



Framework for the participation of children and young people in the work of CHS

Our commitment to children and young people

Through its National Standards for the Children's Panel and its corporate and business plans, Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) has made a commitment to involving children and young people in its work.

We have done this to make sure that the views and experiences of children and young people, especially those who have attended a children's hearing, are taken into account when we are making decisions. This is because these decisions will impact on all children and young people who are currently part of the Children's Hearings System.

This also fits in with the rights that children have under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: *"When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account."*

Our National Standards for the Children's Panel

Our first national standard is 'children and young people are at the centre of everything we do.'
Under this national standard:

- we are committed to making sure everything we do is in the best interests of children and young people
- we will treat children and young people with respect, dignity, care and consideration at all times
- we will make sure that children and young people are responded to fairly and according to their individual needs
- we will make sure the information we publish and the systems we put in place are accessible to children and young people
- we will be open and honest in all our communication with children and young people and will encourage, listen to, respond to and learn from their feedback, so that their experiences and views positively inform our practice

You can find more information about our national standards on our website www.chscotland.gov.uk.

Our Corporate Plan 2015-18

In our corporate plan we have two outcomes which focus on children and young people.

- Outcome 1: hearings are centred around the child or young person and their needs. This is about making sure that children and young people and their needs are the focus of all hearings.



- Outcome 2: our activities are informed by the views and experiences of children and young people. This is about making sure everything we do keeps children and young people central to our work.

You can find a copy of our corporate plan on our website www.chscotland.gov.uk.

The Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011

CHS also has some responsibilities under the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 about involving children and young people in:

- the recruitment of our National Convener
- the design and delivery of training for panel members

CHS has produced this framework (or document) to tell people how we will make all this happen. We also have £50,000 in our budget for 2015/16 to make sure we can pay for this work.

What are the benefits of participation?

Benefits for children and young people	Benefits for CHS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn new skills and gain experience • Have a better experience of the Children’s Hearings System • Enjoyment and develop self-confidence and the opportunity to develop social networks • Opportunities to influence decisions that affect their lives • Feel valued and empowered, builds resilience and promotes self-advocacy • Opportunity to develop a better understanding of how the organisation works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services become more responsive to the needs of children and young people • Perceptions are challenged by feedback from children and young people • Becomes more accessible to children and young people • Becomes more efficient by providing a more effective service to children and young people • Decision making is focused on children and young people • Improves role satisfaction and morale

(Partial extract from the ‘Participation of Children and Young People in Developing Social Care’, Social Care Institute for Excellence).



How will we do this?

1. Recruitment

At the moment we...

- use a job specification created by young people when recruiting new panel members – the job specification is put in all our information packs and is on our recruitment website
- use a talking heads film produced by and featuring young people which tells anyone interested in becoming a panel member what skills you need to be a really good panel member
- have young people as members of our recruitment reference group to make sure they are involved in the planning for our annual panel member recruitment campaigns
- include an interview panel of young people when recruiting a National Convener or Depute Chief Executive for CHS, the young people on the interview panel talk with each candidate and ask them questions before feeding their views and thoughts back to the CHS interview panel

In the future we will also...

- look at ways in which young people can be involved in the information evenings held for anyone interested in becoming a panel member e.g. via a film, role playing, group activities
- involve children and young people in the recruitment of new Area Conveners who lead the Area Support Teams (these are the people who support Children's Panel members in each local authority area)
- see if a young peoples' interview panel could be used when recruiting new CHS Board members

2. Training

At the moment we...

- have someone from Who Cares? Scotland sitting on our training reference group to help make sure that panel member training is developed and delivered with children and young people in mind
- the training materials for trainee panel members have been reviewed by young people to make sure the language used is appropriate and up to date
- the CHS Training Unit uses podcasts produced by and featuring young people to tell trainee panel members about their experiences of care and the Children's Hearings System
- the CHS Training Unit also uses a talking heads film produced by and featuring young people to tell trainee panel members how young people expect to be treated and communicated with during a hearing
- the local Area Support Teams use the films produced by young people in local training sessions for panel members
- young people are involved in a pilot to create and deliver training sessions directly to trainee panel members – these sessions concentrate on communicating within a hearing



In the future we will also...

- review the training pilot to see if we can involve children and young people in delivering sessions for trainee panel members every year, right across Scotland
- look at how we might involve children and young people in the training for current panel members

3. During the hearing

At the moment we...

- have worked with children and young people to produce a short film which tells panel members how children and young people expect to be treated and communicated with during their hearing - this film is used as part of panel member training

In the future we will also...

- hold a workshop with children and young people to help us understand what we can do to support panel members - to make sure that children and young people are able to tell their views to panel members and have a better experience during their hearing
- take what we find out from this workshop and see how we can include this in panel member training

4. Communication

At the moment we...

