

# Public Board Meeting

Wed 25 June 2025, 13:00 - 15:00

Conference Room 2, Thistle House

## Agenda

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### 13:00 - 13:00 **1. Welcome and Apologies**

0 min

*verbal* Katharina Kasper

To update

 0. Board Meeting Agenda JUNE 25.pdf (1 pages)

### 13:00 - 13:05 **2. Declarations of Interest**

5 min

*verbal* Katharina Kasper

To update

### 13:05 - 13:10 **3. Approval of the Minute from the Meeting on 25 March 2025**

5 min

*paper* Katharina Kasper

To approve

 3. CHS-2526-01 CHS Board DRAFT Minute 25.03.25.pdf (7 pages)

### 13:10 - 13:10 **4. Action Log Update**

0 min

*paper* Katharina Kasper

To update

 4. CHS-2526-02 Board Action Log - January 2025.pdf (1 pages)

### 13:10 - 13:20 **5. Chair Update**

10 min

*verbal* Katharina Kasper

To update

### 13:20 - 13:30 **6. ARC Chair Update**

10 min

*verbal* Sean Austin

To update

### 13:30 - 13:40 **7. PaCC Chair Update**

10 min

*verbal* Katie Docherty

To update

### 13:40 - 13:55 **8. National Convener/CEO Update**

15 min

*paper* Elliot Jackson

To update

 8. CHS-2526-03 National Convener CEO Update.pdf (8 pages)

## ITEMS FOR NOTING

### 13:55 - 14:00 **9. Financial Forecast Outturn 2025/26**

5 min

*paper* *Jessica MacDonald*

To note

 9. CHS-2526-04 Financial Forecast Outturn 25-26 Paper.pdf (3 pages)

### 14:00 - 14:05 **10. Quarter 1 Data Summary Report**

5 min

*paper* *Jessica MacDonald*

To note

 10a. CHS-2526-05 Q1 Data Summary Report.pdf (4 pages)

 10b. CHS-2526-05 Appendix 1 - Q1 Board Data Summary v1.pdf (1 pages)

### 14:05 - 14:10 **11. Quarter 1 Performance Report**

5 min

*paper* *Jessica MacDonald*

To note

 11a. CHS-2526-06 Q1 Performance Report\_Board\_2025\_26.pdf (3 pages)

 11b. CHS-2526-06 Appendix 1 - Q1 Performance Report\_DRAFT.pdf (13 pages)

## ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

### 14:10 - 14:15 **12. ARC Annual Report 2024-25**

5 min

*paper* *Sean Austin*

To approve

 12a. CHS-2526-07 ARC Annual Report 2024-25.pdf (7 pages)

 12b. CHS-2526-07 Appendix 1 - ARC ToR 2025 APPROVED\_.pdf (5 pages)

### 14:15 - 14:20 **13. PaCC Annual Report 2024-25**

5 min

*paper* *Katie Docherty*

To approve

 13a. CHS-2526-08 DRAFT PaCC Annual Report 2024-25 v0.1.pdf (4 pages)

 13b. CHS-2526-08 Appendix 1 - PaCC ToR 2025-26 FINAL.pdf (5 pages)

### 14:20 - 14:25 **14. EDI Strategy and Equality Outcomes Update**

5 min

*paper* *Joanne O'Leary*

To approve

 14. CHS-2526-09 EDI Strategy and Equality Outcomes Update.pdf (2 pages)

### 14:25 - 14:30 **15. Annual Accounts Performance Report and Governance Statement (FreM) 2024**

5 min

*paper* *Jessica MacDonald*

To approve

 15a CHS-2526-10 Annual Accounts Perf Report and Gov Statement FreM.pdf (3 pages)

 15b. CHS-2526-10 Appendix 1 - Governance Statement 2024\_25.pdf (5 pages)

## ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND UPDATE

**14:30 - 14:40** **16. Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill Update**  
10 min

*paper* *Carol Wassell*

To discuss and update

📄 16. CHS-2526-11 CCCESP Bill Board Report.pdf (4 pages)

**14:40 - 14:50** **17. Children's Participation and Rights Strategy: Annual Review**  
10 min

*paper* *Carol Wassell*

To discuss and update

📄 17a. CHS-2526-12 Participation Board Cover Paper 25062025.pdf (2 pages)

📄 17b. CHS-2526-12 Appendix 1 - Childrens Participation and Rights Strategy Annual Review.pdf (16 pages)

