

2017 | 18

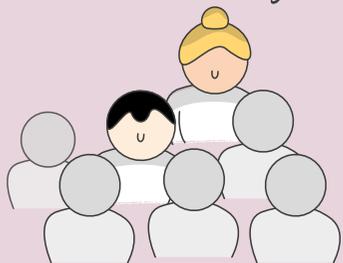
ANNUAL IMPACT *report*



children's
hearings
scotland

The Children's Panel - life changing.

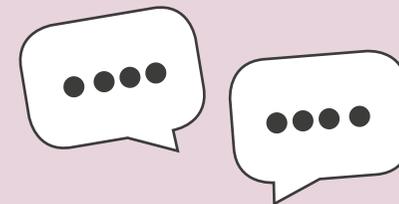
recruiting



training



supporting



Improving outcomes for
children and young people

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INTRODUCTION



“The Children’s Hearings System could not function without every one of you – you truly are a force for good.”

Children’s Hearings Scotland (CHS) is made up of over 3,000 people from all walks of life. Many of us are volunteers, some Board and others work as part of the National Team. What unites us is our motivation to make a difference in the lives of each and every child and young person who attends a children’s hearing in Scotland.

We believe that children and young people across the country deserve to feel safe, loved, valued and respected and on behalf of the Board, I want to thank each and every member of the CHS community for their dedication, compassion and commitment to working towards this aim over the last year. And of course, I would like to thank those young people who have helped inform our work – your support means that Panel Members have a better understanding of how you feel in your hearing and what you want from them in their role on the Children’s Panel.

Garry Coutts, Chair, CHS Board.



I am extremely proud to be National Convener of an organisation with so much passion and commitment to improve the lives of children and young people in Scotland.

Together, we have achieved much: from the recruitment, training and support of our Panel Members, to how we’ve collaborated with children and young people to improve the way we work and to help us better understand our role and its impact upon their lives.

I’d like to recognise the outstanding contribution of our Area Support Teams. And of course, those Panel Members themselves, who give their time because they care about making a difference in their local communities. They do this by listening to and making decisions with and on behalf of Scotland’s most vulnerable children and young people. Volunteering is central to the ethos of the Children’s Hearings System and we wouldn’t be CHS without you. I’d like to say thank you for the impact that you make.

Boyd McAdam, National Convener.

NC This relates to my responsibilities as your National Convener. You can read more information in our Annual Report and Accounts.

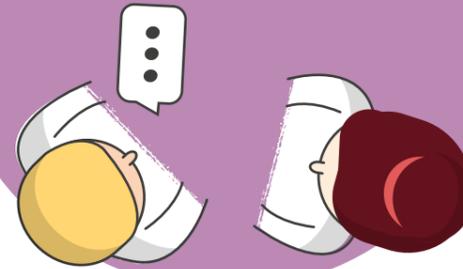


OUR VALUES



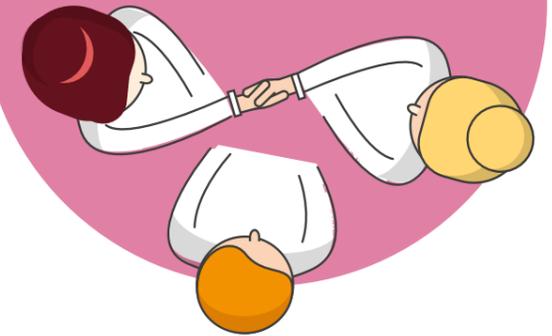
Child centred

Making sure everything we do is in the best interests of children and young people.



Respectful

Treating children, young people, their families, partners and each other with care and consideration.



Fair

Making sure that everyone is treated with dignity and according to their individual needs; that our information and services are accessible to all; that we provide a consistent level of service to all.



Creative

Considering innovative and imaginative ways of approaching the issues we face in the work we do.



Challenging

Not being complacent, but questioning ourselves and others to help us improve.



Open

Listening, responding to and learning from feedback; acting honestly; ensuring processes are transparent; sharing information and being accountable for our actions and decisions.



WHO WE ARE



Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) is part of Scotland's unique Children's Hearings System which exists to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland. We recruit, train and support volunteer Panel Members for Scotland's Children's Panel.

CHS BOARD

Our Board is made up of six members. It **sets our strategic direction, provides governance and challenges the decisions CHS makes.** Through the Board, we are accountable to Scottish Ministers.



CHS NATIONAL TEAM

The National Team is made up of 24 staff, led by the National Convener and Chief Executive, whose job it is to **recruit, train and support our volunteer community.**

WHO WE ARE



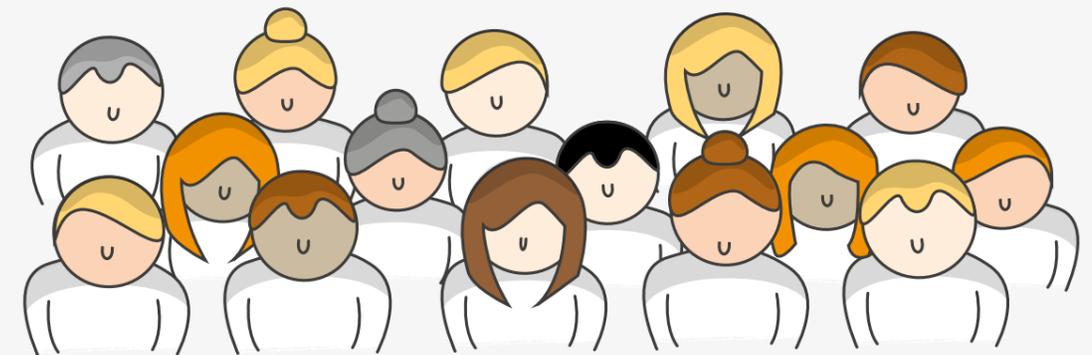
“ They [CHS volunteers] care about making a difference both within their local communities and nationally by contributing to Scotland's unique Children's Hearings System. ”

Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland.