- have sections on our website for both children and young people, which contain information about the Children's Hearings System in language which is age appropriate and easy to understand
- produce some information materials in a format especially designed for young people e.g. a leaflet about the role of the panel member, summary annual reports, a report and film for young people on some research findings
- include a jargon buster on our website and in key corporate documents to help explain some of the complicated words used in the Children's Hearings System

In the future we will also...

- ask children and young people to look at our website and information materials and tell us if we could make any improvements
- produce a leaflet about the role of the panel member especially for children and we will ask children to help us with this
- through our responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010, we will make sure that information materials about the role of a panel member are available in different formats suitable to meet the needs of all children and young people attending children's hearings
- provide regular updates to those children and young people who have helped us with this work – we will also ask them to help us design the format of these updates



- produce an annual review for all children and young people, outlining how children and young people have been involved in our work, what changes and decisions we have made based on the information they have given us and why we have made those changes and decisions, we will also explain why if some changes haven't been possible
- introduce a complaints process which is suitable for and accessible by children and young people
- work with partners to develop a 'tick of approval' showing that all information materials we produce for children and young people have been approved by children and young people

5. Planning our priorities

At the moment we...

- have asked children and young people what work we should concentrate on in the future and have used this feedback when writing our corporate plan for 2015-18

In the future we will also...

- make sure that we ask for and take into account the views of children and young people when writing all future corporate plans

6. Research

At the moment we...

- have produced a summary report of everything children and young people have said about their experiences of the Children's Hearings System
- have carried out our own research to find out the views and experiences that children, young people and their carers of the Children's Hearings System

In the future we will also...

- use what children and young people have already told us about their experiences of going to hearings and make sure it is included in the information and training we provide to panel members
- work with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) to carry out regular research into the views and experiences of children and young people of the Children's Hearings System
- look into how we might get regular feedback from children and young people about panel members

7. Policy (decision making/making up the rules for the place)

At the moment we...

- are a member of the National Participation Forum, set up by Who Cares? Scotland to help us get a better understanding about the issues affecting looked after children and young people
- are working with SCRA and other partners to look at how we set up a young people's board to make sure that young people can be involved in decision making about the Children's Hearings System



In the future we will also...

- continue to hold workshops with children and young people to make sure we stay current with what children and young people need and expect from us
- give children and young people a choice of different ways to get involved with our work
- help young people (through the young people's board) to gain skills which will help them at work
- take part in the School Work Experience Programme for 2015/16
- involve children and young people in any major changes we make to this participation framework

8. Working with partners

At the moment we...

- work with the Scottish Government and other partners (including SCRA, police, social work and education) on the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) - one of the pieces of work they are concentrating on is the participation of children and young people
- are members of SCRA's participation group, which aims to help children and young people feel more able to participate in their hearing
- will respond to any Scottish Government consultations which are about issues and legislation affecting children and young people in the Children's Hearings System
- work closely with Who Cares? Scotland to help us achieve the participation of children and young people in our work

In the future we will also...

- work with different partners to make sure that a wider range of children and young people are able to participate in our work, for example younger children, children and young people who are looked after at home as well as those who are not in the Children's Hearings System and children and young people with additional needs

How will we measure progress?

The National Convener and all staff and Board members at CHS are committed to delivering the plans set out in this framework. CHS' Communications and Engagement Officer is responsible for participation, but everyone at CHS has responsibility for making sure that this work happens.

Because we are still a new public body, we will review this framework every six months to make sure that it is kept up to date. For example, we might need to update it to make sure our new Corporate Parenting responsibilities are included. We will write an action plan which lays out all the work we need to do as part of this framework and when this work will happen.

We will ask the children and young people we have worked with how successful we are at participation. We will provide regular updates to the children and young people who have helped us with this work so they can see the differences their feedback is making. We will also publish an annual review of our participation work for all children and young people. We will provide updates to CHS' senior managers and Board members on our progress with our participation work.



Who did we consult?

This framework has been produced with the help of over 50 children and young people aged between 11 and 25 who have all had experience of the Children's Hearings System.

To achieve this we worked with Who Cares? Scotland to carry out some workshops where children and young people were asked for their thoughts and views on a number of different subjects including:

- panel member recruitment
- panel member training - behaviours and communicating in a hearing
- priorities for our corporate plan
- participation of children and young people in the work of CHS

A draft of this framework was read by four care experienced young people who gave us their feedback and this was included in the final version.

We also worked with the office of Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP) to make sure that our plans are in line with their 7 Golden Rules of Participation, which are:

- 1 Understand my rights
- 2 A chance to be involved
- 3 Remember - it's my choice
- 4 Value me
- 5 Support me
- 6 Work together
- 7 Keep in touch

SCCYP agreed that they could 'see and feel' the rules coming through the document and that it was simple and easy to understand. They also gave us some feedback which we included in the final version.

We would like to thank all the children and young people who gave us their views and feedback, which helped us to write this document. We would also like to thank Who Cares? Scotland, SCCYP and SCRA for their help.

Children's Hearings Scotland

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The Children's Panel — life changing.



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