📄 17c. CHS-2526-12 Appendix 2- Implementation Plan Overview Status and Update.pdf (2 pages)

📄 17d. CHS-2526-12 Appendix 3 - Participation Channels Overview.pdf (1 pages)

📄 17e. CHS-2526-12 Appendix 4 - ExE Information & Pledge.pdf (2 pages)

📄 17f. CHS-2526-12 Appendix 5 - Three Pillars Implementation Plan.pdf (1 pages)

**14:50 - 15:00** **18. AOB**

10 min

*verbal* *Katharina Kasper*

To update

**15:00 - 15:00** **19. Date of Next Meeting**

0 min

*verbal* *Katharina Kasper*

To update

24 September 2025, 10am - 12pm, Conference Room 2, Thistle House, Edinburgh

**BOARD MEETING  
25 JUNE 2025  
1.00pm – 3.00pm, Conference Room 2, Thistle House/Teams Virtual  
AGENDA**

	Timings	Item	Lead	Paper Number	Purpose
1.	13:00	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>	Chair	Verbal	
2.	13:00	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	Chair	verbal	To update
3.	13:05	<b>Approval of the Minute from the Meeting on 25 March 2025</b>	Chair	CHS-2526-01	To approve
4.	13:10	<b>Action Log Update</b>	Chair	CHS-2526-02	To update
5.	13:10	<b>Chair Update</b>	Chair	verbal	To update
6.	13:20	<b>ARC Chair Update</b>	SA	Verbal	To update
7.	13:30	<b>PaCC Chair Update</b>	JD	verbal	To update
8.	13:40	<b>National Convener/CEO Update</b>	LH	CHS-2526-03	To update
<b>ITEMS FOR NOTING</b>					
9.	13:55	<b>Financial Forecast Outturn 2025/26</b>	JMac	CHS-2526-04	To note
10.	14:00	<b>Quarter 1 Data Summary Report</b>	JMac	CHS-2526-05	To note
11.	14:05	<b>Quarter 1 Performance Report</b>	JMac	CHS-2526-06	To note
<b>ITEMS FOR APPROVAL</b>					
12.	14:10	<b>ARC Annual Report 2024-25</b>	SA	CHS-2526-07	To approve
13.	14:15	<b>PaCC Annual Report 2024-25</b>	KD	CHS-2526-08	To approve
14.	14:20	<b>EDI Strategy and Equality Outcomes Update</b>	JO	CHS-2526-09	To approve
15.	14:25	<b>Annual Accounts Performance Report and Governance Statement (FreM) 2024</b>	JMac	CHS-2526-10	To approve
<b>ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND UPDATE</b>					
16.	14:30	<b>Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill Update</b>	CW	CHS-2526-11	To discuss and update
17.	14:40	<b>Children's Participation and Rights Strategy: Annual Review</b>	CW	CHS-2526-12	To discuss and update
18.	14:50	<b>AOB</b>	Chair	verbal	To update
19.	15:00	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>			
		24 September 2025, 10am – 12pm, Conference Room 2, Thistle House, Edinburgh			

**Agenda Item 3. CHS-2526-01**

**Board Meeting  
4<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2024/25  
25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at Thistle House, Edinburgh 13:00 – 15:00**

**DRAFT MINUTE**

<b>Present</b>	Katharina Kasper (KK)	Chair (for items 1,2,3,4,5 and 14)
	Sean Austin (SA)	Depute Board Chair/ARC Chair
	Beth-Anne McDowall (BM)	Board Member
	Katie Docherty (KD)	Board Member (via Teams)
	Barbara Neil (BN)	Board Member
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Elliot Jackson (EJ)	CEO/National Convener, CHS
	Jessica MacDonald (JMac)	Director of Business and Finance, CHS
	Lynne Harrison (LH)	Director of Tribunal Delivery, CHS
	Carol Wassell (CW)	Director of Positive Outcomes, CHS
	Joanne O’Leary (JO)	Director of People and Culture, CHS (via Teams)
	Nick Rougvie (NR)	Children’s Hearings Sponsor Team Lead, SG (via Teams) (for item 14)
	Taiba Ali (TA)	Children’s Hearings Sponsor Team, Legislation and Policy Leader, SG (via Teams) (for item 14)
	Andrew Watson (AW)	Director for Children and Families, SG (via Teams) for item 14
	Stephen Bell (SB)	Finance Manager, SG (via Teams) for item 14
	Katie Jones (KJ)	Member of Public (Via Teams) (Observer)
	Frieda Cadogan (FC)	Executive Assistant/Governance Officer – Note Taker
	Laure Hann (LH)	Office and Administration Coordinator (Observer)

