

CHS Annual Review of Performance

2013/2014



children's
hearings
scotland



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Introduction

The National Convener of Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) leads Scotland's 2,500 volunteer panel members. With the Area Support Teams, the National Convener ensures panel members are consistently supported to a high standard to make decisions that are in the best interests of children and young people. CHS is a dedicated national body, established to support the delivery of National Convener functions related to recruitment, selection, training, retention and support of panel members.

Through the feedback loop we will report each year to the Scottish Ministers on how local authorities are progressing on implementing the Hearings decisions and over time we will aim to measure and identify trends that will demonstrate positive outcomes for children and young people who have come before the Children's Hearings System.

Business Plan 2013/14

The Board approved the business plan for 2013/14 on 20 March 2013. This business plan covered the second year of our corporate plan for the period 2012-2015 which set out the activities needed to deliver our responsibilities under the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.

The business plan demonstrates how Children's Hearings Scotland's (CHS') outcomes, objectives and activities contribute to the six Scottish Government National Outcomes that are relevant to CHS.

Our Objectives

The business plan for 2013/14 agreed a number of activities under the following seven objectives:

- capture the views and experiences of children and young people in the Children's Hearings System to inform our policies, practice and decision making
- put in place the structures, processes and resources to facilitate a smooth transition to the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- ensure that Area Support Teams are well trained, supported, resourced and work together to provide high quality support to the national Children's Panel
- work with partners across the Children's Hearings System to deliver improvements for children, young people and their families
- embed effective governance and support arrangements across CHS and Area Support Teams (ASTs)
- develop systems and resources to communicate and engage effectively with all our stakeholders
- make the most of our people



Key Milestones Achieved in 2013/14

Last year was momentous in the history of the Children's Panel. The priority then was to establish CHS and to work with our colleagues in Scottish Government in particular, to ensure a smooth transition to the national Children's Panel and the ASTs.

CHS staff along with the 2,500 panel members and 400 volunteer AST members whom CHS supports can be collectively proud of the key milestones which were achieved in 2013/14:

- Partnership Agreements were signed between CHS and all 32 Scottish local authorities
- members were recruited to fill all the specific roles on the 22 ASTs
- the transition of panel members to the national Children's Panel in June 2013 was seamless
- following a comprehensive evaluation and procurement process the contract for the provision of national training was awarded
- the transition to the new CHS Training Unit was completed at the end of September 2013
- a very positive partnership was established with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
- the new Professional Development Award (PDA) for panel member training was developed and validated
- CHS received a positive response to its first national recruitment campaign and recruited over 550 trainee panel members.

Annex A provides more detail of the main activities achieved against each of the objectives set for 2013/14.

Looking forward to 2014/15

CHS aims to build on these achievements over the coming year. There will be further challenges as we evaluate the first year of the 2011 Act in practice and reflect on what we need to refine in preparation for the implementation of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. We will continue to listen and actively respond to feedback from panel and AST members to ensure that the support we provide is of the highest quality.

Our objectives for 2014/15 are to:

- meaningfully involve children and young people in shaping our service to ensure the Children's Hearings System meets the needs of children, young people and their families
- strengthen the support for panel and AST members (e.g. review of expenses policy)
- deliver high quality, consistent training for all panel and AST members
- consolidate relationships with our partners and build relationships with new partners
- embed effective governance and support arrangements across CHS, ASTs and the panel community



We have in place strong foundations for all of this work. For example, we carried out workshops with AST members to review last year's recruitment campaign to listen and make improvements in time for the 2014 recruitment campaign.

As we enter our first full operational year many challenges remain. We need to prioritise our activity to deliver what we have to and what will have the biggest impact in supporting the CHS community.

In all of this we will reinforce a culture where as an organisation we are open, listening, informative and supportive. We will also regularly review our progress in responding to the findings in the Organisational Review independent survey that the Board of CHS undertook in October 2013 on how CHS can better meet the expectations of the panel community.



Annex A

Main Activities Achieved in 2013/14

The transfer of functions and duties to CHS took place on 24th June 2013, with the implementation of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. As a consequence, much of the business activity in the first operating period of CHS was structural and developing processes to provide the platform on which to build the longer term aims of the organisation. Having these systems in place will ensure that CHS takes forward the organisation's long term aims.

Quarterly performance reviews tracking progress against the activities and milestones in the business plan were reported to the Board during the year and the annual performance review was approved by the Board on 25th March 2014.

