

BOARD MEETING

AGENDA

1st Meeting 2020/21

23rd June 2020

The Board will meet at 1.00 pm, virtually via Teams.

Item	Topic	Lead Person	Paper Number	Purpose
1	Declarations of interests	Chair	Verbal	To consider any declarations of interests with regard to agenda items
2	Minutes of previous meeting	Chair	CHS-2021-01	To approve the minutes of the previous meeting on 17 th of March 2020
3	Matters arising	Chair	Verbal	Seek assurance that actions from the previous meeting have been progressed
4	Action log	Chair	CHS-2021-02	To monitor progress against actions due and agree action where required
5	Chair update	Chair	Verbal	For information & discussion
6	National Convener/ CEO update	EJ	CHS-2021-03	For consideration and discussion
7	Resilience	CW	CHS-2021-04	Information and discussion
8	2020/21 Financial Forecast Outturn	EM	CHS-2021-05	For consideration and approval
9	2020/21 Capital Spending Plan	EM	CHS-2021-06	For consideration and approval
10	Digital Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOC Update Digital Launch Plans Digital Devices Business Cse 	HR LH	Verbal CHS-2021-07 CHS-2021-08	For consideration and discussion For consideration and discussion For consideration and approval
11	2020 – 22 Equality Outcomes	LH/SL	CHS-2021-09	For consideration and approval
12	Quarter 1 Performance Report	LH/MB	CHS-2021-10	For consideration and assurance
13	Independent Reports Implementation	CM	CHS-2021-11	For consideration and approval
14	Recruitment	CM	CHS-2021-12	For consideration and approval
15	Volunteer Well-being Programme	EJ	CHS-2021-13	For consideration and approval

16	Children's Rights and Inclusion Strategy	EJ	CHS-2021-14	For consideration and approval
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Next meeting date: 22nd September 2020

Minutes of the Board meeting of 17th March 2020

The meeting started at 13:50.

Present:

Garry Coutts (GC)	Chair
John Anderson (JA)	Board Member
Henry Robson (HR)	ARMC Chair/Board Member
Barbara Neil (BN)	Board Member
Beth-Anne Logan (B-AL)	Board Member
Jo Derrick (JD)	RAC Chair/Board Member

Also present:

Elliot Jackson (EJ)	National Convener/Chief Executive (NC/CEO), CHS
Lynne Harrison (LH)	Head of Strategy/development & Depute Chief Executive (DCEO), CHS
Carol Wassell (CW)	Head of Area Support & Community Improvement, CHS
Ed Morrison (EM)	Director of Finance, CHS
Michael Beardmore (MB)	National Quality & Performance Lead, CHS
Simone Ledraw (SL)	(minute taker), CHS

Apologies: None

	Items	Actions / owner	Time-scales
1	Declaration of interests		
	None.	N/A	N/A
	CoVid-19 Update		
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was suggested that due to the advice to restrict unnecessary travel and social distancing future meeting of the board and committees would take place via Skype or video conferencing. The Chair asked for an update on the advice given to panel community and the contingency plans that are been put in place.	N/A	N/A

	<p>The CEO advised priorities are to protect children and keep the volunteers safe. The resilience group meets daily led by LH. We are working closely with SCRA and Scottish Government. Looking at the need to reduce hearings solutions to hold hearings virtually. We are working with Scottish Government to change legislation to renew hearings automatically and reduce hearings.</p> <p>Advice to Panel community is that there will be no PPA observations, we have suspended the digital roll out and local and national training.</p> <p>Advice was received last night from Scottish Government that staff should work from home which was operationalised last night. More advice will continue to go out to staff and the community as we receive it.</p> <p>The Chair asked LH to provide brief but regular updates to the Board on the changing situation.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Teams for the work they have done to date, looking at the chat on TEAMS there are some concerns which have been dealt with very well.</p>		
2	Minutes of previous meeting		
	<p>The Board noted that there were some amendments required to the minute; Page 5 point 6 £125 budget should read £125k budget.</p> <p>The Board agreed to approve the minutes of its meeting on 28th January 2020.</p>	N/A	N/A
3	Matters arising		
	<p>11. LH advised as discussed the Corporate Plan is on the agenda for approval at this meeting, the Business plan will follow once the recommendations from the Care Review have been reviewed fully. This will be ready mid-April for Board approval. Scottish Government are aware of the delay and are supportive understanding year 1 is very important.</p>	LH	April 20
4	Action log		
	As above		
5	Chair update		
	<p>The Chair stated how successful the strategy days in February were with some good thinking. This was reviewed this morning at the Board development session. NC/CEO and LH will look at producing an action plan to take that forward. The themes align with those raised by AST's which is encouraging.</p>	NC/CEO	April 20

6	Chief Executive update		
<p>The NC/CEO introduced the paper. Key elements were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy in children’s hearings, the model will ensure advocacy is available for children referred to a hearing. Practice guidance is being prepared. • Engagement with the community and have undertaken five or six sessions talking about community and partnership the community are recognising where we are and we are moving forward and getting the panel community in to a good place. • The Chair commented on the Twitter chat around the Clerks conference which looked to be very successful and feedback very positive. LH stated it was a very good event and the Clerks felt they were being invested in and got a lot out of the digital workshop. <p>Board decision: To note the NC/CEO update.</p>			
7	2019/20 Financial Forecast outturn		
<p>EM spoke on the Financial report which had been circulated previously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much change since the January 2020 forecast. • No change to digital and Capital expenditure for the year apart from £30k transfer from capital to revenue (Thistle House Furniture) • Scottish Government have requested details of projected underspend by public bodies by 20th April. • Noted the Boards comments regarding the number of lines with variances over 10% and this will be addressed in forecast planning for 2020/21 budget. <p>The Chair asked if the Plans are on track for external audit? EM advised external audit planning is due next week but Audit Scotland have been advised not to visit any clients so the interim audit will be done remotely. The Chair asked about the end of year audit. EM advised Audit Scotland are already thinking about this and are aware there will be an impact but are unable to say at this stage what this will be.</p> <p>The Board agreed—</p> <p>To approve the Finance Report.</p>			

9	Q4 Performance Report	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LH highlighted some activities that the Board had agreed to carry forward. • MB noted there are some areas still to be reported on. Some items still to be reported on— mainly those in pre service which will be reported in May. • Two amber actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruitment, The Chair asked why would this be green then amber, in the last quarter? MB advised that in previous quarters we were still on track to recruit 450, now there was a dip in numbers during pre-service training. - Action 31 deliver a nationally consistent approach to better hearings locally and nationally. This work is now being looked at in view of having the Partners in place. CW advised Jo Hamilton (SCRA) attended a partner meeting to discuss how we can all work to achieve for national consistency. <p><u>Board Discussion</u></p> <p>Business objective 2.13 working with young people with lived experience of children’s hearings to co-produce refreshed recruitment creatives which attract diverse and committed volunteers. Is this something we are considering to do again this year to target people with lived experience. NC/CEO yes and we are taking advice from the Rights and Inclusion strategy group.</p> <p>The Chair noted that this is an incredibly good performance report and thanked the team for their efforts through 2019/20 to deliver this.</p> <p>2) Decision—</p> <p>The Board agreed to approve the Performance Report</p>	
10	Publication of the Review of Care Report	
	<p>NC/CEO spoke on the report which had previously been circulated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four main points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Despite disappointment at some of the language used around volunteering, the volunteer community had received the report positively, recognising the opportunities it offers to the hearings system. - Internally we have completed a gap analysis of the ICR findings versus our Corporate planning which identifies a strong correlation to planned activity - The Board held a strategy session looking at future models and direction of travel. - NC/CEO has a meeting with Fiona Duncan asking her to take part in joint podcast of 20-25 mins using TEAMS to allow panel members to ask questions. <p>MB spoke about the work highlighting he has taken the five info graphics and overlaid our strategic direction and looked at our alignment focusing on things in green directly applicable to CHS, things in red with no direct application to CHS</p>	

<p>and a number sit in grey either will only know more as things progress or we need more discussion or information. MB has gone through the 80 recommendations and has placed and referenced.</p> <p><u>Board Discussion</u></p> <p>The Chair reported that this was an incredibly important document and although there are things that are challenging he is very proud of the panel community that they have recognised its importance. The Chair reported that it is vital that we are listening to the voice of children and young people, there are things that need to be improved and we are accepting of that and will continue to work with children and young people and our partners to get it right. The Chair on behalf of the Board wanted to highlight his huge appreciation to all who took time to tell their stories to the Independent Care Review Team.</p> <p>The Chair asked for the mapping work to be shared with the Board</p>	<p>MB</p>	<p>March 2020</p>
<p>11. CHS DRAFT Corporate Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23</p>		
<p>MB presented the Corporate Plan to the Board. LH highlighted that due to the timing of the Independent Review of Care report, it is less directive than previous versions and the examples on what we will deliver give direction and the Business Plan will have more detail. The Chair clarified that the Business Plan will be laid out in a similar format to allow cross reference. LH confirmed this.</p> <p>MB reported that a check to ensure consistency of language with that modelled by the Care Review Report has been undertaken.</p> <p><u>Board Discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 7 still says “enact the rights of children” Can this be changed for consistency of language. • Page 9 Theme 2 Should we be taking a position statement regarding section 122 as we are saying we don’t want delays and disruption, but if when section 122 is enacted and a chair asks the child about advocacy and the answer is no this could lead to a deferral and disruption. Should we have a position in terms of when advocacy is asked and not a the stage of the hearing. • Is Theme 3 where lived experience in AST’s should sit? LH responded that activities to support this would be more evident in the Business Plan. • Theme 2 acceptable hearings behaviour and conduct, some practice is not achieving this and am looking for reassurance. NC/CEO acknowledged this is a huge challenge, this is an opportunity to reboot the system by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look at PPAs and observations in terms of observations and feedback 2. Training, mandatory training and engagement to ensure panel members have required skills. 		

<p>3. National outcomes in relation to trauma, there currently isn't an indicator so need to reflect where this is now compared to in the future.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all who has been involved in contribution. It was also noted the really fantastic links between the work initiated by the Board a year ago to rewrite the Corporate Plan in preparation for the Care Review. As an organisation we have responded to challenge and it shows fantastic value of having panel members and those with care experience on the board.</p> <p>1) Decision— The Board agreed to approve the Corporate Plan</p>		
<p>12. ARMC</p>		
<p>ARMC Annual Work Plan The Audit Community met on 18th February 2020 and ratified the work plan for Board consideration. This would not preclude additional activity being undertaken through the year.</p> <p><u>Board Discussion</u> It was noted that current CoVid-19 activity would be a good test of the BCP.</p> <p>1) Decision— The Board agreed to approve the ARMC Annual Work Plan</p> <p>ARMC Terms of Reference The Audit Community met on 18th February 2020 and ratified the ToR for Board consideration.</p> <p><u>Board Discussion</u> The TOR was reviewed and considered to be appropriate.</p> <p>1) Decision- The Board agreed to approve the ARMC Terms of Reference</p> <p>Accounting Policy The Audit Committee met on 18th February 2020 and ratified the Accounting Policy for Board consideration.</p> <p><u>Board Discussion</u> It was noted that the Financial policy on pension liabilities which should be available in April and will then be taken account of in the upcoming audit.</p>		

	<p>1) Decision- The Board approved the Accounting Policies</p> <p>Financial Regulations The Audit Committee met on 18th February 2020 and ratified the Financial Regulations for Board consideration.</p> <p><u>Board Discussion</u> The Financial Regulations were reviewed and considered to be appropriate.</p> <p>1) Decision- The Board Approved the Financial Regulations</p>		
13.	RAC		
	<p>RAC Annual Work Plan</p> <p>The RAC met on 28th February 2020 and ratified the Annual Work Plan for Board consideration. It was suggested that gender pay could be included in future plan</p> <p><u>Board Discussion</u> The RAC Annual Work Plan was reviewed and considered to be appropriate.</p> <p>1) Decision- The Board agreed to approve the RAC work plan</p> <p>RAC Terms of Reference The RAC met on 28th February 2020 and ratified the annual work plan for Board consideration.</p> <p><u>Board Discussion</u> The RAC TOR was reviewed and considered to be appropriate.</p> <p>Decision- The Board agreed to approve the RAC Terms of Reference</p>		
14.	Digital Programme		
	<p>Digital Delivery Oversight Committee Update</p> <p>HR reported that the committee had met on the 10th March 2020, and discussed the state of readiness of the programme to go live. He reported that the 2 recent audits from the Digital Assurance - Office Audit had come back green and positive which offered considerable assurance to ARMC and the Board. He reported that there were some challenges both technical and from a support perspective remaining to be addressed that meant that the go live decision date would be moved to 30th March.</p>		

<p><u>Board Discussion</u> The Board noted that they were pleased with the assurance from the DAO. Noted that a delay to launch decision date was disappointing but that it was important to ensure appropriate support was in place.</p> <p>1) Decision- The Board noted the update.</p> <p>Business Readiness & Roll out planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital Champions continue to play a key role in each AST promoting digital and planning in engagement sessions. - The national launch of new e-mail addresses, Community Hub landing page and MS Teams took place in February. The launch had gone well and the functionality in Teams was being well used. - A Go Live decision for the launch of the Community Hub would be confirmed end March 20 with the phased plan still being the preferred launch strategy. <p><u>Board Discussion</u> The Board welcomed the update and were pleased to hear of the successful initial launch and positive feedback from the community.</p> <p>1) Decision- The Board agreed to approve the report</p>		
<p>15. Feedback Loop</p>		
<p>NC/CEO spoke on the report which had previously been circulated.</p> <p>The CHS QPL has reviewed the requirements of the feedback loop and is offering an alternative report to address the legislative requirements. It was reported that this enabled better quality, more consistent national data to be shared.</p> <p><u>Board Discussion</u></p> <p>It was noted that there is more reliable data, better quality but is not covering 8 or 9 bullets. Worried where the risks are. What would happen if there is a risk with an order?</p> <p>NC/CEO reported that If an order was not being implemented the Panel can refer it to the NC who has powers to hold the Local Authority to account.</p> <p>The board noted this data and report format was credible and although it was not without risk was preferable to the current reporting tool.</p> <p>NC/CEO advised this has been shared with SG colleagues for input.</p> <p>The Board asked if the data could be ‘humanised’, it does reflect lives of children. It was agreed to look at how this could be achieved.</p>		

<p>Decision- The Board agreed: To seek input from SG to the report format</p> <p>Pending SG Input, to pursuing this report format for at least one year and see what emerges.</p> <p>For NC/CEO to work with B-AL to humanise the document further.</p>	NC/CEO	April 20
	NC/CEO	April 20
	NC/BAL	April 20
<p>16 Gender Pay Gap Reporting</p>		
<p>LH spoke to the report which had previously been circulated.</p> <p>This is a bi-annual statutory report required to be published in March. This type of reporting is always challenging for small organisations due to the small number of employees and the impact this can have on the statistical skew of the data. CHS report on median and mean data for this reason. The report shows a positive trend for CHS with a significant reduction in the median pay gap and a sway in favour of women in the mean figure.</p> <p><u>Board Discussion</u></p> <p>The Board were delighted to see such a strong report in particular around part time working and occupational segregation.</p> <p>Will be very interested in the next report. Currently very fixed re male v female and not inclusive of transgender.</p> <p>This report demonstrates a dramatic change vs 2018 and shows a commitment to appoint women throughout the CHS workforce.</p> <p>Decision- The Board agreed to approve the report for publication and RAC oversight.</p>		

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution.