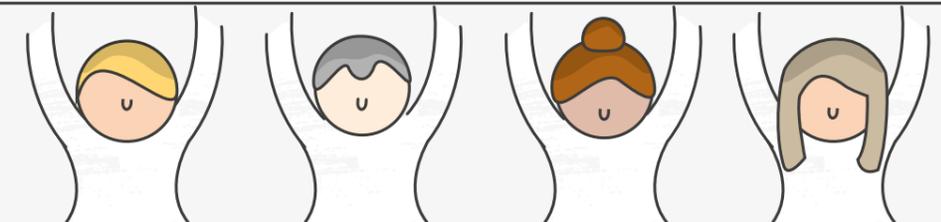
PANEL MEMBERS

Around **2,500 skilled volunteer Panel Members** from local communities across Scotland.

make legal decisions



give support to the Panel Members



AREA SUPPORT TEAMS

There are **22 Area Support Teams** across Scotland made up of around **400 volunteers** from local communities.



What we do

The Children's Panel is made up of approximately **2,500 Panel Members** from all walks of life who are trained to sit on children's hearings.

Panel Members discuss and make important decisions at hearings about how best to protect each child or young person. **Importantly, children and young people are front and centre of their hearings – our decisions are informed with and by them.**

Panel Members are supported locally by **400 volunteer Area Support Team** members from communities across Scotland.

Collectively, in 2017/18 our volunteer community has contributed an amazing **360,000 hours to the Children's Hearings System**. We think that they are awe inspiring!

DID YOU KNOW...

In the last five years our Panel Members have sat on **174,659*** children's hearings, supporting **76,238*** children and young people in Scotland.