The main activities achieved against each of the seven objectives were as follows:

Capture the views and experiences of children and young people in the Children's Hearings System to inform our policies, practice and decision making

In 2013/14 CHS:

- commissioned and conducted research with SCRA to find out what children, young people and their carers thought about children's hearings
- secured membership of the National Participation and Engagement Forum set up by Who Cares? Scotland, to help us hear the views of young people who have been in care
- invited Who Cares? Scotland to work with us on the CHS Training Reference Group to represent the views and experiences of children and young people
- used the findings of 27 research reports on children and young people's views and experiences to inform:
 - Procurement of panel member training
 - Development of core policies supporting panel and AST members
 - Design and delivery of AST Member induction and training



Put in place the structures, processes and resources to facilitate a smooth transition to the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011

In 2013/14 CHS:

- delivered a seamless transition to the Children's Panel on 24 June. All 2,187 who accepted the appointment received a personal letter from the National Convener thanking them for their continued commitment and setting out their new terms and conditions
- instructed the Panel Pal structural changes required to reflect the new ASTs and ensured the smooth handover of the panel member database from the Scottish Government (SG) to CHS, negotiated a new contract for support and maintenance, and delivered training for Clerks and schedulers ahead of go live
- established key information sharing protocols with partners, including SG, SCRA and local authorities to govern the sharing of any information relating to the Children's Hearings System
- supported safe recruitment for volunteers and staff fulfilling our obligations under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups and disclosure legislation and assisted panel members, local authorities and SG to put in place a phased handover to the new arrangements
- updated guidance for panel members to make sure they were familiar with the changes about children's hearings because of the 2011 Act
- informed the drafting and implementation of the transitions and savings regulations between 1995 Act and 2011 Act via the Hearings Management Group to maintain the hearings process to minimise upheaval for children, families, volunteers and staff
- developed a Practice and Procedure Manual for panel members to refer to for guidance and advice when preparing for hearings
- developed and delivered training to 400 AST members
- developed and implemented policy and procedures to facilitate panel and AST volunteers claiming expenses when on CHS business

Ensure Area Support Teams are well trained, supported, resourced and work together to provide high quality support to the national Children's Panel

In 2013/14 CHS:

- provided induction events, training and support to the newly appointed members of the 22 ASTs
- developed supporting materials and policies to make sure that all AST members understood their roles
- set up processes for recruiting and appointing AST members to their various key roles
- developed quarterly reports so that each AST would receive performance information about the Children's Panel in their local area
- established a quarterly AST National Forum to exchange information, views and explore with ASTs areas for improvement
- developed various information management and security training and awareness resources to



support panel and AST members, Clerks, staff and Board members – including a dedicated section on Data Protection and keeping information safe at pre-service training for new panel members

- created a dedicated information management resource page on CHIRP for panel and AST members, Clerks, staff and Board members to act as a quick reference tool when managing information
- established risk management arrangements and guidance for ASTs
- produced a communication toolkit for ASTs

Work with partners across the Children's Hearings System to deliver improvements for children, young people and their families

In 2013/14 CHS:

- played a key role with the Scottish Government, SCRA, Police, Health and Justice as part of the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP), exploring shared outcomes for children and young people
- worked with SCRA through the Hearings Management Group to update guidance on how hearings would be managed after the implementation of the 2011 Act
- sought partners' views about the best way to report on the implementation of compulsory supervision orders and their impact on the wellbeing of children and young people [the feedback loop]
- disseminated and monitored the delivery of hearings management guidance to ensure effective hearings management practice

Embed effective governance and support arrangements across CHS and ASTs

In 2013/14 CHS:

- produced key information policies, procedures and guidance to advise panel and AST members, Clerks, CHS staff and Board members of their responsibilities to keep information safe and to support them when managing information relating to the Children's Hearings System
- established shared risk management arrangements with SCRA for hearings management and put in place a protocol that was approved by both Audit and Risk Management Committees
- established data processing contracts with 32 local authorities that set out the responsibilities when processing any data created after 24 June 2013 on behalf of CHS



Develop systems and resources to communicate and engage effectively with all our stakeholders

In 2013/14 CHS:

- launched a new public website to raise the profile and awareness of CHS , the Children's Panel and ASTs
- launched phase one of a new secure, online portal enabling panel members and AST members to access all the information, documents and news they need to support them in their roles

Making the most of our people

In 2013/14 CHS:

- worked with the Scottish Qualifications Authority to set up and put in place a new qualification for panel members
- awarded the national training contract to West Lothian College following a comprehensive public procurement process
- successfully managed CHS' first panel member recruitment campaign and provided support to the ASTs to recruit over 550 trainee panel members
- completed an employer survey of the panel community to inform the development of an employer strategy to increase panel member retention
- commissioned an independent Organisational Review in October 2013 with key stakeholders, to establish how CHS can better meet the expectations of the CHS community
- provided pre-service training to 267 newly recruited panel members

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