The next Board meeting will be on 23rd June 2020, It will be called virtually unless significant change. The meeting closed at 14:15

Children’s Hearings Scotland Board Action Log
Updated on 17th March 2020

No.	Action(s)	Source	Target date	Owner	Status
1	To support the NC/CEO’s approach on Feedback Loop and to seek Ministers and Parliament’s views on the new approach outlined in the report.	Sept	Nov 19	EJ	Moved to Sept 2020
2	To consider a report on plans to ensure a successful step change to help draw enough people from non-traditional backgrounds including training and support.	Sept	January 20	CM	Not yet due
3	Annual Review of Appeals	Sept	Sept 20	CM	Not Yet Due
4	Look to arrange a development session with OHOV Board in 2020	November 19	Before November 20	LH	Not Yet Due
5	To look at the creation of a child/young person friendly complaints policy once the policy has been finalised	November 19	September 20	LH	Not Yet Due
6	Update on progress of implementation and impact of ASIP role and provide a report on quality improvement	November 19	March 20	CW	September 2020
7	to consider numbers put forward for the 2020 campaign when they become available	Jan 2020	Aug 2020	CM	Not Yet Due
8	To monitor the percentage of care experienced people who apply to ensure adequate support is provided if/when required.	Jan 2020	Oct 2020	CM	Not Yet Due
10	To share the PPA report with PPA’s	Jan 2020	March 2020	CM	Completed
9	To compile and compare data around the percentage of observations across ASTs that give cause for concern to PPAs and which lead to recommendations.	Jan 2020	March 2020	CM	March 2021
10	Update report Independent Report Writers	Jan 2020	TBC	CM	On the agenda
11	Consider draft Business Plan	March 2020	April 2020	LH	Completed
12	To humanise the Feedback Loop report	March 2020	April 2020	EJ & BAL	September 2020
13	Produce an action plan following the Board Strategy Day	March 2020	April 2020	EJ	September 2020



Agenda Item 06, CHS-2021-03

National Convener / Chief Executive update

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The period between the last Board meeting in March to now, has possibly been one of the most professionally challenging periods of many of our working lives. Our response to the coronavirus pandemic has been complex, technical and fast paced.
- 1.2 It's important to call out and recognise the herculean efforts of the CHS National team and our Panel and AST members based across Scotland. That partnership, based upon trust, respect, and a willingness to go the extra mile, has meant that we have endured. We have delivered children's hearings which may not be perfect, but go a long way in protecting children and young people when they need us most. There is much work to do however.
- 1.3 This report traditionally offers me the chance to reflect upon the key tasks and activities over the last quarter, but given the focus has primarily been on leading our COVID-19 response, which is covered in another Board report, I have used the National Convener update to set out some reflections and thoughts on the challenges and opportunities over the next 6-months to aid discussion and debate.

2. A Children's Rights Based Response to COVID-19

- 2.1 Maintaining a Children's Rights based response to COVID-19 remains critical for CHS. Our transition over the last 8-weeks to a model of virtual Hearings where more children, young people and their families are present is welcome. Whilst this has not been free from technological and access challenges, it has offered Panel Members the chance to seek the views of the child or young person directly to inform their decisions.
- 2.2 The news from the First Minister on 21 May 2020 that face-to-face children's hearings will return within the early stages of the Scottish Government Recover Plan was warmly welcomed by the CHS Community. Early results from our dedicated Panel Member survey to establish numbers of those willing to return to face-to-face, assuming all protections were in place, are encouraging. Where face-to-face hearings can be accommodated within a physically distanced environment, it will be important for the child or young person to identify who they would want to attend with them. Notwithstanding the ambition for a full return to face-to-face hearings, it is highly likely that a form of blended attendance at hearings will prevail in the short to medium term. This may include some Panel Members, along with other professionals – or indeed children, young people and their families/advocacy workers, choosing to participate virtually.
- 2.3 SCRA have confirmed that the first two-sites will reopen, subject to a satisfactory Health Protection Scotland assessment, week commencing 22 June 2020 with hearings recommencing in these sites, week starting 13 July 2020.

- 2.4 In my view, the return to a limited form of face-to-face hearings might be the easy bit. The harder bit will be to create a 'thinking outside the box' strategy and plan that would see CHS and its partners tackle the growing backlog of cases in a prioritised way using an empathetic approach. Failure to do this would likely deliver a significant child protection, drift and delay, threat. SCRA's initial priority was to ensure legal orders do not lapse, but what is essential now is to prioritise hearings more holistically to put the child, young person and their family at the centre.
- 2.5 SCRA confirm that they are currently operating at approximately 25% of normal capacity and this is unlikely to change over the coming months. Indicatively, SCRA report that they are scheduling around 160 hearings per week, when normal levels are around 350 across Scotland. The review of robust data is hugely important to help shape and inform the size of the response, but a simple analysis would point to a growing backlog of just under 6000 cases since lockdown began. We need to be thoughtful to prioritise those cases with the most immediate need. There is also an argument to consider permanence cases as not to hold up a move to a positive destination. There is provision within the emergency legislation to extend orders without hearings, but I think we must look beyond this and tackle the holistic needs of the child, young person and their families. The current emergency legislation is in place until the end of September at which point it will be reviewed as to whether a further 6-month extension is granted.
- 2.6 In order to tackle the backlog, I don't think we should do this on our own. I believe that we need to reach out and secure multi-agency buy-in that creates a broader coalition that promotes new thinking; access to other services and locations; creates more capacity; and all with the opportunity to align with aims of The Promise. Without innovative and creative thinking beyond our existing boundaries and the need to generate that sense of urgency and joint endeavour now, I cannot see how I as National Convener will be able to fulfil my obligations to those children and young people who need our help.
- 2.7 In coming to this view, I made ten planning assumptions for the remaining months of 2020. These are that:
1. Some form of social distancing will remain in place;
 2. That existing Hearing centres will need to be augmented by other locations;
 3. Staffing capacity at SCRA achieves between one third and a half of normal levels;
 4. Hearings continue to operate at 25% of capacity for the remainder of the year (i.e. 160 Hearings per week/Normal levels are 650 Hearings per week);
 5. Hearings will reduce throughout SCRA's introduction of CSAS digital systems;
 6. The CHS Panel Member community operates at approximately 70% of capacity;
 7. The emergency legislation will not be extended beyond end of September;
 8. That there will be a significant increase in new referrals to the Reporter;
 9. The likelihood of the temporary closure of Hearing locations due to new infection remains moderate-to-high; and
 10. The hearing numbers that I have used have been based upon comparative figures and further robust analysis work will be required to quantify numbers and the risks.

- 2.8 There is real opportunity to look upon the challenge of the backlog with a fresh perspective. To simply generate more capacity and more hearings in the way we have always done would be to miss the point. We need use our most recent learning together with the views of children and young people. The CELCIS research has a huge part to play here in giving voice. We need innovation and creativity to reimagine a new service offering that aligns with the outcomes of the Care Review, but also pushes us to consider alternatives through a new lens. I have be incredibly impressed with the views of Panel Members who have taken time to write to me with their ideas on how to do things differently. There are no sacred cows.
- 2.9 Creating a broad leadership coalition with key stakeholders is critical. We will need new voices and new perspectives to contribute to new solutions. The Scottish Government are key to this work, as is the voice of hearings experienced colleagues, along with representatives from the soon to be announced oversight committee that will take ownership of implementing the intentions of the former Independent Care Review. This is a unique opportunity to bring forward work that may have been otherwise planned for either 2021 or 2022.

3. **Conclusion**

- 3.1 If the case backlog numbers in this report are accurate and the planning assumptions remain true, then CHS needs to influence our partners and stakeholders to create a sense of urgency to tackle a significant and growing child protection risk.
- 3.2 There three factors that need to coalesce to protect and prevail from this challenge. They are, the voice of the child or young person, the right approach to the prioritisation of cases; and the will of our professionals, be it employed or volunteers, to make it happen.

Elliot Jackson
National Convener
17 June 2020

Agenda item

Accountable Officer:	Head of Area Support and Community Improvement
Report author:	Carol Wassell
Recommendation:	To note the update
Resources implications:	N/A
Equalities duties:	Equalities Impact Assessment Required No

1. Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the organisational resilience response to the Covid-19 pandemic and impact of lockdown which came into effect w/c 23rd March 2020 and looks to the challenges ahead. The Board is asked to note the report,

2. CHS Resilience Response:

2.1 Resilience Management:

- In response to Covid-19 CHS formed a Resilience Management Group initially led by Lynne Harrison and now Carol Wassell.
- The group comprises National Team expertise from Practice, Learning and development, IG, HR, Area Support and Communications.
- The group meet weekly and are responsible for crisis response, resilience wellbeing planning and communications, virtual hearings practice and management and resilience exit strategy development.
- CHS SMT hold a weekly strategic resilience meeting with SCRA focussed against hearings management and planning.
- CHS SMT hold a weekly online meeting with Area Conveners to sense check operational implementation and seek input to strategic decisions.

2.2 Hearings Management:

Effective w/c 23rd March 2020 hearings are being conducted virtually.

Over the 13 weeks of lockdown;:

- Between the 31st April and 19th June approx. 960 decisions to support children and young people have now been made in a virtual hearing environment.
- SCRA identified VScene as a secure virtual meeting tool to meet the needs of the hearing system.
- CHS now have 956 trained virtual Panel Members and of these 667 are trained Panel Chairs that are able to use the SCRA identified Objective Connect tool for sharing Panel Papers and as a tool to enable Panel members to write up and share reasons and decisions.
- SCRA are prioritising hearing scheduling based on each child or young person's circumstances are considered on an individual basis but as a guide to the priorities teams are working to are:

- 8th working day hearing
 - New grounds Hearing – where there is significant concern about welfare of child if delayed.
 - ICSO/IVCSO hearings
 - Established grounds hearing
 - Local Authority Review (if flagged as urgent)
 - Emergency transfer
 - CSO review where secure authorisation is sought
 - Remit for reconsideration following successful appeal.
 - Any other case that is considered to be urgent
- Virtual Hearings evolved from Reporters and Panel Members only (week 1 and 2), to now include virtual attendance (where possible) to include children, families and professionals and papers being issued to all attendees.
 - Observations have been paused since early March due to capacity and complexity of the virtual hearing space. This remains under review and the opportunity to begin to undertake observations of virtual hearings is being pursued.

2.3 Legislation and Practice

- The CHS practice team significantly contributed to the development of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act, including drafting the supporting principles for implementation and securing:
 - The ability to hold hearings with 1 – 3 Panel Members in attendance
 - The removal of the gender balance requirements of Panels
 - Acceptance of reasons having an electronic signature
- Produced the CHS Coronavirus Practice Guide, including a mock hearing video, to support Panel Members (and others) to take part in virtual hearings and appropriately understand and implement the legislative changes.
- This is under constant review following feedback from virtual hearings experience to ensure.
- CHS have produced an updated Contact Framework in partnership with Social Work Scotland and CELCIS
- CHS contributed data to parliamentary report on the use of the emergency legislation in respect of gender balance and the number of panel members that sit in a hearing.

2.4 Partnership Working

- CHS meet weekly with Social Work Scotland, COSLA, CELCIS and Scottish Government to update on hearings arrangements, gain wider understanding of the issues facing children and families and identify how we can work together to best respond to need.
- Partner organisations who have also attended these calls include CYCJ, The Children's Commissioner and Children 1st
- A weekly call was also held with the Independent Review of care Team until the team were disbanded. It has now been announced that Fiona Duncan will chair the National Implementation Group, but no decisions have been shared about who will be in the team, although CHS has received assurances that it will be included.

- The National Convener / CEO is also a member of the Leadership Collective, formed as a direct response to Covid-19 and with a GIRFEC remit to support those particularly in need at this time.
- Area Support and Improvement Partners are playing a key role locally working closely with ACs and LRMs to support hearing activity and reaching out to local partners including Social Work to understand how to best work together locally to meet local need.
- CHS Issued a Joint statement on contact with SCRA and Social Work Scotland in relation to hearings and contact.
- Issued 2 joint hearings updates with SCRA, including direct contact with Scotland's Advocacy organisations to encourage support for children and young people to participate in hearings.

2.5 Childrens Hearings Scotland Learning Academy:

- Face to face training has been paused.
- Day 6 and 7 of Pre- service training has been fully moved to online content with trainees continuing to undertake activity. To date 86 trainees have now completed with 200 on their way.
- Trainees were appointed as Panel Members on the 18th May 2020, subject to conditions of completing pre-service training. How these trainees may contribute to virtual hearings is now being considered.
- A Learning in Lockdown suite of learning has been developed including wellbeing and resilience resources. This includes the Hearings in Lockdown module, training vital to support virtual hearing activity.
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- A Learning and Development Co-ordinator virtual forum has been held identifying local learning and support activities using Teams were in place in many areas.

2.6 Volunteer Wellbeing:

Connecting Our Community Virtual Events

In June, we hosted two virtual Connecting the Community events for Panel and AST members within four AST areas. The aims of these events are to (1) To improve visibility for the during the ongoing lockdown period; (2) To Position leadership and responsibility at both national and local levels; (3) To actively demonstrate the community working and discussing live topics together as a team; (4) To bring together a small cross section of our community, national & local, different roles, a microcosm of our community in action; and (5) to showcase a virtual meeting room of engaged colleagues, talking through live topics and answering questions.

The event evaluation scores have shown that there is real value and benefit for Panel and AST Members. Specifically, there is an 88.2% satisfaction score for event content, an 88.5% satisfaction score for providing opportunities to discuss and contribute, and a 91.4% approval rating for demonstrating how National and AST teams work. Plans are in place for events 3 and 4 by the end of June, with the remaining AST covered off by the end of the summer.

In addition

- We continue to issue weekly communications through Teams and e mail and which are being well received.

- We continue to have weekly teams calls with ACs – they remain energised and motivated. We have welcomed 2 new ACs and a new DAC and re-appointed an AC during this period.
- We have re-imagined the 'Connecting our Community' programme to an online engagement. 2 have been held across 6 ASTs with over 100 attending. Feedback has been very positive with 93% satisfied/very satisfied with organisation, 88% welcoming the opportunity to ask questions and 94% indicating the national and local focus of the event was helpful.
- We have created a signposting directory for our community to local and national organisations who can offer support in relation to finance, food poverty mental health etc,
- A link with an external counselling provider has been identified providing direct access to support for our community. This service will be launched imminently.
- Local ASTs are using Teams to engage with their communities to support wellbeing and ensure everyone is kept up to date on local activity. ACs and LPRs are also calling volunteers who have been unable to contribute currently to ensure they remain connected with their local AST.
- A PPA channel has been created on Teams and online forum events created to enable connection and networking to take place.

2.7 National Team:

- All fit, well and in good spirits.
- We have in place weekly virtual team meetings and twice weekly huddles to maintain our strong connections and are encouraging peer to peer connections to help support each other.
- A mixture of business and social activity is taking place using Skype and Teams and the Staff Forum have taken an active role in engaging widely to support resilience activity and promote wellbeing through Motivation Monday and Feel Good Friday Teams activities.
- Equipment to support home working has been provided including health and safety self-assessment tools.

3. Resilience Response Challenges

The response to Covid-19 required a dramatic and speedy response from the hearings system. This was embraced by the CHS community but has not been without challenge particularly in 3 key areas:

3.1 Protecting Rights:

A number of concerns have been raised in relation to the impact on children's' rights due to the use of virtual hearings, particularly about child and family advocacy, receiving papers and contact. In response to these concerns we have met with the Commissioner's office and made representation to Scottish Government.

- SCRA have established a virtual hearings team to support children and families attendance at virtual hearings.