2,500
Panel Members



400
Volunteer Area Support Team Members

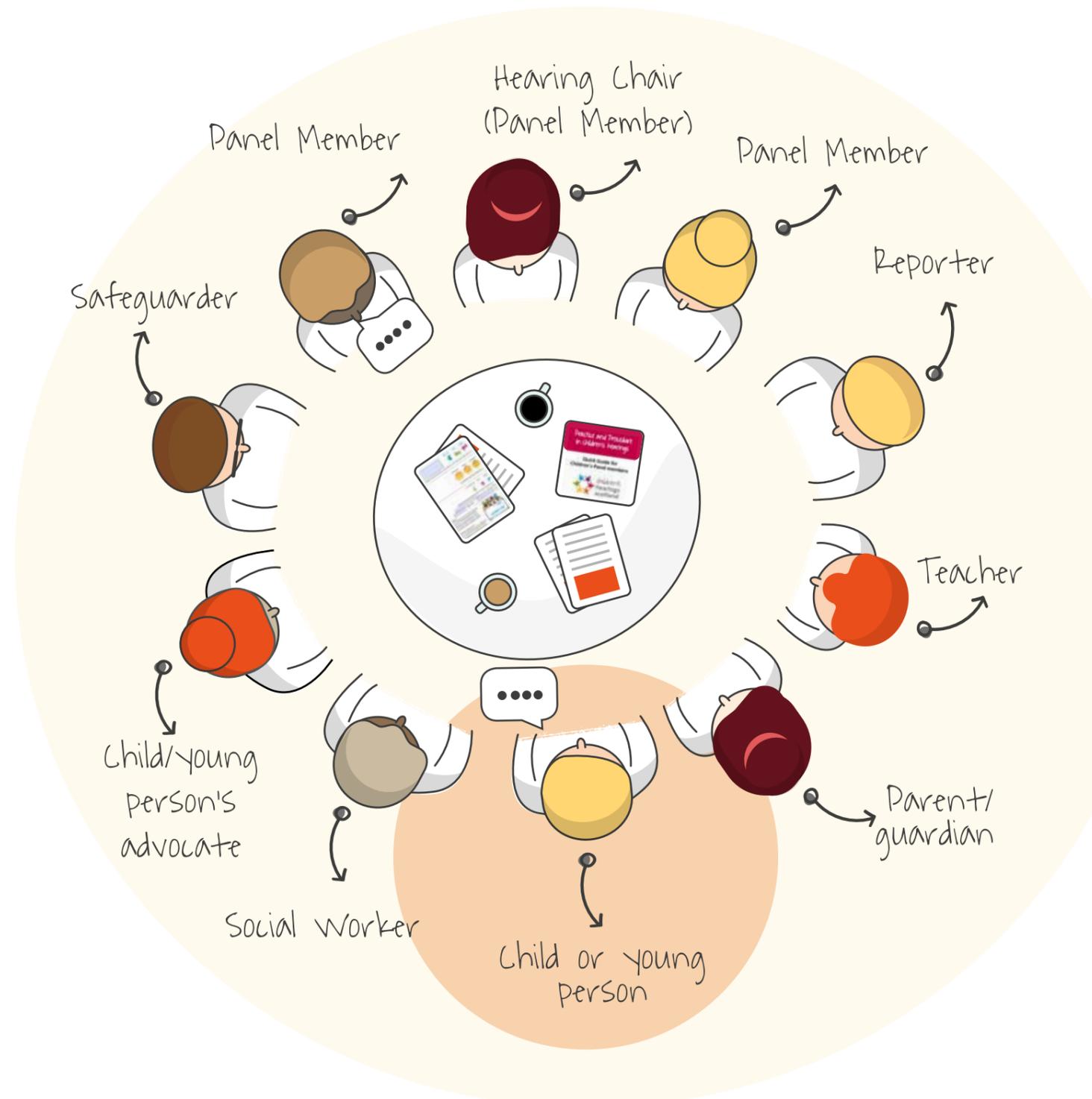


360,000
Hours to the Children's Hearings System



“Feeling part of a team and walking away at the end of a hearing believing we have done the best for that child on that day is important to me. I get a lot out of interacting directly with the child and trying to understand their viewpoint.”

Panel Member, Community Survey 2017.

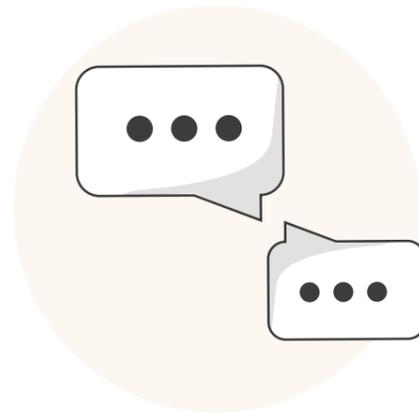


*figures from SCRA 2012-2017 inclusive.

SUPPORTING OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Children and young people are at the heart of everything we do. We are helping to ensure that our children and young people feel valued, safe, loved and respected.



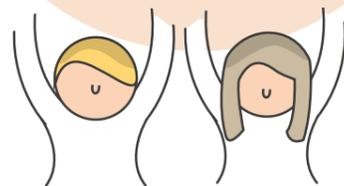
The National Team works closely with partners to look at ways to work together to improve the Children's Hearings System.

CHS is part of a number of groups, boards and committees which aim to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people in Scotland. These include: **Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership, Secure Care Board, Youth Justice Improvement Board and the Hearings Management Group.** We also contribute to the **Independent Care Review.**

Our Area Support Teams and Panel Members work in partnership in their local communities. They engage with social work, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) and other local partners to ensure that children and young people have the best possible experience and outcome at their children's hearing.

DID YOU KNOW...

We are working in partnership and with children and young people to look at ways to improve the Children's Hearings System.



It is vital that everyone responsible for the safety and wellbeing of our children and young people works in partnership. At CHS we are collaborative. We want to make sure that the Children's Hearings System is the best it can be.

Jackie McRae, Policy & Partnerships, CHS.

SUPPORTING OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ESTABLISHING THE OUR HEARINGS, OUR VOICE BOARD

It is hugely important to us that the views of children and young people with experience of children's hearings inform our work. Throughout 2017/18, together with SCRA we have continued to establish a new young person's board, Our Hearings, Our Voice.

This Board will commission projects aimed at improving the experiences of children and young people in the Children's Hearings System and Board Members will be recruited in 2018/19.



It's a real privilege to be leading the development of a Board for children and young people who have experience of, and want to see improvements to the Children's Hearings System. It's an exciting opportunity and I'm really looking forward to seeing what the first group of Board Members prioritise and want to work on.

Jacqui Dunbar, Development Worker, Our Hearings, Our Voice.

ROLLING OUT OUR BETTER HEARINGS WORK

This year, our Area Support Teams have been working with partners to implement recommendations from the Better Hearings report (published in 2017).

In 2017, we carried out a number of Panel Member Profile pilots. These profiles provide children and young people with a photo of and a little information on who their Panel Members are in advance of their hearing. We are delighted to say that 75% of children, young people and their families found the profiles helpful. We believe that these profiles play an important role in connecting children and young people with Panel Members.



Almost all Panel Members have provided photographs or bitmojis of themselves along with some personal information. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with those attending hearings saying that seeing the Panel Members in advance helped put them at ease.

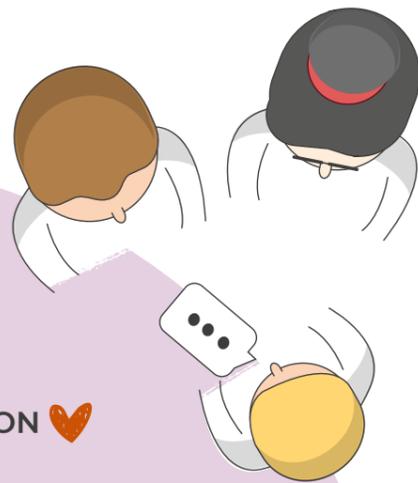
Laura Conachan, Area Convener, Aberdeen.

