

Progressing Children's Rights

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026

This is Children's Hearings Scotland's first Progressing Children's Rights Report since the commencement of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024. Children's Hearings Scotland has always worked tirelessly to protect and progress children's rights and we have been reporting on our actions to uphold children's rights since 2017. This report demonstrates the progress we have made between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2026.

We have reviewed our previous actions and delivered on our commitments to protect children's rights, many of which have formed part of our ongoing operating model. Achievements during this reporting period include:

- Ensuring that children's needs and rights have remained central to Panel Member decision making at children's hearings.
- Delivering on our updated Children's Participation and Rights Strategy, including the creation of and recruitment to our Experts by Experience group.
- Ensuring children's rights are at the centre of and shape our recruitment campaigns of staff and volunteers to ensure we recruit the right people that are committed to protecting children's rights.

This report also identifies our plans for the next three years. These actions include:

- Developing a new Strategic Outlook for 2027-30 that has a focus on children's rights and participation, underpinned by strong leadership and values.

- Delivering on our ambitious plans to create more robust mechanisms to support child-friendly feedback about the children's hearings system.
- Ensuring that children's rights and the voices of those with lived experience are central to our activity linked to the redesign of the children's hearings system.
- Continuing to train and upskill our staff and volunteers on children's rights, child protection and trauma-informed practice.
- Developing more robust processes for children to be made aware of their right to recourse if they believe their rights are not being upheld.

We are proud of our volunteer community for their continued hard work to ensure children's rights are, and continue to be, at the heart of their practice. With this clear day-to-day focus, and the opportunities presented by hearings system redesign, we will continue to make progress in ensuring that children's rights are respected, upheld and truly felt.

We must remain accountable to ourselves and, most importantly, the infants, children and young people whose rights are impacted when they attend a children's hearing. Children's Hearings Scotland will use this report to celebrate our positive progress, but also as an important tool to help shape and measure future improvements.