- To enable greater participation, SCRA has developed a range of, accessible resources to support young people and their families to attend and participate in a virtual Hearing. (www.scra.gov.uk/young_people/virtual-hearings/). These resources included guidance to buy extra mobile data, a video on the 5 top tips for attending a virtual Hearing, together with an extensive Q&A communication
- SCRA have launched a questionnaire designed to seek feedback on their virtual Hearings experience from children, young people and their families, together with all professionals (e.g. advocacy worker, solicitor or social worker) who took part.
- SCRA and CHS are working with Children 1st to ensure that families that are due to attend a virtual Hearing can get in touch with Parentline for support to help them understand how their Hearing will work, what will happen, how they can contribute and what their rights are.
- In partnership with CELCIS, CHS and SCRA, and based on similar work by Family Justice Observatory in England we are participating in research that will give us qualitative and quantitative evidence and data to support our return to 'physical' hearings in Scotland. The research will look at the following:
 - Capture a record of the significance of the emergency measures for everyone involved, including children and families who's hearings have not gone ahead;
 - Generate knowledge and insight from the broad range of people who are involved in attending a hearing in order to inform understanding of how this is being experienced;
 - Capture learning to consolidate what changes we wish to keep as lockdown is eased to facilitate reopening of physical hearings; and to
 - Capture learning for any future consideration of innovation around the conduct of children's hearings.
- This research will completed by the end of July.

3.2 Hearing Scheduling:

SCRA continue to schedule hearings on a priority basis and therefore hearing numbers are significantly reduced vs comparable periods last year. A number of hearings are being deferred in line with the provisions of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act.

We are working with SCRA to plan for an increase in hearing. We have met with SCRA to agree that the circumstances of children, whose hearings have been cancelled, are considered in the following ways to allow us to put in place plans to provide a hearing for every child who required it:

- Provide a detailed profile of Hearings to take into account a range of factors, including expiry reviews, outstanding Hearings and an assessment of children awaiting Hearing decisions, awaiting Proof outcomes and awaiting Reporter decisions.
- Collate data from operational teams current capacity and the key area that require focus to increase the current and future capacity is to hold Hearings

This is being closely monitored by CHS and SCRA and modelling taking place to project the potential impact on the system and resources over the coming months.

CHS are taking steps to ensure PMs have sufficient resources to enable continued support to virtual hearings including ongoing training and access to a limited pilot of digital devices.

3.3 Appeals:

- Total of 16 appeals relating to cases between 20th March and 29th April 2020 (prior to the roll out of video based hearings); all these hearings were conducted 'administratively' with only the Panel Members, the Reporter and on occasion solicitors in attendance. The basis for the appeals stated that the arrangements made for these hearings amounted to a procedural irregularity; appeal points included lack of proper notification, no opportunity to participate or contribute views and limited information available to the Panel including a lack of social work reports.
- Two cases are still awaiting an appeal hearing; one is scheduled for 27 May and no date has yet been scheduled for the other. Of the remaining fourteen appeals, the Panel's decision was upheld in only two cases. 12 appeals were successful; commonly the court found that the decision was unjustified on the basis of the limited information available to the Panel.
- In two cases the court made specific criticism of the arrangements made for the hearing – that the hearing had been arranged without giving parties notice or sufficient opportunity to contribute views or make representations. In one of the two most recent appeals very poor sound quality during the hearing prevented the child's contribution being properly presented and this amounted to a material procedural irregularity. The two cases in which the Panel's decision was found to be justified concerned ICSSOs. In one case the relevant person had had advance notification and their views were available to the Panel. In the other the decision was found to be proportionate in the light of available information.
- There were 3 appeals in Tayside and Fife, 3 in Highlands and Islands, 3 in North Strathclyde, 2 appeals in Central and 2 in South East Scotland and one each in Glasgow, Ayrshire and Lanarkshire/Dumfries and Galloway (SCRA Reporter localities not ASTs).
- In six of the successful appeals the Reporter was directed to arrange a further review hearing to enable the Panel to reconsider the case. In the others the Sheriff made a substantive order, in some cases in terms similar to the original decision.

3.4 Digital Inclusion

CHS have trained over 1200 Panel members to participate in virtual hearings. This training will continue to provide new capacity for what's likely to be a blended approach to the return of face-to-face children's hearings. A pilot programme of the provision of devices to Panel Members is proposed to support the development of this new capacity.

Furthermore, CHS welcomes the Scottish Government's £30M investment in the provision of electronic devices for those families who do not have access to an internet enabled device and / or broadband or 4/5G. The first phase of this

programme will be the deployment of 25,000 Chromebook packages to Local Authorities at the start of July.

4. Forward Planning

- Resilience planning activity is now looking forward and planning for the transition out of lockdown and impact of easing of restrictions on activity for hearings and National Team operation.
- We recognise that many of the changes that have taken place over the past weeks have bought forward some significant tests of change for the hearings system. We will capture and use the learnings from this current period to actively inform our future practice post Covid-19.

4.1 Face to Face hearings

- We are working closely with SCRA to support them to think creatively about how face to face hearings can be managed given social distancing constraints and public transport limitations for those attending. We have sent a questionnaire to all panel members to understand people's willingness to attend a physical hearing environment whilst we are still in phases 1, 2 and 3 of lock down. This information will cover all of Scotland and allow us to ensure panel members are available to attend face to face hearings in all areas when this is possible.

4.2 Recruitment

The current landscape has been closely reviewed taking into account how Coronavirus is likely to impact on the next 9 – 12 months particularly in relation to social distancing measures, peoples willingness to come forward to volunteer for causes other than the pandemic at this time, and the capacity of Area Support Teams and local authority clerks to manage recruitment and selection effectively and fully over the next few months.

A range of options have been examined in relation to Panel Member recruitment including

- Continuing as usual recruiting in August / September 2020
- Delaying recruitment for a period of time until early 2021
- Managing recruitment and selection of new panel members virtually rather than face to face
- Calculation of the number of panel members likely to be required over the next 18 months incorporating data on the likely number of 2020 appointed Panel Members who will go forward to sit on hearings later than anticipated in 2020

In a separate paper the Board is invited to accept a recommendation that Panel Member Recruitment be delayed until the beginning of 2021 with a range of opportunities and benefits identified to support this recommendation alongside information on the key implications of delay and conclusion that the impact of delay is at an acceptable level.

4.3 Return to Thistle House

- The resilience group are working with the staff team and SLAB to plan for a safe return to Thistle House.
- We are working with SLAB to identify working protocols for office and building space including safe working numbers, access and hygiene requirements.
- SMT are undertaking 1:1's with all team members to understand individual needs and concerns.
- A questionnaire is also being fielded to understand more general areas of support and suggestions for how we can transition back to office working safely.

4.4 Learning and Development

Planning and actions in relation to learning and development and organisational and individual resilience have centred on the following:

Trainee Panel Members and Trainee Panel Practice Advisors:

- Alternative training arrangements have been made for the 2020 trainees working through Part 1 of the Professional Development Award (Pre service).
- In particular, days 6 and 7 of this training have been extensively re-designed and are being hosted on the Academy site with Academy trainers facilitating and assessing virtual individual and group learning.
- Contingency plans have been developed to facilitate the face to face elements of Pre service training at a later date.
- Reassurance has been given to trainees with regards to their status as panel members. The National Convener appointed trainees as Panel Members on May 18th. These appointments were made subject to conditions, most notably that all identified elements of Pre service training must be completed before sitting on Children's hearings.
- Training for trainee Panel Practice Advisors has been migrated online and is being hosted and assessed by the CHS Learning Academy team

CHS 2020 Learning Academy Prospectus

- The 2020 CHS Learning Academy Prospectus has been suspended and this includes the withdrawal of all face to face training - face to face training courses scheduled up until the end of June have been cancelled (pre booked venues activated the cancellation options and there are therefore no charges associated with this). Courses due to run later this year are under constant review and the current assumption is that these are unlikely to be offered before the end of August
- Prioritisation has taken place for specific learning for Panel and AST members and as much face to face training content as possible has or is being migrated online where appropriate
- Information Governance learning remains a priority for the whole of our community, and those of the most recent cohort due to complete this who have

not done so – will not sit on hearings until this mandatory training has been passed.

Hearings in Lockdown

- Bespoke learning has been created for those Panel members participating in virtual hearings (and others who may be interested) via a new online module: 'Hearings in Lockdown'. Developed by the CHS training and practice staff alongside SCRA colleagues and the CHS Learning Academy team, this module includes practical guidance and learning resources to help Panel Members acquire the knowledge and skills to conduct virtual hearings. The learning is recorded by the Learning Academy and forms part of continuing professional development for Panel Members. The primary resources in the module are the Coronavirus Practice Guide and a training video. There are also additional optional materials and learning resources including for example technical guidance on the use of Objective Connect for viewing and editing of papers for children's hearings.

Learning in Lockdown

- The month of May was designated 'Learning in Lockdown' month in CHS with content being hosted and repackaged on the CHS Learning Academy website
- The content was launched to the CHS community early in May and new opportunities were made available throughout the month including during the UK Campaign for Learning. 'Learning at Work week' from May 18th to the 24th and during Mental Health Awareness Week, also in May.
- Learning in Lockdown focuses on three distinct areas: Coping in lockdown, Adapting and adjusting in lockdown, and Growing and learning in lockdown.
- Coping in lockdown includes learning about personal resilience and mental health awareness. Adapting and adjusting includes learning on emotional intelligence and how to participate in conference calls. Growing and learning in lockdown includes learning on decision making and creative problem solving.
- Learning in lockdown remains live to the CHS community and we are reviewing this over the next few weeks.

Partnership working and prioritisation

The interim arrangements made for learning and development have required a high degree of agile and collaborative working with a lot of work taking place behind the scenes from the CHS, the CHS Learning Academy, our partner organisation SCRA, and others. It has been a real team effort and demonstrated that there are opportunities to vary and develop our learning and development options further in the coming months. Prioritisation of training options and contingency planning up to and including to the end of 2021 is underway.

5 RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to note the report

Agenda Item 8. CHS-2021-05

Finance Report: 2019/20 forecast outturn

Accountable Director: Director of Finance
Report author: Ross Mackenzie
Resources implications: Within available resources
Equalities duties: Equalities Impact Assessment Required
 Yes No

1 Background, summary and recommendation

- 1.1 The revenue grant in aid (GiA) allocation for CHS for 2019/20 was £4.5m, excluding £286k funding transferred from SCRA in respect of the joint digital programme. The Board approved a revenue budget of £4.575m in March 2019, anticipating £75k of carried-forward resource underspend from 2018/19. Carried-forward resource was £134k, i.e. £59k more than was anticipated at the time the budget was set.
- 1.2 The capital GiA allocation for CHS for 2019/20 was £75k. After adjustments for ICT spend and Ladywell House dilapidations, a carried-forward underspend of £14k was available in 2019/20.
- 1.3 The Board is asked to note the 2019/20 pre-audit outturn position: a revenue underspend of £93k to budget, resulting in a potential carry forward underspend of £152k, some or all of which will be recouped by SG.

Finance Report as at 31 March 2020 (unaudited)						
	Actual YTD Period 12	Variance YTD Period 12	2019/20 Annual Budget	2019/20 Forecast	2019/20 Variance Actuals to forecast	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
Staff	1,701	-89	1,790	1,739	-38	-2.2
Board	53	+8	45	51	+2	+3.1
Training, travel and subsistence	124	+44	80	120	+4	+3.7
Property	148	+41	107	137	+11	+8.2
Other Operating Costs	56	-8	63	50	+6	+11.3
ICT Costs	340	-15	355	348	-8	-2.2
Corporate Costs	106	+30	76	96	+10	+9.9
Panel and AST Expenses	610	+35	575	545	+65	+12.0
Panel and AST Training	1,115	-59	1,174	1,174	-59	-5.0
Support for hearings	11	-21	32	52	-41	-78.1
Volunteer recruitment	145	-37	182	182	-37	-20.1
PVGs	30	+0	30	30	+0	-0.3
AST Devolved Funding	46	-20	66	56	-10	-17.1
Income	-3	-3	0	-5	+2	+31.1
Total	4,482	-94	4,575	4,575	-93	-2.0

2 2019/20 Financial Outturn

- 2.1 The YTD Actual figures above exclude a number of costs reported within the statutory accounts:
- Depreciation of £299k, a non-cash cost that is not met from revenue grant in aid;
 - Revenue digital spend of £243k, met from the transfer of grant in aid from SCRA rather than core grant in aid; and
 - £425k of IAS 19 costs, comprising £41k interest charges and £384k pension contribution charges. These are required to be accounted for within statutory accounts according to International Accounting Standard 19 but, as non-cash costs, are not reported within the management accounts above.
- 2.2 Staffing spend fell short of forecast by £38k. This variance is due to additional strategic support, forecast in this line, being spent within Corporate Costs where consultancy is reported in the statutory accounts. It also arose due to vacancies within the Business Support Team that were not recruited to as promptly as forecast.
- 2.3 Property costs were £11k higher than forecast due to building capital charges being under-budgeted in 2019/20.
- 2.4 Volunteer expenses are £65k higher than forecast. Some of these costs are estimates due to exact figures being unavailable from Local Authority clerks unable to access the required data during lockdown. Shetland, South East, Edinburgh and Argyll and Bute have all seen spending more than double, with Central's spend increasing by 77%.
- 2.5 Spend on volunteer training is £59k less than forecast due to £52k of costs relating to constructing online digital modules being met from digital funding rather than core funding.
- 2.6 Support for Hearings spend was £41k less than forecast primarily due to planned engagement and participation activities (including the 3-day workshop from CELCIS) being suspended due to the coronavirus.
- 2.7 Volunteer recruitment spend was £37k less than forecast due to less spend on AST recruitment than predicted, and due to unspent contingency within the larger panel member recruitment budget.
- 2.8 Regarding capital, £6k was spent completing the Thistle House works, leaving £83k as 2019/20 capital underspend that CHS will seek to allocate against 2020/21 capital plans.
- 2.9 Senior team members are meeting with SG Sponsor team every month to review the impact of covid-19 on finance and resources. Internal formal monthly budget monitoring starts as soon as practically possible: however, SMT members already recognise that this year there will likely be savings on volunteer expenses and volunteer training. This is notwithstanding a likely surge in expenses later in the year when the Hearings backlog starts to be cleared, and a potential surge in training costs when face-to-face training restarts after lockdown.

3 Digital Programme

3.1 The allocation and spend of Digital funding in 2019/20 is as follows:

Programme Aims	Budget £k	Actual £k	Variance £k
Aim One – Core Systems Development	2,276	2,244	(32)
Aims Two to Four – Other organisational projects	279	191	(88)
Total	2,555	2,435	(120)

3.2 The available budget included £55k carry forward from 2018/19. The minor underspend on Aim 1 arose from uncertainty around spend on the pre-production environment (a Pay As You Go model) and small underspend on staffing costs. The underspend on other aims arose principally from user training (staff and volunteers) some of which could not take place last year.

3.3 The Digital budget for 2020/21 is £1m. Guided by the Programme Director, the Digital Delivery Board will review the spend requirements across the entire project and determine where to allocate resources in 2020/21.

4 Conclusion

4.1 The Board is asked to note the 2019/20 pre-audit outturn position: a revenue underspend of £93k to budget, resulting in a potential carry forward underspend of £152k, some or all of which will be recouped by SG.

Agenda item 09, CHS-2021-06

2020/21 Capital Budget Proposal and Indicative Spending Plan for GIA

Accountable Director: Director of Finance
Report author: Lynne Harrison
Recommendation(s): To approve SMT's capital budget for 2020/21 and to note indicative spending plan for GIA
Resources implications: Within available resources
Equalities duties: Equalities Impact Assessment Required
 Yes **No**

1. Background

- 1.1 CHS's capital budget in 2020/21 is £50k.
- 1.2 A capital underspend of around £80k was anticipated in 2019/20 and is assumed to be available in 2020/21.
- 1.3 CHS' total capital budget is anticipated to be £130k.
- 1.4 The Board have approved a volunteer devices business case pilot, committing £40k expenditure.
- 1.5 The balance of available capital funding is therefore £90k.
- 1.6 Additional GIA of 500k is being allocated in-year on submission of a business case to SG.