WE ARE PROUD CORPORATE PARENTS



It's extremely important to us that our whole community focuses on the wellbeing of care and hearings experienced children and young people across Scotland.

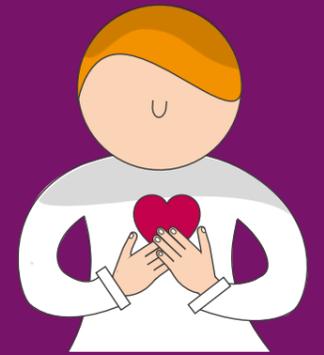
We want all children and young people involved in the hearings system to **feel safe, loved, valued and respected.**



OUR CORPORATE PARENTING VISION

- Children and young people are at the centre of the Children's Hearings System and are treated as individuals.
- The decisions that affect children and young people are based on their views, sound knowledge and clear evidence.
- We will work together to make the Children's Hearings System work better for children and young people.
- We will keep asking ourselves if the way that we do things is the best it can be.

WE ARE PROUD CORPORATE PARENTS



As very proud Corporate Parents in 2017/18...

We...

To...

...set up a joint Corporate Parenting website with SCRA.

...show children and young people what we will do to meet our responsibilities as Corporate Parents.

...involved 40 care and hearings experienced young people in the recruitment of and training for our new Panel Members.

...make sure that our trainees understand how their decisions affect the lives of children and young people.

...worked with our partners across Scotland to implement Better Hearings recommendations.

...improve the experiences of children and young people at their children's hearing.

...have been focused on setting up a new children and young person's board called Our Hearings, Our Voice.

...make sure that the views of care and hearings experienced children and young people are at the heart of our work.

...started design on a new digital system for both CHS and SCRA.

...give children and young people a choice in the future about how they want to engage with us and communicate their views in children's hearings.

...made sure our Area Conveners were trained on their Corporate Parenting role and responsibilities.

...develop understanding of how they can work with children and young people and local partners to provide the best possible support locally.

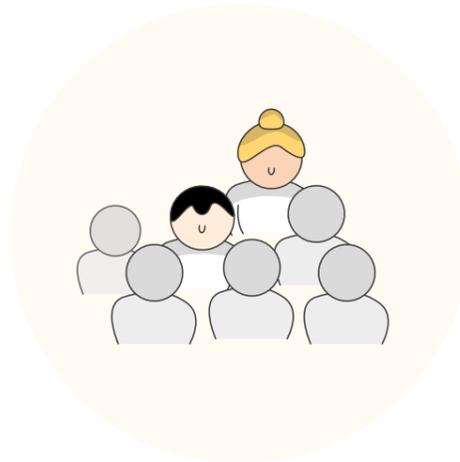
...tested out new Panel Member Profiles.

...connect children and young people with Panel Members before their children's hearing to improve their experience whilst in the hearing.

RECRUITING AND RETAINING OUR VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY NC



Our programme of recruitment ensures that we have enough Panel Members who can make vital decisions with and on behalf of vulnerable children and young people across Scotland.



Recruitment

Every year we look to recruit around **500 new Panel Members**. In 2017, we launched a national recruitment campaign that ran to May 2018 when Panel Members were appointed. The campaign is supported at a local level by **400 dedicated Area Support Team members and local authority Clerks**.

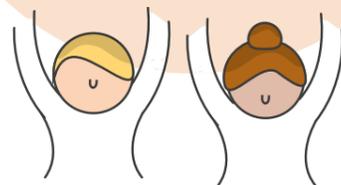
This year, **1,592 people applied** from across the country and **we appointed 444 new volunteer Panel Members**.

Panel Members are appointed for three years and can choose to be re-appointed for a further three. In the last year, we re-appointed **over 100 volunteer Panel Members**.

Year on year we are involving more young people in our recruitment. By working with local organisations, we are ensuring that young people are part of our recruitment and selection process.

DID YOU KNOW...

We couldn't do what we do without our Area Support Teams. In the last year, we recruited 100 new volunteer Area Support Team members.



Recruitment is one of the busiest and most rewarding points in the Area Support Team's year. When going through the applications I am humbled by the number of people willing to give their time and energy to support Scotland's children and young people.

Val Kennedy, Depute Area Convenor, Glasgow.

RECRUITING AND RETAINING OUR VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY



Our volunteers take important decisions in respect of Scotland's most vulnerable children and young people. They do an amazing job and it often happens under the radar – our 3,000 volunteers truly are a force for good.

Boyd McAdam, National Convener, CHS.

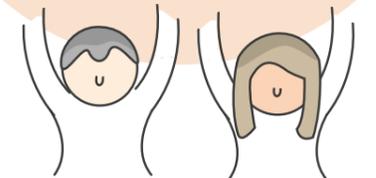
Recognition

Every year our amazing **volunteers give 360,000 hours to the Children's Hearings System**. They care about making a difference in their local communities, and children and young people are at the heart of everything they do.

In the last year, local **Area Support Team members held 23 recognition events across Scotland**. From our longest serving Panel Members to those who had recently completed training, we were celebrating their truly awe inspiring contribution and commitment.