2. CHS Capital Requirements

- 2.1 It is recommended that CHS Capital requirements for 2020/21 are:

- 2.2 Phase 2: Devices Pilot Expansion – June 20

As detailed in a separate paper, this is expected to cost **£140k**.

- 2.3 National Team Tech Refresh

Mid–end 2020/21, 10 Scots laptops to refresh end of life provision (3 years).
Approx. £5k

- 2.4 PPA Devices

PPAs are responsible for Observations, Complaints and Concerns handling and recruitment shortlisting all of which will now be fully digitised operations.

Provision devices to this community will ensure this operation is carried out consistently across the country and enable management information required to support CHS' improvement journey to be captured.

Although important, this requirement is secondary to any proposals identified in 2.2–2.3 or future identified need for devices to support our Panel Member community in 2020/21.

200 managed devices – **Approx. £70k**

2.5 Total identified Capital requirements are £215k, £125k over remaining allocated budget.

Capital	
Devices pilot expansion	£140k
PPA devices	£70k
Scots tech refresh	£5k
Total	£215 k (+125k)

3. CHS Grant In Aid (GIA) Allocation 2020/21

3.1 CHS' grant in aid (GIA) in 2020/21 is £4,629k revenue and £50k capital. Lesley Sheppard's letter of 20 March 2020 noted "that an in year pressure of up to £500,000, not currently authorised as Grant in Aid has been recorded."

3.2 Requirement for the additional £500k granted included provision of £186k funding to support Panel Member device support premised on a contribution model. This model has since been identified as not meeting HMRC requirements, therefore identifying the only viable digital support member for our volunteer community being direct device provision.

3.3 Indicative spend are aligned to CHS Corporate and Business Plan Aims and Objectives:

Revenue (indicative)	
<i>Digital</i>	
Technical and Support Costs	£78k (+£40k roll forward)
<i>Improvement Programme</i>	
Multi Agency events	£44k
Planning and Governance	£15k
Leadership Support	£20k
Connecting Our Community	£50k
Trauma Informed, Supported and Diverse Panel Lived experience recruitment	£25k
Trauma Training	£67.5k
Pastoral Support	£15k
PDA Overhaul	£20k
Capital overspend (devices)	£125k
Total	£459.5k (+ £40k roll forward)

- **Digital Technical & support Resources, £78k** with potential to roll forward £40k to support 2021/22 technical support costs: Comprises a fixed term technical expertise to establish strong links with SCRA Support Team, shape operational working requirements and identify ongoing technical support post

Go Live. Alongside, additional technical support costs anticipated as a result of the delay of the launch of the digital programme, in part impacted by covid-19.

- **Planning and Governance Support, £15k:** Digital Data Archiving and programme board software to enable effective management of CHS' improvement programme.
- **Multi Agency events, £44k:** local events to launch, develop and support the CHS Improvement programme, 1 per AST at £2k per event.
- **Programme Board software, £5k:** provision of software to enable efficient management of programme.
- **Leadership Support, £20k:** provision to enable external support to enable a leadership approach that can deliver CHS improvement aims.
- **Trauma-informed, supported and Diverse Panel, £25k:** provision to create a bespoke element to the annual recruitment campaign to drive diversity of applicants with a key focus on those with lived experience of care or the Hearings system.
- **Trauma-informed training, £67.5k:** provision of a programme comprising online modules for the community and expert-facilitated discussion sessions online via webinars.
- **Pastoral support, £15k:** a form of counselling, available for community members to call upon, to provide emotional support. Discussions are underway with a variety of providers.
- **PDA overhaul, £20k:** as per the five year plan.

4. Recommendation

4.1 The Board is asked to approve the Capital budget:

Capital	
Devices pilot expansion	£140k
PPA devices	£70k
Scots tech refresh	£5k
Total	£215 k (+125k)

4.2 The Board is asked to note indicative spending plans for in-year additional grant in aid.

Agenda Item 10. CHS-2021-04

CHS Community Hub - Transition Support Model & Year 1 of Live

Accountable Director: Head of Strategy, Development and DCE
Report author: Lynne Harrison, DCE
Resources Within available resources
implications:
Recommendation For consideration and Approval
Equalities duties: Equalities Impact Assessment Required

Yes

No

1. Introduction:

This paper identifies:

1. The plans for the CHS launch of the Community Hub
2. The proposed support model to support the transition to live of the CHS Community Hub;
3. The ongoing CHS digital management during year 1 of Live.

2. Background:

CHS and SCRA embarked on a joint digital development programme in 2018 with Leidos. CHS successfully launched it's first phase (sharepoint Landing Page, O365 e mail and MS Teams) in Feb '20. The launch of the CHS Community Hub, originally scheduled for March 2020, was delayed to enable contractual issues (quality of SCRA functional development and platform and ongoing technical and customer support arrangements) to be addressed. A route to address issues has been agreed and is now in train.

3. Launch Planning – Transition Phase:

Launch of the Community Hub is being undertaken by a phased approach. The approach although similar to original launch plans, is being undertaken in a much reduced timescale, with the majority of ASTs launching during August 2020.

Vanguard

w/c 29th June 2020*

Edinburgh; Aberdeen City; Shetland;
CHSLA; National Team

Deployment 2

3rd August 2020* Phase 2
10th August 2020* Phase 3
17th August 2020* Phase 4
24th August 2020* Phase 5

Remaining ASTs will be launched
in a phased pattern through August

*dates TBC

4. Transition Support Model:

Support over the transition to live period will require greater focus and intensity than ongoing BAU activity. A number of support resources will be in place for a short period to support the transition phase:

- 1 x 1 year fixed term MS systems technical support
- 2 x short term MS systems technical support resources to cover the launch period
- The CHS Digital Team (Douglas, Nicola and Ian) will be on hand to provide customer service and some technical support
- The Business Support Team will be on hand to provide customer service cover
- Digital Champions (>30 now in place) will be trained and able to offer Community Hub support locally and nationally via Teams. ASTs will be asked to consider further boosting their digital champions teams during the launch period.
- CHSLA trainers will be utilised to provide workshop and additional support for CHS services (see below)
- A dedicated Community Hub Launch Channel will be created on Teams to funnel support questions. Digital Champions and CHS Digital Team will be asked to monitor the channel and field requests, escalating into the CHS National Team if they cannot be solved or are technical issues.
- Additional support will also be provided by The Scottish Tech Army (STA). Teams of volunteers of digital experts who have signed up to support public sector and charitable activity whilst the country is impacted by Covid-19. We are seeking to secure 66 individuals to support the transition period.
- CHSLA online Community Hub training modules.

5.1 Pro-Active Support Model:

Launch of Teams and e mail in February 2020 to all 3000 volunteers identified that while some coped well with launch instructions, some struggled and needed additional support and while the majority of users logged on and access the system reasonable quickly, a portion of the community have taken some time to engage, however usage of Teams is now above 80%.

Access to the Community Hub requires all users to set up Multi factor Authentication (MFA), an additional log in step to allow access from the CHS Tenancy landing page into Community Hub services.

To facilitate speed of uptake and minimise the requirement A pro-active approach to launch is being proposed whereby volunteers are allocated a virtual 'slot' for logging on to the Community Hub.

Managed by CHSLA, slots would consist of a virtual Teams MFA workshop moderated by a Digital Champion, CHSLA Trainer, CHS Digital Team or STA Volunteer.

As well as setting up MFA the workshops will enable a direction to check personal details and complete Equalities information to enable us to map community diversity.

5. Digital Management and Support Model – Transition and Year 1

The joint digital delivery programme has enabled CHS a new sharepoint landing page, MS O365 e mail and MS Teams platform – The CHS Tenancy. This Tenancy sits outside the overall CSAS development. This tenancy requires to be appropriately

managed to ensure data held is up to date and technical maintenance ensures its ongoing security. In addition the Microsoft platform and ongoing MS investment and development enables CHS future potential to enhance the platform and the functions it offers.

The CHS Community Hub – functional services to support CHS business activity sit within the CSAS development. The CSAS platform will be managed by the SCRA IT Team. Although separate, there is a technical relationship between the 2 sites and It is vital for the CHS team understand the potential impact on each site when making technical changes.

CHS' response to these support and ongoing management needs is identified in Diagram 1.

Key changes are:

1. The addition of a new fixed term post – Digital Technical Development Lead, bringing expert MS systems knowledge and enabling coaching and mentoring for the CHS digital team.
2. Creation of a **Digital Programme Board** to enable internal governance and strategic oversight of backlog and pipeline development for CHS Tenancy and CSAS platforms. (Appendix 1)

The Board will receive:

- User acceptance/feedback data from Business Owners and Digital Engagement Lead
- Improvement/Development requests from Business Owners, CHS Active Implementation Group

Reporting into SMT, the Board would be responsible for:

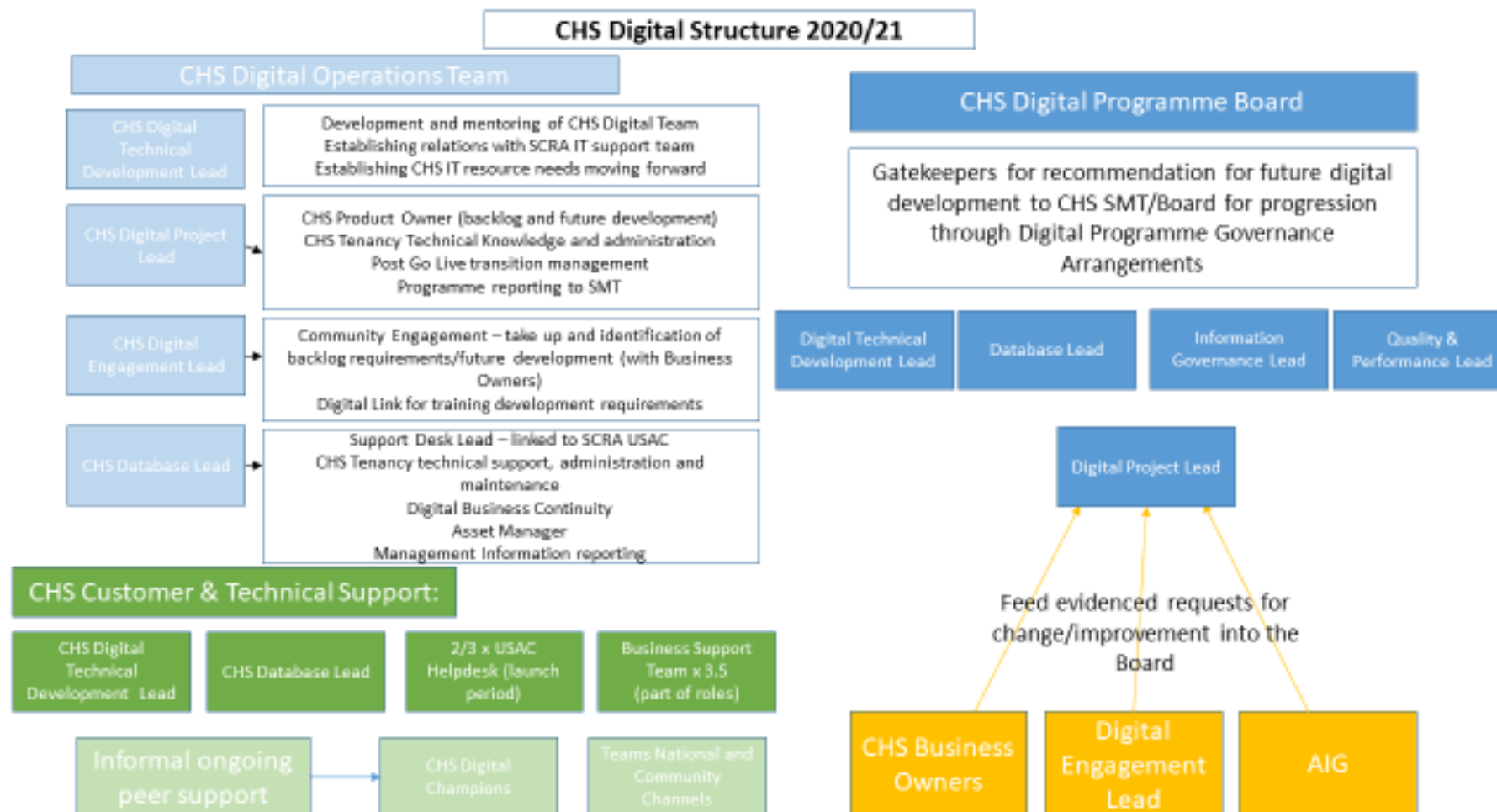
- Reporting on Benefits realisation KPIs.
- Agreeing structure and process for Management Information Reporting
- Reviewing and recommending the priority of change/improvement requests
- Assessing and identifying the impact of requests on wider technical and functional areas

This approach will enable CHS SMT to take forward strategic recommendations for development/improvement to the CHS Tenancy and for CSAS functional areas to the Digital Delivery Board (assuming this structure remains in place) for wider governance consideration.

6. Next Steps:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Secure appointment of Technical Development Lead | June 20 |
| 2. Implement Transition to live support plans | July/August 20 |
| 3. Implement CHS Programme Board | July 20 |

Appendix 1



Agenda Item 10 CHS-2021-08

Accountable SMT member: Head of Strategy, Development and DCE
Report author: Laura Conachan
Resources implications: Within available resources
Purpose: For consideration and approval
Equalities duties: Equalities Impact Assessment Required

Yes?

No

Digital Device Pilot Expansion

Introduction

This seeks Board approval for the expansion of the previously agreed digital devices pilot to 500 devices (previously 100) at an additional cost of £140k to support CHS response to virtual hearings and the anticipated uplift in hearing scheduling requirements in late 2020.

Background

The Board approved a Digital Devices Business Case pilot (May '20) to provide devices to 100 devices to Panel Members to support virtual hearings activity and to enable rigorously test digital Hearing Information Packs (HIP) and the deployment model offered by XMA the framework provider.

The extended lockdown period of COVID-19 and the routemap phasing of easing restrictions requires that virtual attendance at hearings will need to be in place for the medium to long term, even with the move to re-instate an element of face to face participation.

Due to the impact of Covid on scheduling we anticipate a significant uplift in hearing activity in the autumn of 2020 which will require careful management with SCRA to resource. We will need a fully capable and resourced virtual and face to face panel at this time to meet the anticipated demand.

Proposal

To date, CHS has ordered 100 devices which will support 4% of Panel Members. This number is not sufficient to ensure we can meet the anticipated uplift in demand of virtual hearings as 2020 progresses. It is proposed that the pilot is expanded from to 500 devices to enable a well resourced panel to meet the needs of scheduling and virtual hearings. Equipping 20% of the Panel community will help to build this much-needed capacity and enable a more robust pilot of the deployment model on offer.

Drivers

The drivers to provide devices now are:

1. Virtual hearings have given rise to a fundamental shift in the volunteering proposition. The digital expectations on Panel Members have transformed

significantly and every Panel Member must now have a suitable digital device to enable them to fulfil their volunteering role.

During the pandemic, there is currently no option to participate in hearings in person and no capacity within the Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration (SCRA) to provide all paperwork in hard copy.

Although SCRA are planning the return to face to face hearings, the requirements of social distancing and track, trace and isolate with require a virtual attendance model to remain in place for some considerable time. The requirement to work digitally remains a priority and volunteers must be supported to continue in this virtual role.

To date, a proportion of our volunteers have taken part in a significant number of children's hearings. These volunteers all have appropriate personal devices to enable them to do so. As virtual hearings expand and become more complex, a larger pool of Panel Members will be required to build in the resilience needed to keep children's hearings operational. Without providing devices to those who require them, the lack of appropriate IT will negatively impact the number of hearings able to take place.

2. SCRA have chosen Vscene and Objective Connect as their digital solutions to enable children's hearings to take place virtually. The basic functions of both platforms are device agnostic and can be used on a mobile phone, tablet, laptop or desktop. However, the basic functions do not permit a chairing Panel Member to carry out their duties effectively.

On Vscene, smart phones and tablets are restricted to viewing a maximum of four participants. This was manageable when only three Panel Members and a Children's Reporter were invited to virtual children's hearings. Now, with participative virtual hearings, there are more individuals attending, many of whom will not be visible to other attendees. Not being able to see the child or other participants is a barrier to inclusion and participation as those who have spoken recently are visible on screen, leaving those who may need encouraged to participate off-screen and invisible for the entire hearing. Larger devices, such as laptops, can view six participants at one time, plus yourself. Viewing seven participants at one time would allow the chairing Panel Member manage the hearing more effectively by encouraging participation, responding to body language and being alert to any loss of connection.

The chairing Panel Member is also required to complete the Record of Proceedings on Objective Connect. The edit function of Objective Connect is not compatible with iPhones or iPads which are used by a large number of volunteers. The chairing Panel Member must have access to a laptop or desktop device to fulfil their role.

3. Due to the impact of Covid-19 and the move to virtual technology, the number of hearings taking place currently is lower than normally anticipated levels. The number of hearings will require to increase substantially later in 2020 to meet demand of deferrals and the anticipated increase in children and families who will

need support as a direct impact of Covid-19. We will need a fully capable and resourced virtual and face to face panel at this time to meet the anticipated demand.

- Purchasing Chromebooks via the Scottish Government Frameworks not only provides the best value for money but includes the licence which allows the devices to be managed remotely by CHS and set up to our specification. This is essential for such a large device estate. However, due to unprecedented demand, delivery of devices via the Framework can take up to 8 weeks. There is a need for CHS to action the increase the number of devices ordered now to enable devices to be in place in time for the anticipated increase in scheduling later in 2020.

A questionnaire is currently in the field to help us identify how best to allocate devices to our community looking at those who are unable to access a device as a priority followed by those who have access to a device but that may just a smartphone or be old technology.

Device Choice and Cost

Chromebooks have been selected from the Scottish Government Framework Agreements based on their low cost and the ability for remote management of all devices from one location. Indeed these have become the 'go to' device for Covid responses for many agencies including significant orders to support the education sector.

The devices have been tested on the CSAS test environment, Vscene and Objective Connect and meet the technical specification required by each. XMA are the Framework supplier for Chromebooks.

	Standard	
HP Chromebook 14A G6 A4-9120C 4GB/32GB 3Yr (7DF07EA)	£	173.10
Extended 5 year warranty	£	22.89
Chrome Management Licence (Enterprise) Lifetime	£	79.04
Asset tagging	£	3.00
Set up/enrolment	£	3.00
15" case	£	8.00
Delivery	£	6.50
TOTAL COST PER UNIT	£	295.53
TOTAL COST PER UNIT INCLUDING VAT	£	346.84

The total cost for purchase and delivery of an additional 400 standard Chromebooks will be £138,736.

Financially, this proposition is within CHS' overall 2020/21 GIA revenue settlement due to the additional award of £500k revenue in year.

This additional award was premised on CHS' 5 year financial plan in which £186k had been identified as a requirement for digital support to the Panel Community.

The Scottish Government have indicated their support of the pilot expansion and costs involved as being within available resource and acknowledge that this may require capitalisation of revenue funds in year.

Recommendation

The Board are asked to approve the capital spend of £140k to enable children's hearings to continue to operate virtually and meet the anticipated increased need in support for children and families, with appropriately equipped Panel Members.

Agenda Item 11 CHS-2021-09

Date of Meeting	23 June 2020
Paper Number	CHS-2021-09
Title	Equality Outcomes Report (2020 – 2022)
Purpose	To seek approval from the Board on content and publication of the above equality reports
Consultation	Senior Management, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group, National Team, CHS Volunteer Community
Author(s)	Sinead Lammie – HR/OD Lead
Line Manager(s)	Lynne Harrison – Business Manager
Contact Details	Sinead.lammie@chs.gsi.gov.uk

1. Background Information

CHS became a listed authority further to the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2015, and so we have a specific duty to publish a new Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes report every four years, giving progress updates at 2 yearly intervals.

The equality outcomes reports consist of a set of clear, measurable and time-bound equality outcomes that are linked to supporting at least one of the x9 protected characteristic. Since our latest progress report, we now recognise a 10th protected characteristic, namely 'care experienced'.

Since the production of the last Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes report, CHS has formed its own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group that consists of members from various grades and functions within the national team, is sponsored by a member of our Senior Management team at Executive Grade and is led by a colleague at Senior Management Grade. We also have representation from our volunteer community Area Support teams with the membership of one Area Convener at present.

This collective group have taken on the responsibility of developing in consultation with the National Team and our wider CHS Community at set of Equality Outcomes that support the drive to meet all of our general equality duties

2.2 Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report (2020 – 2022)

The reports present a set of 3 over-arching Equality Outcomes that are then broken down into smaller, tangible outcomes. The outcomes, while ambitious, are also designed to be pragmatic, achievable and importantly, proportionate to an organization with a resource of 39 employees, supporting a CHS community of almost 3000 volunteers.

3. Additional information

3.1 Equality reports are usually due to be published by end of April, however the Equality and Human Rights Commission advised listed authorities in their letter of 8 April 2020, that the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 includes provisions which give relevant public authorities the power to postpone compliance with a statutory duty and where the report has not already been approved, to instead consider publishing in

draft and then publishing your final products as soon as reasonably practicable. Following SMT approval, this report is currently published on our website in their draft format.

4. Recommendations

4.1 it is recommended that the Board approves the content of the Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes report (2020-2022)

Agenda Item 12. CHS-2021-10

Quarter 1 Performance Report

Accountable SMT member: Head of Strategy, Development & DCE
Report author: National Quality & Performance Lead
Resources implications: Within available resources
Purpose: For note
Equalities duties: Equalities Impact Assessment Required

Yes? No

1. Introduction / Purpose:

This paper describes developments made to the quarterly performance report for Quarter 1 (April-June 2020), which this cover note accompanies.

2. Context:

Over the course of last year, a number of changes were made the format of the quarterly performance reports to improve their transparency, clarity and make it easier to track progress. Specifically:

- (1) New colour indicators have been added – BLUE for actions that are completed and WHITE for actions that are not due to have started or be reported on.
- (2) Introduction of activity summary table on the front page.
- (3) Colour Status of each action shown both for the current quarter and the past quarters of the year.
- (4) Past performance of KPIs included in the report.

This new iteration of the quarterly reports builds on these developments and aims to move CHS' performance monitoring further towards transparent programme management methods.

3. New Format

The 2020/21 Business and Corporate Parenting Plan introduced milestones to our organisational planning. To reflect this, the quarterly reports now include specific progress reports against the milestones, and the overall Business Objective is given a RAG status based on the progress of the milestones and the likelihood of delivering the entire Objective:

1. For the milestone due for reporting, a completion % is given.

	Business Objective	Status				Actions / Milestones / Deliverables	Time scales / Target	% Complete	Update
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
1	Better understand how the UNCRC can be realised in CHS's work and reflect on our current performance by producing our first UNCRC Realisation Report					1.1 Develop a framework/approach for reporting on our progress on the realisation of UNCRC	Complete by end Q2	30%	
						1.2 Publish the UNCRC Realisation Report with recommendations for further work	Complete by end Q3	-	
						1.3 Begin to implement recommendations	Progress to end Q4	-	

2. A short narrative update on the milestone is given.

	Business Objective	Status				Actions / Milestones / Deliverables	Timescales / Target	% Complete	Update
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
1	Better understand how the UNCRC can be realised in CHS's work and reflect on our current performance by producing our first UNCRC Realisation Report					1.1 Develop a framework/approach for reporting on our progress on the realisation of UNCRC	Complete by end Q2	30%	Initial planning has taken place and draft of CHS' UNCRC duties produced
						1.2 Publish the UNCRC Realisation Report with recommendations for further work	Complete by end Q3	-	
						1.3 Begin to implement recommendations	Progress to end Q4	-	

3. Based on the progress of the milestones, the overall Objective a status in the relevant quarter based on the key below. 100% completion of all the milestones that make up the Objective would mean the Objective is complete.

Key:
Blue = Objective completed
Green = Objective on track to be completed on time / budget
Amber = Objective at risk of not being delivered on time / budget
Red = Objective at serious risk of not being delivered on time / budget

	Business Objective	Status				Actions / Milestones / Deliverables	Timescales / Target	% Complete	Update
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
1	Better understand how the UNCRC can be realised in CHS's work and reflect on our current performance by producing our first UNCRC Realisation Report					1.1 Develop a framework/approach for reporting on our progress on the realisation of UNCRC	Complete by end Q2	30%	Initial planning has taken place and draft of CHS' UNCRC duties produced
						1.2 Publish the UNCRC Realisation Report with recommendations for further work	Complete by end Q3	-	
						1.3 Begin to implement recommendations	Progress to end Q4	-	

In keeping with adopting an approach that allows our planning and delivery to adapt to changing circumstances, and for this to be done transparently, page 13 includes a record of changes made to planned activities.

This approach to reporting will be kept under review and improvements and refinements made where necessary.

In addition to the Business Plan and performance report, there is an operational spreadsheet that identifies the accountable roles / teams for each objective and milestone and will be used to track any changes to actions that may be proposed.

3. Board Action:

The Board are asked to note the content of report and give any feedback that may improve the new revised format.

Agenda Item 13. CHS-2021-11

Independent Reports: June 2020

Accountable SMT member:	Head of Practice, Improvement and Learning
Report author:	Laura Conachan
Resources implications:	Within available resources
Purpose:	For note
Equalities duties:	Equalities Impact Assessment Required

Yes?

No

Independent Report Function Update

This report provides an update of the development of the Independent Reports function which now resides with Children's Hearings Scotland. On 1st April, responsibility for this function transferred to CHS however CELCIS agreed to facilitate report requests with the previous Bank of report writers until 1st June while CHS robustly established a new Bank.

CHS Board are asked to note the report.

1. Recruitment and Selection of Independent Report Writers

1.1 51 applications were received, of which 30 were shortlisted for interview. Interviews took place virtually between 18th and 29th May. Candidates were provided with a hypothetical report request and were asked to prepare a breakdown of activity, time and costs to form part of the discussion at interview. The quality of candidates was high with applications from a wide field of expertise such as children and families social work, criminal justice social work, art therapy, mental health, education, clinical, educational and forensic psychology and psychiatry.

1.2 In order facilitate report requests without delay, it was identified that approximately 20 report writers would be required to meet demand. 21 successful individuals will be invited to join the Bank with conditional offers being made in early June. Confirmation of registration with the relevant professional body such as the SSSC will be required, in addition to two references and a PVG.

Appointments to the Bank will be for two years with the option of renewal at the end of the appointment period. Two years is the required period to demonstrate the completion of information governance training to the Information Commissioner's Office and all report writers must complete this pre-appointment and before any future reappointment.

1.3 A further pool of 12 interested individuals have requested to be contacted directly the next time new Bank members are required. This should reduce the need for another formal recruitment campaign and will allow CHS to add individuals to the Bank when needed in response to the numbers, locations and types of requests being requested.

2. Establishment of the Bank

2.1 In order to provide report requests to only those individuals with substantial and specific expertise in those areas, 1:1 induction meetings will take place with each Bank member to identify and agree their areas of expertise and any potential areas of conflict.

2.2 An online induction for all report writers will be scheduled in early July once all checks have been undertaken. It is possible that three inductions will take place for social workers, education professionals and psychologists separately. Inductions will cover the ethos of the Children's Hearings System, the role of CHS and the practicalities of the role. It will also allow Bank members to meet each other to begin to build that network.

3. Information Governance

3.1 Advice has been sought from Katie Crone Barber, Information Governance Lead, as to the requirements for Independent Report Writers. Decisions will be taken in the coming weeks on key areas based on the response from the Information Commissioner's Office and CHS digital developments.

3.2 Child-friendly privacy notices are required to explain to children and families who Independent Report Writers are, what they will do with their information, who will have access to it and how they will process that information. A small leaflet which can be left with children and families is the intention however with no face to face meetings or report requests since lockdown began, this is not being prioritised at present.

4. Practice Standards and Expectations

4.1 All shortlisted candidates were provided with a copy of the CHS Practice Standards and Expectations to enable them to fully understand the unique role of the Independent Report Writer. They appear to have been warmly received and have been referenced throughout the interviews. The framework was created after consultation with existing report writers but is intended to develop over time in conjunction with the new Bank.

The main provisions address:

4.1.1 Practice Standards: The standards are the minimum expectations a family, professionals and Panel Members should expect from an Independent Report Writer. They closely echo CHS's values and set standards around being Child-Centred, Independent, Respectful and Confidentiality.

4.1.2 Quality Management: As report requests are fulfilled, CHS will have access to the independent reports for the first time and will be able to develop the quality management framework by sampling completed reports. We will also have the time and date of the hearings for the first time and be able to seek direct feedback from Panel Members about the standard of reports.

4.1.3 Practice Network: Applicants have been especially keen to meet and learn from other independent experts. This is a unique opportunity for them to

standardise tools, share thinking and improve assessments with other highly skilled practitioners from across the country. For CHS, it will provide valuable information and insight into the need for these reports, the reasons why they are being requested and whether they are being used appropriately in Panel Member decision-making to inform Panel Member guidance.

5. Panel Member Guidance

5.1 The overarching intention is to shift Panel Members away from requesting “a clinical psychologist” to thinking about the specific questions they need answered in order to come to a substantive decision. As part of this work, Panel Members will complete a standard request form after a hearing which will allow the Independent Report Co-ordinator to commission the most appropriate individual, taking into account their skills and expertise.

5.2 An update to the Practice and Procedure Manual (PPM) was planned for Q1 which would have included updated information on requesting independent reports. Due to COVID-19, this was overtaken by the need to produce a Coronavirus Practice Guide therefore a full PPM update is not expected until Q2/3.

The June CHS Community newsletter will include a short overview of the report function to explain the recruitment campaign and will direct Panel Members back to the existing guidance. It will also trail that we are reviewing our guidance on deferring for additional reports.

5.3 There is still no anticipated implementation date for section 77 of the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 which creates a duty for Panel Members to consider the need for additional reports when considering deferring a decision. The guidance in the PPM update will address this along with more detailed and robust guidance on all types of additional reports which may help decision-making but which may also add unnecessary drift and delay. This includes Safeguarder’s reports as well as local authority reports and independent reports.

5.4 A joint workshop to inform the guidance was intended for Spring with social workers and Panel Members in Grampian who were recently involved with independent report cases. This was not progressed due to COVID-19 but a similar online discussion will be arranged when appropriate.

5.5 There is also a need to understand the extent of Panel Members requesting independent reports but requiring the Local Authority pay for them under section 83(2)(j) of the 2011 Act which requires “the implementation authority carry out specified duties in relation to the child.” This has occurred several times in East Lothian recently but may be more widespread. This is potentially due to a lack of understanding of the independent report process by Panel Members, by Children’s Reporters recording the decision under section 83(2)(j) as opposed to Rule 61(1)(b) or there may be valid reasons why a local authority is being asked this. In any case, this scale of this issue and how it may affect the independent report budget in future needs to be explored.

6. Memorandum of Understanding with SCRA

6.1 When responsibility for facilitating independent reports was split between CHS, SCRA, CELCIS and the Scottish Government, a multi-agency MoU was essential. Now that CHS has full responsibility for the function and SCRA have a small facilitative role, it was considered whether a formal MoU was required at all.