DID YOU KNOW...

Our Dumfries and Galloway Area Support team held a recognition event celebrating Panel Members who had collectively volunteered 429 years!



Ayrshire Awards Ceremony 2017.

Every year, the National Team celebrates our volunteers during Volunteers' Week. In 2017, we recognised and thanked our volunteers for the huge contribution they make to the Children's Hearings System.



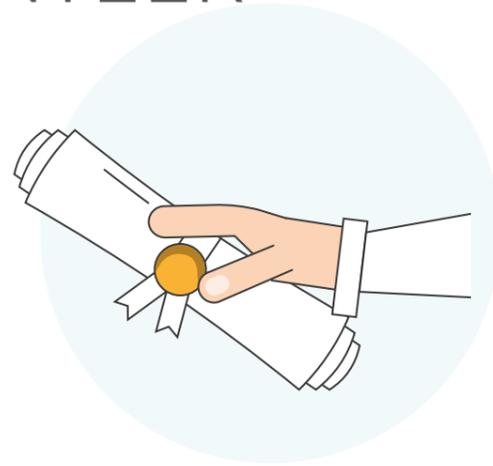
Dumfries & Galloway recognition event.



TRAINING OUR VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY



Our training enables us to ensure that the views of children and young people are heard, respected and valued and that Panel Members are making high quality decisions in children's hearings.



National Training

CHS' training provider is responsible for delivering an extensive programme of training to all Panel Members on our behalf.

Our training enhances Panel Members' skills, knowledge and confidence to make the best decisions for our children and young people in a consistent way.

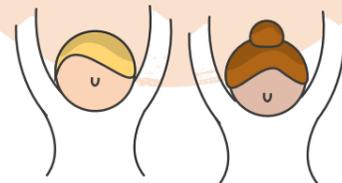
In 2017/18, **422 trainee Panel Members successfully completed pre-service training** to prepare them to sit on children's hearings.

During this period, **174 of our existing Panel Members also achieved their Professional Development Award**, bringing them to the end of a two year journey that demonstrates their knowledge and skills to sit on children's hearings.

And, hundreds of Panel Members have undertaken core training in a range of topics from effectively communicating with children and families to decision making and reasoning.

DID YOU KNOW...

40 young people took part in training at 18 locations. They shared their experiences of the Children's Hearings System with trainees to help inform their Panel Member practice upon appointment.



Volunteering with CHS has tested my ability to speak in public, to organise my thoughts carefully and to consider the impact of anything I might say.

Panel Member, Community Survey 2017.

TRAINING OUR VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY



94% of our community describes our national training as 'very good' or 'good'.

Our new CHS Learning Academy

This year, work began on the new CHS Learning Academy which will be launched in 2018/19 and cover a broad range of topics. The Academy will enable us, in partnership with our expert training provider, to deliver the Panel Member Professional Development Award and learning programmes for the CHS community and our partner organisations. This new approach will enable our volunteer community to access course content more flexibly to fit around their work and family commitments.

Local learning and development

Learning and development events are important because they help to keep Panel Members up to date with local issues and the support available to children, young people and their families. They are also a great way for the CHS community to meet and build relationships not only with each other but also with local partners. This enables the sharing of best practice, improving the experiences of children and young people in their hearings.

DID YOU KNOW...

In 2017/18, 34 Learning and Development Coordinators ran 266 local learning events across Scotland.



Training plays an integral role to ensuring that Panel Members listen to children and young people and make the best possible decisions.

Meggan Jameson, National Training, CHS.

COLLABORATING LOCALLY

In 2017/18 our East Renfrewshire Area Support Team worked with East Renfrewshire Council's Youth Intensive Support Service (YISS) on local learning and development events. One of these events, led by Learning and Development Coordinator Dave Stewart, involved young people linked with YISS who spoke about their experience in care and how it felt to attend a children's hearing. The event gave Panel Members and young people the opportunity to discuss how important communication and listening is in a children's hearing. The evening kick started the East Renfrewshire Area Support Team's relationship with YISS, who have been involved in other local training events.

These discussions and training events have strengthened our working relationships with CHS and SCRA and support shared good practice. The voices of our young people are central to our work and training sessions have enabled children, young people, carers and families to have their say about the Children Hearing System.

Jennifer McKean, Team Manager, YISS.

INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN TRAINING

Throughout the year, the Central and West Lothian Area Support Team has been working hard to involve children and young people in training. A number of events took place, including how to effectively communicate with children and young people. At the event, five young people delivered a hard hitting sketch based on their experiences of children's hearings.



Central & West Lothian training event.

The Area Support Team is also working closely with West Lothian's 'Having Your Say' group by running two way communications events. These events provide opportunities for Panel Members to hear from children and young people about their views of hearings and how they think Panel Members should be. They give children and young people the opportunity to ask questions too.

Work is also ongoing in the area with the Falkirk Champions Board. The Central and West Lothian Area Support Team has pledged to listen to views and ideas of the Board and to use these, wherever possible, to make sure those attending children's hearings have the best possible experience.

SUPPORTING OUR VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY

Our volunteers must be well supported because they are making life changing decisions for children and young people across Scotland.