SCRA report that solicitors and other parties have requested a copy of the MoU to understand how report writers are selected and funded. Therefore, in the spirit of transparency, a MoU is required to be available for other parties to understand how Independent Report Writers are appointed. The legislation referred to in the MoU will require updating later in the year and the need for a MoU will be revisited. Other options, such as including information on CHS's website, will be considered as alternatives.

6.2 Before the National Convener and Principal Reporter are asked to sign the new Memorandum of Understanding, further discussions are taking place with the SCRA Practice Team to agree all aspects of the new process. CHS are also asking SCRA to streamline some of their own internal practices which add some non-essential steps in the process. It is hoped that agreement can be reached without the need for a Scottish Statutory Instrument but this still may be required to bring Independent Reports in line with official National Convener functions.

7. CHS Internal Guidance

7.1 The internal guidance which governs independent report requests is been fully updated and will provide the process for the Independent Report Co-ordinator to manage the function. This will cover all internal processes such as communications, commissions, payments and fees. A process for future recruitment and reappointment will also be included.

7.2 It should also be noted that while there is still significant work to be undertaken to fully establish the Bank such as the lone-working policy, privacy notices, drafting the terms and conditions per commission, writing Panel Member guidance, and recruiting an Independent Report Co-ordinator. With the exception of staff recruitment, all work is expected to be complete by early July.

8. Recommendation and Timescales

8.1 The recommendation is that the Board note the report and the timescales.

CHS Board Meeting

Tuesday 23 June 2020

Agenda Item 14. CHS-2021-12

2020 Panel Member Recruitment Campaign

Accountable Director: Christine Mullen, Head of Practice, Improvement and Learning

Report author: Catherine Goodfellow/Sarah Hunter Argyle/
Michael Beardmore

Recommendation: To approve the options proposed

Resources implications: Within available resources

Equalities duties: Equalities Impact Assessment Required: **Yes / No**
Equalities Impact Assessment Carried out: **Yes / No**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper provides background to be presented to the CHS Board in support of the recommendation to delay the annual CHS Panel Member recruitment campaign until early 2021.
- 1.2 This recommendation has been reached as a result of feedback, consultations and input from CHS forums, colleagues and the Senior Management Team over the past ten weeks. This included in-depth examination of current, and projected, data of the Panel Member community; how the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has affected our own community; and the limitations the external environment and Government restrictions including the published route map to transition from lockdown may impose on the traditional annual recruitment campaign.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The purpose of our annual Panel Member recruitment campaign is to recruit empathetic and committed volunteers who reflect Scotland's communities to make high quality decisions for our infants, children and young people and their families.
- 2.2 Traditionally, since 2013 this campaign has been held between August until November attracting almost three times the number of volunteers required. The campaign is driven nationally by a promotional and creative

campaign which is then delivered locally by the Area Support Teams and Clerking teams.

- 2.3 Trainees Panel Members have been normally appointed in November to undertake a 14 week Pre Service Training course, delivered by the CHS Learning Academy between December and April with appointments made in May. New Panel Members are then included on the hearings rota early in June.

3 2020 Recruitment Campaign and Programme Planning

- 3.1 To operate an effective nationwide campaign, which meets our ambitious CHS *Strategic Outlook* vision and objectives and equalities outcomes, responds and delivers on The Promise, the Independent Care Review findings, while continuing to deliver empathetic Panel Members, our planning needs to focus on:

- including young people to shape and embed meaningful participation throughout all of our recruitment activities with our Area Support Teams;
- engaging with employers and partners to encourage a greater diversity of applicants to become Panel Member volunteers;
- targeting those with previous personal lived experience of the hearings system to become Panel Member volunteers; and,
- extensive training for all recruitment selectors to appoint diverse and empathetic volunteers.

4 2020 Environment

- 4.1 Determining whether CHS should proceed with a high-profile, nationwide campaign for new Children's Panel Members in autumn 2020, the current landscape and environment has been closely reviewed including:

- how coronavirus pandemic will impact the next 9-12 months, both in terms of physical distancing restrictions and societal attitudes.
- taking cognisance of the long terms effects of Covid 19 creating a back log of hearings as only urgent and emergency hearings will have taken place for a period of several months.
- the detail and impact of the emergency legislation and length of time it will be in place (for instance, Panels led by 1-2 people or relaxation of gender requirements).
- the impact of other high profile national campaigns seeking volunteers (e.g. Scotland Cares).
- as a non-departmental public body (NDPB), adherence to Scottish Government directives regarding unprecedented restrictions on the

movement of people and the operation of businesses, including physical distancing, shielding and restrictions on public gatherings.

- 4.2 Assessing the current context and how to objectively reach a decision on whether to deliver a national volunteer recruitment campaign we worked within a framework basing any decision on:
- 4.2.1 AST capacity and readiness: how Covid-19 has affected the health and well-being of our own individual community members. The limited capacity of Clerking Teams, so integral to a successful recruitment campaign and related activities, working outwith an office environment.
 - 4.2.2 whether there would be any financial or budgetary implications or limitations.
 - 4.2.3 ensuring CHS decisions, as a non departmental public body, would be in line with the guidance within the Government Decision Making Framework.
 - 4.2.4 the delivery on our CHS *Strategic Outlook* and our contribution to The Promise, the findings from the Independent Care Review and recruit quality, empathetic Panel Members.
 - 4.2.5 the operation of hearings.
 - 4.2.5 the expectations on the CHS Learning Academy.

5 Community Consultation

- 5.1 Throughout the review period we have had regular feedback from the Community on the potential impact of delaying recruitment. This has included:
- discussion with Area Conveners at the Area Conveners' Leadership Group;
 - discussion with members of the Recruitment and Retention Reference Group (RRRG);
 - discussion with the Clerks' network; and
 - feedback from number of Area Support Teams members.
- 5.2 There was initially some disquiet that there may have been a decision to not recruit at all. While this may have seemed to be a short term solution for 2020, in-depth analysis evidenced that the full impact would not be felt until April 2022: Panel Member numbers could reduce by 25%, to approx 1,800 with a similar number of hearings still being held.
- 5.3 A number of options were discussed within our decision making framework such as re-appointing previous Panel Members, running more localised

campaigns, a campaign at the traditional period but limited in all ways. However, by reflecting on the core purpose and asks on the recruitment campaign and activities and that with the greatest return on investment, the most effective delivery of the campaign will be to delay until January 2021.

- 5.4 While in initial discussions some ASTs were wary of the option of delaying the full campaign, there is now greater support. There is an improved understanding of the negative impacts of running a campaign in August & September, building awareness of the opportunities delay brings, as well as the mitigation strategies we are aiming to put in place (i.e. to include new Panel Member on the rota by August rather than traditionally in June).

6 Benefits to Campaign Delay

- 6.1 Our key consideration throughout this process is maximising the impact of the campaign (i.e. receiving high quality applicants) to the general public. We know of the increased interest in January, from the expression of interests in volunteering with the Children's Panel.
- 6.2 Delaying the campaign creates the opportunity to refresh recruitment processes and activities which have been in place since the inception of CHS in 2013, developing and shaping it alongside young people with personal experience of the hearings system.
- 6.3 Building on our focus to include young people with personal experience of the hearings system in all our recruitment activities at an AST level needs time to build partnerships, offer practical guidance and embed this approach – which had been started but interrupted by lockdown.
- 6.4 By delaying, a greater and more focused engagement with employers and partners will allow to encourage the release of employees to volunteer and in turn, encourage a greater diversity of individuals to become Panel Members.
- 6.5 An opportunity to review and review the training and development of potential Panel Members delivered by the CHS Learning Academy.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 Any delay proposed intends to remain within the current financial year.
- 7.2 The creative and communication budget was already set at the outset of 2020/2021 and would be expended before and during the campaign itself, which is indicatively suggested to be from January – February.
- 7.3 Contractual arrangements with creative and media buying agencies have built in delivery at different timescales.

8 Area Support Teams Implications

- 8.1 The proposal is to delay the campaign by five months but for any impact upon the ASTs to be minimised with the inclusion to the rota of new Panel Members to later in the summer. Traditionally, Panel Members have been

included on the rota early June but often do not have the opportunity to sit on hearings at a time when there are fewer hearings or are cancelled. The aim would be to have Panel Members included on the rota by August rather than June.

8.2 Support and practical guidance for AST members involved in recruitment will be focused through diversity training, through the Children's Rights & Inclusion Strategy work and specific training support to accommodate blended selection processes (virtual or face to face).

8.3 Clerking Teams may also have greater access to Council facilities by 2021.

9 National Training Implications

9.1 Delaying recruitment would mean a subsequent delay in the training of new recruits. This offers the opportunity as identified above to make changes to this national training programme, and others, including the migration of more of our existing course content – primarily the knowledge components - online, reserving face to face training for the development and assessment of key practice skills. It also gives the opportunity to build training on trauma into a new curriculum for trainees.

10 Recommendation and Rationale

10.1 The recommendation to be presented to the CHS Board is to delay the Panel Member Recruitment campaign until January 2021. The AST community has been consulted and presented with options and has accepted delay until 2021 as the most realistic approach at this time noting also that it would provide opportunities to do some things differently.

10.2 Rationale:

This global pandemic has created challenges for the overall Children's Hearings system but does also create an opportunity to allow CHS to re-imagine the recruitment activities and explore how we attract individuals who are best suited for this vital decision making role. Delay until January 2021 allows:

- an opportunity to review and renew overall approach to all recruitment activities.
- the campaign to effectively focus on meeting the core purpose to recruit quality and empathetic volunteers.
- an opportunity to continue striving towards appointing Panel Members who reflect Scotland's communities, including establishing the infrastructure to support potential volunteers with personal experience.
- to allow for greater public readiness for a nationwide campaign, building on the positive ethos of community volunteering seen

during the pandemic.

- adherence to prepare for and meet all continuing Government restrictions.
- the opportunity to expend the recruitment budget within the same financial year.
- the opportunity to revise the Pre Service Training curriculum and overall prospectus of training, learning and development for the CHS community, particularly greater trauma informed training.
- minimal impact on ASTs with new Panel Members being included on the rota within 10 weeks of their traditional inclusion from early June.

11 RECOMMENDATION

The CHS Board is asked to agree this recommendation to delay the annual recruitment campaign for Panel Members to January 2021.

Agenda item: 15. CHS-2021-13

Volunteer Well-being Programme

Accountable Director: Chief Executive
Report author: Samina Ansari ASIP
Resources
implications: Within available resources
Recommendation For consideration and Approval
Equalities duties: Equalities Impact Assessment Required

Yes No

Volunteer Wellbeing Assistance Programme

Introduction

This paper recommends that as part of our wellbeing commitment and plan as highlighted in the Strategic Outlook document (pg 10), CHS provide an external and qualified resource that enables the community to feel confident, supported and able to fulfil their role to the best of their ability, ensuring good decisions are made for our young people and children.

Background

Strategic Outlook Theme 3: Continue to Build and Effective, Empathetic Panel, that is well-supported.

Ensure volunteers are supported with the personal and emotional side of their role by introducing a new wellbeing support approach.

Coronavirus has no doubt changed life as we know it. Health and safety has never been more essential, and we're committed to putting wellbeing at the heart of our support to the community, as much as we can during this crisis.

Through regular AC conference calls and Area Partner feedback we're aware some of our community are battling hard-hitting life issues e.g. financial uncertainty, social isolation, family and personal stresses, loss, additional caring responsibilities and more, understandably resulting in lower or no volunteering during this time.

It's important that we invest and adopt a proactive approach to wellbeing and ensure we're supporting our community as much as possible, particularly during a time that will continue to be strenuous on their mental health. It is the ethical thing to do as an organisation, to actively care for the emotional, physical and social wellbeing of our volunteers.

*Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. **It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.** Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. (mentalhealth.gov)*

Despite all the good work that's being done across Scotland to normalise conversations around mental health, there are a number of factors that may deter our community to access support locally through an AST or nationally, including:

- Stigma and negative perceptions surrounding mental health and help-seeking
- LPR (usually point of contact for support) doesn't have the training to provide support; panel members not fully aware of LPR offering other than e.g. rota management
- Absence or lack of information on what wellbeing support and resources are available
- Concern about confidentiality or trust

Please note this resource would not be a 'benefit' of volunteering rather a recognition and response to our duty of care to our volunteers as hearing demand increases and becomes more complex; and may serve to retain panel members, particularly during this ever changing and uncertain time, and with further recruitment not likely to take place until 2021.

Provider Research

A range of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and helpline providers were contacted about the provision of a potential Volunteer Assistance Programme support line for our community. More commonly EAP providers offer confidential information, support and counselling to staff with personal or work-related issues. The service is available 24/7, 365 days and is paid for by the employer. Over the last decade many volunteer led organisations have subscribed to this type of provision, responding to better supporting their volunteers at a fairly low cost per head. Many are members of a professional body*

Findings

Most providers typically:

- offer around 5-6 short term focussed counselling sessions annually, with only a few that provide sessions per issue. Additional counselling sessions can cost approx. £55 – £90 per session.
- provide counsellors that are vetted and qualified.
- have some kind of online support provision, with a few having a dedicated app that's free to download.
- cover life issue support via helpline provision e.g. debt advice, relationships, stress management, work issues, domestic abuse, drug/alcohol addiction, family care and bereavement etc.
- have a 12 month contract
- have a set up time ranging from 48hrs – 2 weeks
- provide management info as standard, though varies from quarterly to twice a yr
- cost between £3.50 - £7 per head

Proposal:

Research has identified Health Assured as the provider that would best meet CHS current requirements:

	Health Assured
No of counselling sessions per issue	6
Online support	app/web access

Helpline support	Standard provision
Triage/Direct	Triage
Clients include	British Red Cross, Victim Support, Action for Children
Lead in time	48hrs
Dedicated Phone Number	Yes
Length of contract	12 months
Awards/Accreditation	Best provider wellbeing 2017,18 and 19; accredited with the workplace wellbeing charter & feefo gold trusted award 2019, 20; BACP accredited
Cost per head	£2.94 excl vat

Recommendation

The Board approves a volunteer wellbeing assistance programme for our CHS community with *Health Assured* as the provider of choice.

* The professional body for the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) industry in the UK is the UK EAPA, which is responsible for promoting the interests of the industry, setting standards for delivery of EAP services and fostering the development of EAPs

Agenda Item: 16: CHS-2021-14

Children's Rights and Inclusion Strategy

Accountable SMT member:	Head of Strategy and Depute CEO
Report author:	Donna Martin, Area Partner, Beth Anne Logan, Board Member/Adviser
Resources implications:	Within available resources
Purpose:	For Consideration and Approval
Equalities duties:	Equalities Impact Assessment Required
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Introduction and Purpose:

- 1.1 Enclosed with this covering paper is the Children's Rights and Inclusion Strategy for Board approval.

2. Background

- 2.1 This Children's Rights and Inclusion Strategy comes at a particularly exciting time. With the release of our new corporate plan we have been ambitious, forward thinking and challenging like never before and this strategy just adds to the inclusion and collaboration we are seeking to deliver over the next 3 years.
- 2.2 Throughout the changing landscape over the past few years, there has been a clear unequivocal challenge to Scotland's care sector. We must put voice at the centre of all that we do. This strategy aims to ensure that voice is centred and evident in all that we do. We, at Children's Hearing's Scotland are ready to lead this change so that Scotland's children grow up loved, safe, respected and heard so that they can realise their full potential.
- 2.3 The unique way this strategy has been carefully crafted with a blend of people with lived experience of the hearings system, representatives from the panel community and invited experts in participation and engagement ensures that voice has been evident from the very beginning. Where possible we will continue to create and seek out the spaces for voice to help influence, shape and drive this engagement like never before.
- 2.4 We are confident that this is the right approach to take to ensure our children feel able to express their views and with the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law, there has never been a more fitting time to realise and champion our children's rights.
- 2.5 Following approval from board, we would look to consult externally with a range of stakeholders. We propose this would include approaching all Champions Boards or equivalent in each of our 32 local authorities as well as Who Cares? Scotland's membership. Through working in partnership with Children in Scotland over the time of the working group, we have an opportunity through them to invite feedback from a range of professionals in third sector children's organisations who have a the role in policy or participation. And we would also be keen to share the document with CYPSC and his team, and Fiona Duncan if that would be considered appropriate. Staff have also expressed interest in supporting our consultation.

3. Board Actions

- 3.1 The Board are asked to approve the Children's Rights and Inclusion Strategy.



children's
hearings
scotland

Children's Hearings Scotland

Children's Rights and
Inclusion Strategy

2020-2023

DRAFT

FOREWORD or INTRODUCTION



Our Children's Rights and Inclusion Strategy comes to you at a particularly exciting time. With the release of our new corporate plan we have been ambitious, forward thinking and challenging like never before and this strategy just adds to the inclusion and collaboration we are seeking to deliver over the next 3 years.

Throughout the changing landscape over the past few years, there has been a clear unequivocal challenge to Scotland's care sector. We **must** put voice at the centre of all that we do. This strategy aims to ensure that voice is centred and evident in all that we do. We, at Children's Hearing's Scotland are ready to lead this change so that Scotland's children grow up loved, safe, respected and heard so that they can realise their full potential.

The unique way this strategy has been carefully crafted with a blend of people with lived experience of the hearings system, representatives from the panel community and invited experts in participation and engagement ensures that voice has been evident from the very beginning – and that's our commitment to you. Where possible we will continue to create and seek out the spaces for voice to help influence, shape and drive this organisation like never before – Exciting right?! There will soon be a part for everyone across CHS to play in making this strategy a reality.

I am asking the community to be more and more ambitious and we are ready to help support and empower you to be able to help us put this strategy into action, because without you this will not be possible.

I am confident that this is the right approach to take to ensure our children feel able to express their views and with the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law, there has never been a more fitting time to realise and champion our children's rights.

Once again, I want to record my thanks for your unwavering commitment to Scotland's children.

Yours in partnership



Elliot Jackson
National Convener
& CEO

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VISION: CHILDREN'S RIGHTS & INCLUSION



We want a Children's Hearings System that listens, acts and places real value and weight to the voice of infants, children and young people.

A Children's Hearings Scotland where inclusion is central to our core values as an organisation. Voice will be evident in all that we do and will influence how we work internally and with partners.

Infants, children and young people will feel respected, valued, heard and included across all aspects of the Children's Hearings System.

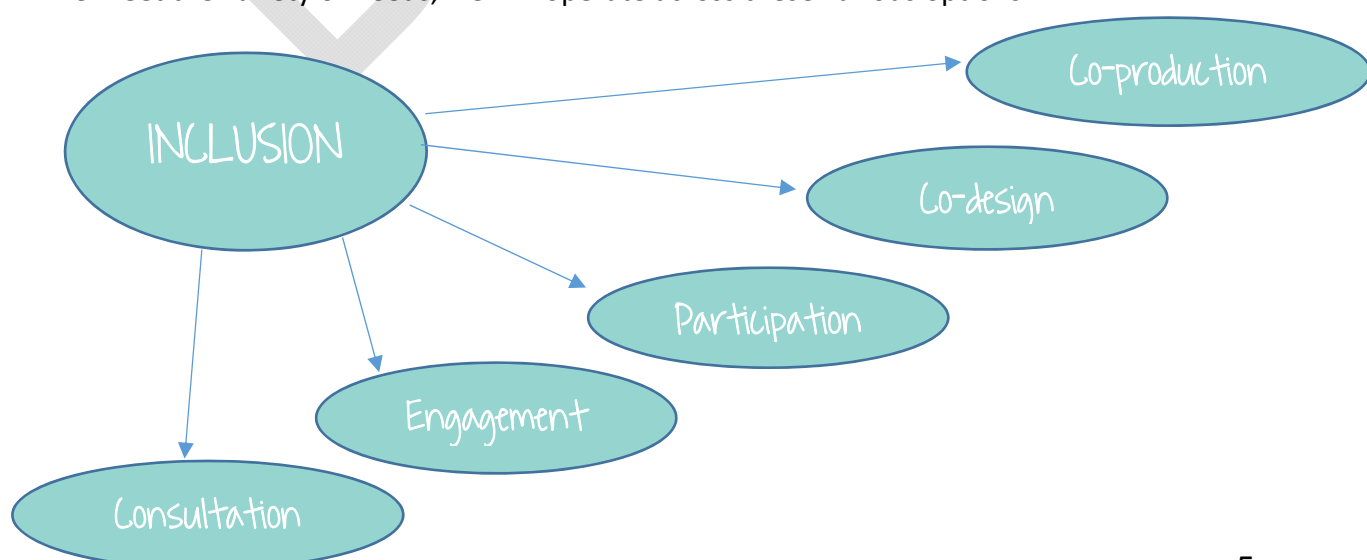
(future reference to child or children includes: infants, children and young people under the age of 18 years)

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

As the Scottish Government announced in 2019 on the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children's rights will be fully incorporated into Scots Law. By the very nature of the decisions that panel members make in securing the best interests of the child, we have a clear understanding of the ways in which decisions will protect and safeguard many human rights of children. This is demonstrated in Appendix 1 showing a number of articles and cluster groups as defined by the United Nations. But we can do more, which this strategy reflects particularly on **Article 12 – the right to be listened to and taken seriously**.

WHAT INCLUSION WILL LOOK LIKE

At Children's Hearings Scotland, we want to embed methods of inclusion that children feel comfortable and confident with, and these may vary from situation to situation. But to ensure we meet the variety of needs, we will operate across these various options:



WHY INCLUSION IS IMPORTANT

There are many reasons inclusion in and beyond children's hearings is important. Namely **Article 12 of the UNCRC – The right to be listened too and taken seriously**. However above and beyond that we have been acutely aware of the challenge of late to Scotland's care sector that people with lived experience receive equity in decision making surrounding their lives and indeed their communities. This strategy seeks to curate an environment where voice is central to all that we do. These are the three key areas CHS can work on to see our vision for Scotland's children realised:

- Most importantly for children in their hearings, where our panel members have the decision making role. For children to feel that it is *their* hearing, where they can choose how to share their views about their lives. Panel members need to know how to make their interaction and communication with children as inclusive as possible, recognising and understanding trauma and its impact as well as being open to the ways that children may choose to share their voice.
- The second area that inclusion is so important is across our Area Support Teams in supporting the delivery of the National Convenor's functions through our volunteer community. The working group considered the current ways that the voices of people with lived experience of the hearings system contribute to the essential roles of recruiting and supporting our local volunteers. They have identified a key way to take this inclusion further and is presented later on in the strategy.
- Finally, the third area relates to the successful functioning operations of Children's Hearings Scotland as an organisation. We need to role model and demonstrate, beginning with the creation of this document, of the ways we can use the methods of consultation, engagement, participation, co-design and co-production to improve our everyday work and practice.

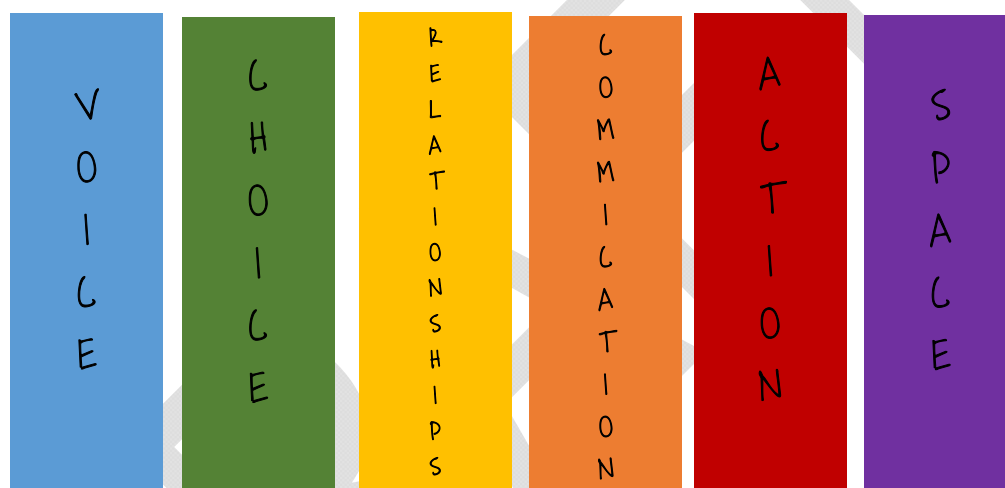
OUTCOMES & PILLARS OF INCLUSION



Children feel able to speak openly, freely and honestly.

Children know that their views are given real weight and listened to in decision-making about their lives.

Children feel empowered and have ownership of their rights.



Our six 'pillars of inclusion' have been identified from people with lived experience of the hearings system as key essentials in reaching our intended three outcomes as shown above. Each and every one is required in combination and collaboration.

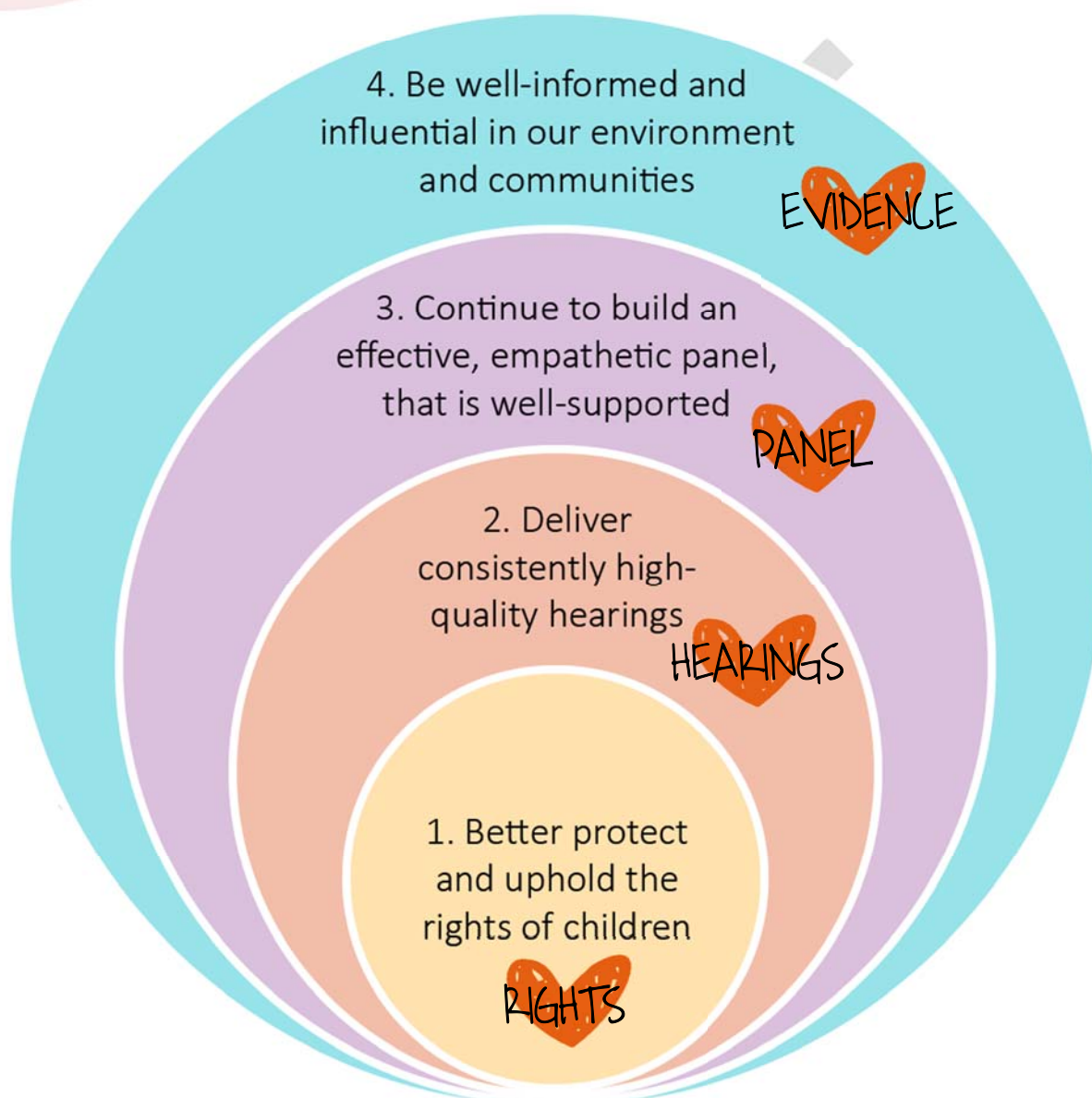
We will demonstrate **why** each pillar is important from a child's perspective and **what** we can all do to make those outcomes a reality. Before finishing with **how** we are going to do it, we will reflect how this strategy works towards The Promise and responding to the wider recommendations of the Independent Care Review.


This strategy is aligned to the core values of Children's Hearings Scotland, being **child-centred, creative, respectful, fair, challenging** and **open**. It is also very importantly coordinated within the strategic themes of our corporate plan, known as *Our Corporate Outlook 2020 – 2023*.

OUR CORPORATE STRATEGIC THEMES



In our new corporate plan, *Our Strategic Outlook 2020-2023*, we set out what our priorities for the next three years will be. We call these our “Strategic Themes” and together, they set out an ambitious, improvement-driven direction for CHS that places children’s rights at its centre. Our Strategic Themes are:



The work outlined in this Children’s Rights and Inclusion Strategy is linked and contributes towards the delivery of these four themes in an approach across our ‘Six Pillars of Inclusion’. Please find the relevant  demonstrating those links and contributions.

VOICE



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WHY?

Throughout my hearings journey...

- The adults around me recognise the need to accept all voices, including mine. [Article 12](#)
- I am supported to express my voice using various different methods e.g. poems, art, videos, technology. [Article 12 & 13](#)
- I feel included and supported to have my voice heard. [Articles 12 & 17](#)
- I feel empowered to use my voice and am supported to do so. [Article 6](#)

WHAT?

Scotland's children and young people have a hearings system that works for them.

- We encourage all children where possible to attend their hearings. If they feel unable to attend, they are supported to have their voice heard through a variety of contemporary methods.

RIGHTS

- Children will have a menu of options to have their voices heard which our panel members will also be trained in how to interpret this.

RIGHTS

- We enable children's voices to be heard and our highly skilled panel members are equipped to facilitate this in a child friendly environment.

The children's hearing system is dynamic and reflective of the community we seek to serve.

EVIDENCE

- We ensure that children and people with lived experience are included in developing, shaping, delivering and reviewing the work and values of Children's Hearings Scotland.

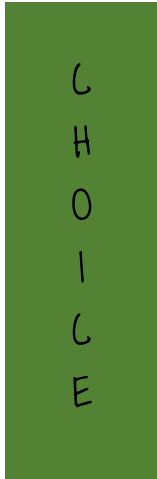
EVIDENCE

- People with lived experience of the hearings system will be included in all volunteer and staff recruitment. We recognise the need for consistency both locally and nationally and thus, will provide a framework and a toolkit educating the community in how to do this fairly, safely and meaningfully.

EVIDENCE

- We truly value the voice of lived experience. We recognise the invaluable experience people with lived experience can bring to improving the children's hearing system for the better.

CHOICE



WHY?

Throughout my hearings journey...