Support at a local level

400 dedicated people make up our Area Support Teams. They are volunteers too and support Panel Members in their local area.

They give their time without question - here's what they do!

Area Convener – I lead Area Support Teams and work with partners at a local level.

Depute Area Convener – I support the Area Convener and manage complaints and concerns.

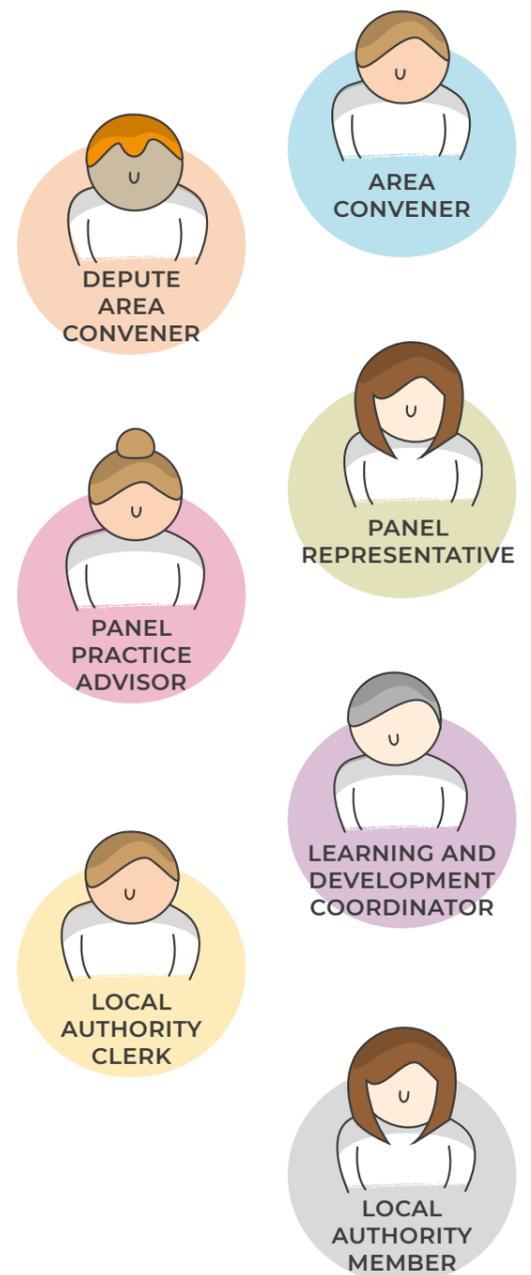
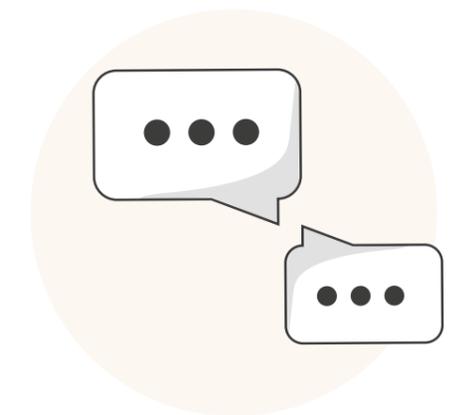
Panel Representative – I am a local point of contact for Panel Members, representing their interests within Area Support Teams. I also allocate Panel Members to children's hearings.

Panel Practice Advisor – I maintain the high quality of our Panel Member practice through observation and feedback.

Learning and Development Coordinator – I organise Panel Member learning at a local level.

Local Authority Clerk – I work for the local authority and support volunteers locally.

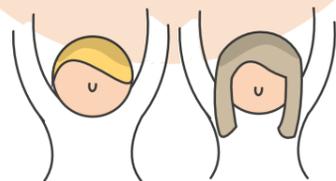
Local Authority Member – I am an elected member acting as a link between the Children's Panel and the local authority.





DID YOU KNOW...

In 2017, the National Team had a headcount of 20, growing to 24 in 2018 to support our 3,000 strong volunteer community.



A responsive National Team

In 2017, we engaged with Volunteer Scotland who undertook a review of how we support our volunteers. In conjunction with this, CHS undertook a workforce review in which all roles were evaluated and the team was restructured. These pieces of work strengthened the breadth and depth of knowledge within the National Team allowing us to focus our efforts on recruiting, training and supporting our volunteer community.

In our Community Survey, 1,550 volunteers told us:

95%

WERE PROUD TO TELL OTHERS THEY WERE PART OF CHS

93%

WOULD RECOMMEND CHS AS A GREAT WAY TO VOLUNTEER

89%

FEEL WELL TRAINED TO CARRY OUT THEIR ROLE

98%

HAVE THE SKILLS TO CARRY OUT THEIR ROLE



“Our Area Support Teams and Clerks play a vital role. They contribute widely by engaging with local partners to improve the experiences of children, young people and their families in hearings. They also provide tailored local support to Panel Members – children’s hearings couldn’t function without them.”

Boyd McAdam, National Convener, CHS.

Area Convener Liaison Group

Area Conveners play a hugely important role both in the operation of children’s hearings locally and in supporting Panel Members. They lead Area Support Teams in all aspects of local learning and development, are a key driver for the implementation of our Better Hearings work and collaborate with local partners.