- I have freedom and control over my hearing. *Article 12*
- I have power over where, when and how to get involved. *Article 6 & 9*
- People respect and appreciate my choices. *Article 12 & 29*
- I have freedom over how I express myself. *Article 12 & 30*

WHAT?

Scotland's children and young people have a hearings system that works for them



- Our hearings work for children, giving the choice for children to be included in deciding where and when their hearing takes place that is suitable and meets their needs.

- Children can choose if and how they want to use and integrate their lived experience. This can be within their own hearing or in contribution to our organisation. We have a responsibility to meet them where they are, and provide an open door.



- Children will have the choice to be included in all aspects of the children's hearings system, not just the hearing itself, and they will be supported and encouraged to occupy these spaces.

We are proud of Scotland's unique children's hearing system.



- We embrace the range of inclusion that can be possible in a hearing, and for children who choose to, can have the opportunity to co-design their own hearing.



- We will enable all children's voices to be heard and as such will work with partners on the logistics of creating the space in hearings that facilitates a menu of choices available for children to share their views.

RELATIONSHIPS



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WHY?

Throughout my hearings journey...

- The adults around me understand the impact any trauma may have had on me and make me feel safe. *Article 6, 9, 25 & 39*
- The spaces and language used around me is appropriate and responsive to my needs. *Article 3, 4, 6 & 30*
- My hearings journey feels consistent and meets my needs. *Article 3*
- The people involved in my hearings journey are there because they need to be and care about me. *Article 3, 6 & 25*

WHAT?

Children's Hearings Scotland understand the importance of relationships for children which are based on respect, honesty and trust.

HEARINGS

- We will clearly demonstrate and promote positive behaviours and expectations of panel members through our code of conduct, ensuring children feel safe and empowered within their own hearing.

RIGHTS

- Panel members are trained in how to listen and include children, recognising the challenges some children may face in recovering from trauma. They will embed a children's rights and child-centred approach during the child's hearing.

- We recognise the purpose and importance of continuity and will strive to achieve this by working with partners to provide this for all children.

HEARINGS

- We will work with partners to ensure children attending and contributing towards their hearings are supported by meaningful relationships in creating a positive hearings experience.

The children's hearing system is dynamic and reflective of the community we seek to serve.

EVIDENCE

- We will ensure that children and people with lived experience of the hearings system feel empowered and connected to exert their influence using their personal experiences to improve the hearing's journeys for others.

COMMUNICATION



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WHY?

Throughout my hearings journey...

- People recognise the importance of language and the impact it could have on me. [Article 29, 30 & 39](#)
- Everything is explained clearly and concisely and feels easy to understand. [Article 13 & 17](#)
- People respect my privacy and right to confidentiality. [Article 16](#)
- Children's Hearings Scotland holds question and answer sessions so that I can ask the questions that are important to me. [Article 6, 13 & 17](#)

WHAT?

The inclusion of children throughout their hearings journey is clearly visible through our core values.

RIGHTS

- The inclusion and participation of children and people with lived experience of the hearings system must be the golden thread running through all everyday operational business at Children's Hearings Scotland.

RIGHTS

- All language used throughout the hearings process is accessible, child friendly, and easily understood. Where this is not possible, everything is explained to the child in an age and stage appropriate manner.

PANEL

We are proud of Scotland's unique children's hearing system.

- There will be the creation of a 'Top 10 Tips' for the volunteer panel community and national team staff on how best to include children in their work in a way that's respectful, meaningful, safe and reduces any stigmatisation.

EVIDENCE

- We will participate, influence and lead the sharing of good and effective practice in inclusion, enabling us to further develop our skills and knowledge learning from others too.

The children's hearing system is dynamic and reflective of the community we seek to serve.

- There are clear expectations and boundaries across Children's Hearings Scotland and Area Support Team (AST) activity so that children and people with lived experience know what they can expect from our organisation across all situations.

ACTION



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WHY?

Throughout my hearings journey...

- My voice is taken seriously and given real weight. [Article 12](#)
- I am kept fully informed about how and why things happen the way they do. [Article 6, 13, 17 & 25](#)
- I feel comfortable that my voice has been heard and acted upon. [Article 12](#)
- I have the opportunity to be an active participant in decisions that affect me. [Article 12](#)

WHAT?

We are proud of Scotland's unique children's hearing system.

RIGHTS

- We will report to Scottish Government on how we realise children's rights in the work we do. We will explicitly demonstrate the ways in which various articles are supported until there is no longer a need, with the UNCRC being embedded in everyday practice, knowledge and understanding.

EVIDENCE

- In line with our values, all action within Children's Hearings Scotland relating to our Corporate Plan, Annual Business Plans and strategy documents will also illustrate our development in our inclusive work with children, from a national organisational input to AST operations and into Panel Member interaction with children in their own hearings.

RIGHTS

- Children's Hearings Scotland in partnership with the Learning Academy will provide training for all staff and volunteers ensuring a children's rights-based approach and inclusive practice is second nature in facilitating voice to be heard and acted upon within hearings and informing our operations.

Scotland's children and young people have a hearings system that works for them

HEARINGS

- We will provide complete clarity for children on the roles, responsibilities and expectations of all the different people who attend the child's hearing.

EVIDENCE

- Essential to the impact of this strategy and demonstrating the action fulfilled in reaching our three outcomes, feedback loops to monitor, review and evaluate each 'pillar of inclusion' will exist and collate the information, data and views to continually improve what and how we do it.

SPACE



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WHY?

Throughout my hearings journey...

- The spaces we meet feel safe and equal. [Article 2, 3 & 4](#)
- Consideration is given to where and when we meet and these feel comfortable to me. [Article 13 & 25](#)
- I feel able to contribute because the space feels safe. [Article 6](#)
- The language used in these safe spaces feels accessible. [Article 29 & 30](#)

WHAT?



Scotland's children and young people have a hearings system that works for them.

- During the hearings journey, children are offered timely, safe and inclusive physical and psychological spaces to ensure they have their voices heard and their needs met.

The children's hearing system is dynamic and reflective of the community we seek to serve.



- Where appropriate, we will have people with lived experience of children's hearings on our ASTs. In creating this space for people to occupy, we can continue to have voice at the centre in all we do.



- Children are included in shaping and influencing the spaces that children occupy, whilst never deviating from the voices of lived experience of the hearings system.

INDEPENDENT CARE REVIEW



Table 1 – Independent Care Review Recommendations aligning with Our Pillars of Inclusion

T H E P R O M I S E	VOICE Children must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved properly listening and responding to what children want and need. There must be a compassionate, caring decision-making culture focussed on children and those they trust.	FAMILY Where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together, to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.	CARE Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so, and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed.	PEOPLE The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, who in turn must be supported to listen and to be compassionate in their decision-making and care.	SCAFFOLDING Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required.
●	- Listening to Children				- Rights: UNCRC
●		- Risk & Safety	- Relationships that are important to the child		- Advocacy
●		- Supporting Families	- Brothers & Sisters - Attachment & Co-regulation - Criminalisation - Personal Identity, Love & Relationships		- Rights: relationships and culture
●	- Information & Decisions		- Transitions - Stability - Language of Care		
●	- Listening - Decision-making - CHS Trained - CHS Youth Justice	- Intensive Family Support: decision-making	- Upholding Children’s Rights - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	- Nurturing Scotland’s workforce - Learning & Development	- Parenting - Data Collection - Inspection & Regulation
●	- Structural & System Listening		- Section 3: Normalisation of Care Experience	- People & Risk	

● VOICE ● CHOICE ● RELATIONSHIPS ● COMMUNICATION ● ACTION ● SPACE

HOW – IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY



To ensure full implementation in tandem with our Corporate Plan, a **Quality Improvement Programme** will be developed to identify the tasks and actions of embedding our six ‘pillars of inclusion’ to reach our overall outcomes:

Children feel able to speak openly, freely and honestly.

Children know that their views are given real weight and listened to in decision-making about their lives.

Children feel empowered and have ownership of their rights.

These key areas of work will be reflected across **Annual Business Plans**, where performance measures and targets will be set. Achievement will be quantified in our **Corporate Parenting Duties of Reporting** to Scottish Ministers/Government on our further incorporation and promotion of children’s rights and the UNCRC.

The developments we will capture include:

1. Enhancing all **training** for staff and volunteers to embed children’s rights knowledge, a children’s rights-based approach and become trauma informed and responsive.
2. **Working with all partners supporting children before attending their hearing** to ensure children are best prepared, recognise what information is shared, understand what their hearing is about and have had the opportunity to consider their views and thoughts.
3. **Working with all partners supporting children during their hearing** to ensure they have the choice of inclusion and participation in the way they share their views and thoughts. Panel members will be trained in and understand the range of ways to hear the voices of children and demonstrate back through effective communication what they have heard, making decisions clear for children to understand.
4. **Working with all partners supporting children after the child’s hearing** to gain feedback and ensure children have clarity on why decisions were made and what it means for them.
5. Within our ASTs, **embedding inclusion opportunities for local people with lived experience** by establishing a specific role that will facilitate activity across all functions of the AST in recruitment, retaining, monitoring, training and supporting panel members.
6. For continuous improvement, adopting an **integrated approach to monitor, review and evaluate**. We will appoint a Children’s Rights and Inclusion Lead, whose role will be to facilitate and support our organisation in reaching the outcomes of this strategy with a responsibility on reporting improvements to our CHS Board in line with working towards The Promise, in meeting the recommendations of the Independent Care Review.

GLOSSARY



Area Support Team (AST) – There are 22 ASTs that lead the vision, mission and values of CHS across the country in local authority areas. They coordinate the rota of panel members for hearings, lead local learning and development sessions as well as recruit and retain of volunteers.

Co-design – The Collins English Dictionary states that ‘co-design’ is the art of designing something jointly. For example, children being able to co-design and shape their own hearings with the panel chair.

Co-production – The Collins English Dictionary states that ‘co-production’ is the art of producing something jointly. For example, children co-producing the panel member recruitment campaign.

Consultation – The Collins English Dictionary states that ‘consultation’ is a discussion with an expert. For example, children being consulted on the CHS Learning Academy logo.

Engagement – The Collins English Dictionary states that ‘engagement’ is actively engaging someone in a process of activity. For example, the “What makes a good Panel Member” video.

Inclusion – The Collins English Dictionary states that ‘inclusion’ is the act of making a person or thing part of a group or collection. For example the inclusion of people with lived experience in this strategy’s working group.

Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV) – Our Hearings Our Voice is an independent board of young people aged 8-18 years who have lived experience of the hearings system, their aim to change the hearings system for the better.

Participation – The Collins English Dictionary states that ‘participation’ is the act of taking part in something. For example, young people’s participation in the 2019 local panel member recruitment including interviews.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – The UNCRC is a document containing the rights and entitlements for children all over the world. It is currently not fully implemented or embedded yet in Scotland so it’s important that as many children know their rights to ensure they are respected and protected at all times.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



This document was co-produced with the essential collaboration of our strategy working group. We want to recognise and say special thanks to the members of the group who gave their time, commitment, perspective and ambition to realise children's rights and inclusion in new possibilities.

The members of the working group included:

- Beth-Anne Logan, Chair of the working group and CHS Board Member
- Simone Smith, Advisor
- Dylan Duff, Advisor
- Liam Slaven, Advisor
- OHOV Board Member
- James Smith, Panel Member
- Paul Smith, Area Convenor
- Paul Sullivan, CELCIS
- Elaine Kerridge, Children in Scotland
- Jennifer Orren, SCRA
- Nathalie Helene, CHS
- Rosie Megginson, CHS
- Lara Wauchope, CHS
- Donna Martin, CHS

STILL TO HAPPEN – external consultation:

The draft strategy was then shared with participation groups and Champions Boards across the country, as well as with members of Who Cares? Scotland. 'Our Hearings, Our Voice' Board contributed to the consultation of the document through presence on the working group as well as an additional opportunity extended to all board members. Staff also supported the consultation holding an event for their 'members' to review and comment on the draft strategy.

A group of staff members occupying policy and/or participation roles within Aberlour, Barnardo's, Children 1st, Children's Parliament, Includem, Intandem, NSPCC Scotland and Young Scot were invited together at a consultation event, while Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland was also approached for comment.

APPENDIX 1



Table 2 – Articles of the UNCRC in relation to Panel Member’s duties and responsibilities

Cluster Group	UNCRC Articles	Activity in Children’s Hearings
General Measures of Implementation	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are doing everything we can to ensure that every child can enjoy their rights. All Children’s Hearings Scotland (CHS) organisational operations should promote rights and enable children to realise their rights. Panel Member decision making should take rights in to account.
General Principles	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHS organisational operations, Panel Member decision making, and how hearings run should protect children from all forms of discrimination.
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are doing everything we can to ensure Panel Members are making decisions that are in the best interests of children and enable the necessary care and protection. We adhere to all necessary standards.
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members are, to the greatest extent possible, making decisions that ensure the survival and development of the child.
	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members are providing children the opportunity to express their views (directly or through a representative) to a hearing and Panel Members give the views due weight.
Civil Rights & Freedoms	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members are making decisions that, as far as possible, mean that children know - and are cared for by - their parents.
	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members are making decisions that mean children can preserve family relations [without unlawful interference].
	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are free to express their thoughts and opinions at a hearing through the media of their choice.
	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members recognise that children have a right to privacy. It is important that people attending a child’s hearing are only there because it is essential.
	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members are making decisions that do not deprive children of education and encourage regular attendance at school. The way hearings operate do not deprive children of education.
	37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members are making decisions that do not unlawfully or arbitrarily deprive children of liberty, and that this is only used as a measure of last resort and is for the shortest appropriate period of time.
Violence Against Children	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members are making decisions that protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect or poor treatment by anyone caring for them.
	39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members are making decisions that promote recovery and social integration of child victims of neglect, exploitation or abuse.

Family Environment & Alternative Care	<p>9</p> <p>19</p> <p>25</p> <p>27(1-2)</p> <p>39</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members are making decisions that do not separate children from parents unnecessarily and all interested parties are given the opportunity to make their views known. Decisions should also not deprive regular direct contact with parents unless in the child’s best interest. Panel Members are making decisions that protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect or poor treatment by anyone caring for them. Panel Members participate in the periodic review of care ensuring people keep checking if they feel safe and healthy Panel Members are making decisions that help secure the standard of living and conditions necessary for child development. Panel Members are making decisions that promote recovery and social integration of child victims of neglect, exploitation or abuse.
Disability, Basic Health & Welfare	<p>6</p> <p>23</p> <p>27 (1-3)</p> <p>33</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members are, to the maximum extent possible, making decisions that ensure the survival and development of the child. Panel Members treat disabled children with dignity and make decisions that promote self-reliance and participation in the community. Panel Members are making decisions that help secure the standard of living and conditions necessary for child development. Panel Members are making decisions that protect children from the illicit use of drugs.
Education, Leisure & Cultural Activities	<p>23</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members are making decisions that do not deprive children of education and encourage regular attendance at school. The way hearings operate do not deprive children of education.
Special Protections	<p>22</p> <p>32</p> <p>33</p> <p>34</p> <p>36</p> <p>37 (a-d)</p> <p>39</p> <p>40</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members making decisions about children seeking refugee status in a non-discriminatory way, and protecting rights when no parents can be found. Panel Members are making decisions that protect children from economic exploitation or harmful work. Panel Members are making decisions that protect children from the illicit use of drugs. Panel Members are making decisions that protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse. Panel Members are making decisions that protect children from any exploitation that may harm their welfare. Panel Members are making decisions that do not unlawfully or arbitrarily deprive children of liberty, and that this is only used as a measure of last resort and is for the shortest appropriate period of time. Panel Members are making decisions that promote recovery and social integration of child victims of neglect, exploitation or abuse. Panel Members are treating children in conflict with the law with dignity and dealing with them in a manner appropriate to their wellbeing.

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