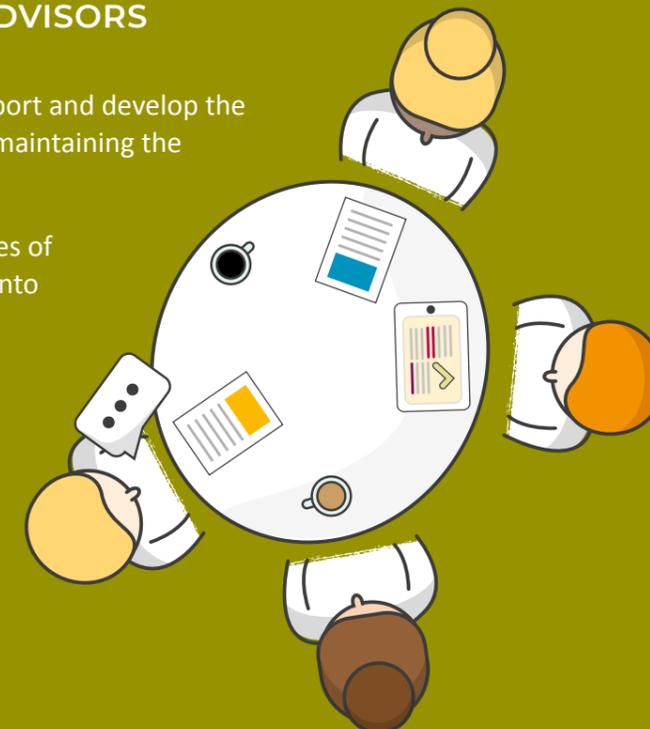
In 2017/2018 we held four Area Convener Liaison Group meetings to support our volunteer leaders. These events provide an opportunity for the National Convener to work directly with his volunteer leadership team, for Area Conveners to share best practice, for policy and practice to be discussed and peer networking to take place.

SUPPORTING OUR PANEL PRACTICE ADVISORS

In 2017/18 we looked at how we can better define, support and develop the vital role our 190 strong Panel Practice Advisors play in maintaining the high quality of our Panel Member practice.

We engaged with Panel Practice Advisors through a series of learning events across Scotland which gathered insight into what was working well, what could be improved.

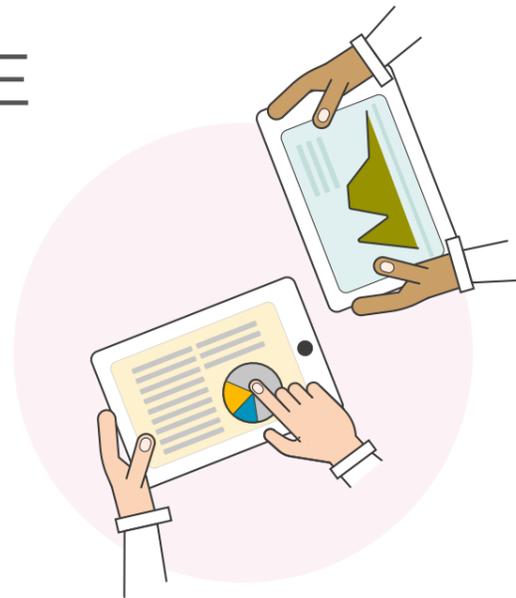
In 2018, our Panel Practice Advisors presented recommendations to the National Convener including the establishment of a national Panel Practice Advisor Forum; a National Panel Practice Advisor Training Course and a review of Panel Practice Advisor recruitment. The National Team will begin to implement these recommendations in 2018.



OUR DIGITAL FUTURE



We believe that digital tools can help us improve the way we engage, support and interact with our volunteer community, partners and importantly, the children, young people and families we exist to support.



Digital Plans

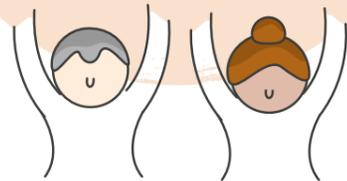
It is important to us that the CHS community, children and young people and their families or carers can access the information they need as quickly as possible and in a way that suits them.

In the last year, we've been working with Leidos, our IT partner, and SCRA to better understand how new digital systems can improve the experiences of children and young people in their children's hearings. This piece of work is ongoing.

We want to support improvement and choice for everyone involved in children's hearings. So, we've been working with our **186 Digital Bank members**, made up of members of our volunteer community, and our partner SCRA to understand what a new digital system might look like and how it might support us as a community.

DID YOU KNOW...

Our new digital systems will deliver choice and in the future new ways for children and young people to communicate their views in children's hearing.



OUR DIGITAL FUTURE



In the next two to three years being a volunteer with Children's Hearings Scotland will change. Our new digital systems will make volunteering easier and importantly we'll be keeping up to speed with the children and young people we're here to support.

Elliot Jackson, Depute Chief Executive, CHS.

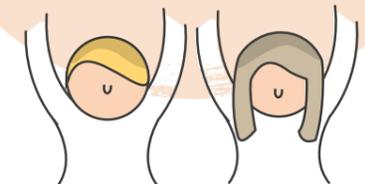
Digital systems should make life easier for the CHS community so that together we can focus all of our time on what's important: supporting Panel Members to make the best possible decisions for children and young people in their hearings.

So, we've been looking at a range of systems and technologies that enable us to do just that. These include:

- More online training.
- Claiming expenses online quickly and easily.
- Better ways to monitor and chart training and the amazing contribution all of our volunteers make to the Children's Hearings System.

DID YOU KNOW...

In the last year, we've rolled out online e-learning modules which aim to support the community in using current systems and develop news skills as we move forward with our digital plans.



Engagement plays a central role in the success of this programme of work. Leidos has been delighted with the enthusiastic and valuable contribution of the CHS community. We're indebted to the passion of the community in providing such a valuable contribution, and confident that the programme will thereby meet its goals.

Gerry Lowe, Leidos.

This strategy will only develop if it has the support of Panel Members as we'll be the ones using the tools and the applications that come out of it.

Alan Sorrell, Panel Member & Rota Manager, West Dunbartonshire.

We will continue to work together as one community to develop our Digital Strategy to ensure that it supports us all.

THANK YOU

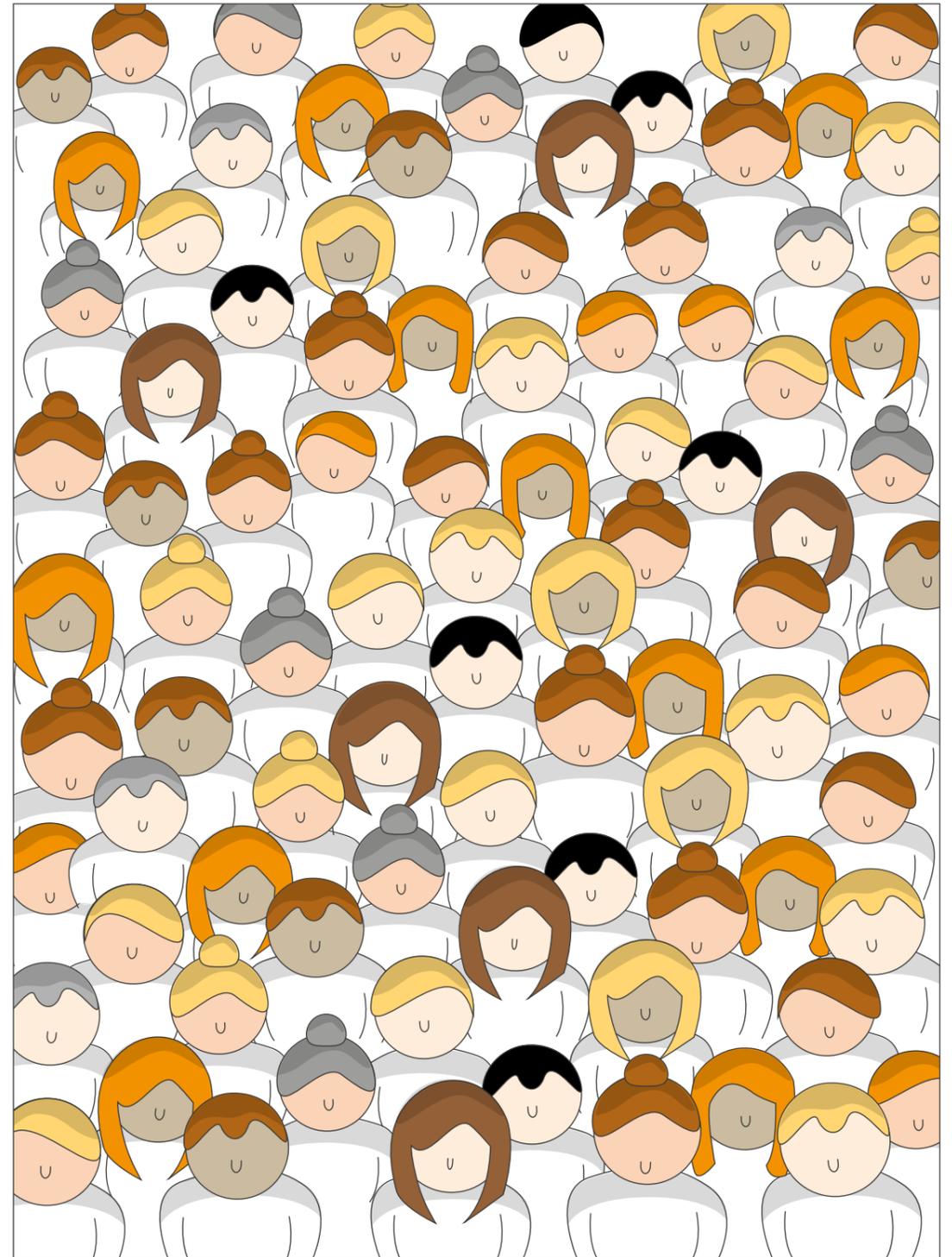


“ You make a difference within your local communities and you put children and young people at the very heart of everything you do. You are committed to protecting Scotland’s children and young people. It is this dedication and commitment that gives the Children’s Hearings System strength. ”

Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Children and Young People.



THANK YOU



Panel and Area Support Team members' 2017/2018.



child centered



fair



respectful



creative



challenging



open



Children's Hearings Scotland

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