	<b>Item</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including SA first meeting as Depute Chair and KD first meeting as Chair of People and Culture Committee (PaCC) Chair.</li> <li>• KK will leave the meeting following the discussion under item 14 with AW and SA will chair the remained of the meeting.</li> </ul>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>	
	Nothing noted.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Approval of the Minute from the Meeting on 21 January 2025</b>	
	Minute from the meeting on 21 January 2025 was approved as an accurate record.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Action Log Update</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The action log was update on a separate document.</li> <li>• All actions complete except for action 2 and 5 which have a deadline date of the June Board meeting.</li> </ul>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Chair Update</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KK provided the Board with assurance on the progress of the CHS Board member recruitment:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All progressing well with robust process being led by the Public Appointments Team, supported by FC.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

**Agenda Item 3. CHS-2526-01**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interview panel will consist of Brian Taylor, Deputy Director of Children's Rights, Protection and Justice and KK.</li> <li>○ Interview with Young People's Panel has taken place with candidates and interviews with main panel will take place on 26, 28 and 31 March.</li> <li>● Meeting between KK and EJ, with the Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise that was due to take place on 11 March was cancelled and is due to be rescheduled. A letter was received from the Minister with apologies and confirmation that this will be rescheduled. The Board will be updated on the outcome of this meeting at the June Board.</li> </ul>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair Update</b>	
	<p>SA provided the Board with an update from the ARC meeting which took place on 25 February:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The meeting was the last meeting for Henry Robson as a Board member and was thanked for support, advice, and commitment.</li> <li>● New audit lead Lisa Duthie from Audit Scotland attended her first meeting to support CHS going forward and has met with members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and SA as Chair.</li> <li>● Several items were approved, prior to Board approval today; Financial Regulations, Accounting Policies, Internal Audit and External Audit Plans, the Committee Terms of Reference and the Committee Work plan.</li> <li>● There were four recommendations within the Internal Audit Report which were accepted by the Committee and corrective actions are progressing for completion at the end of March.</li> <li>● The Committee agreed for the annual review of effectiveness will be conducted online for 2024/25.</li> <li>● The Quarter 3 Compliance Report was presented with the Committee requested that the risk score for the Learning Academy is reviewed, considering the size of the programme.</li> <li>● The Committee received an update on the Quality Strategy, Business Continuity Policy and Plan, and the Digital Disaster Recovery Plan. SA advised that the Committee received firm reassurance for these high quality, comprehensive documents and commended the team on the outstanding quality of work that has gone into these.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked SA for the update and positive feedback on the high standard of work done by the team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No questions were raised.</li> <li>● SB joined the meeting.</li> </ul>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>People and Culture Committee (PaCC) Chair Update</b>	
	<p>KD provided the Board with an update from the PaCC meeting which took place on 11 March:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● KD thanked SA for attending the Committee meeting in place of BM, who was unable to attend, to ensure the meeting was quorate.</li> <li>● The Committee received the Quarterly People Strategy Implementation update and KD thanked JO and the team for a good quality report that is aligned to the CHS values and Investment and People work.</li> <li>● The Terms of Reference was presented and approved, prior to final Board approval at today's meeting.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee approved the Refreshed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.</li> <li>• Several CHS Leave Policies were presented for approval, following an update, including the Neonatal Policy. This has been updated in line with the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023 however final regulations are still to be published therefore further update may be required.</li> <li>• Finally, the Committee received an update from the Team Forum with several fundraising activities ongoing to raise money for the CHS nominated charity of the year, Children’s Protection Action Group. The new Chairs have embedded into the group extremely well and leading on several activities.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked KD for the update. SA was also thanked for stepping into the Committee at short notice to make this quorate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AW joined the meeting to talk to item 14 which was brought forward.</li> </ul>	
8.	<b>National Convener/CEO Update</b>	
	<p>EJ presented the report to the Board and highlighted the following four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Point 3.1 Capacity</b> – This is a consistent theme for discussion for the Board. Following the decision to hold a second recruitment campaign in February/March for new Panel Members, work is ongoing with the Rota Management Team, and this is progressing well. There is still work to be done on the analysis following the centralised rota being in place for one year. The SLT will provide a Board update on data and predictions based recent recruitment campaigns and forecasts, at the meeting in June.</li> </ul> <p>In a redesign context, the scale and reach of any Bill proposed is still under consideration and CHS will continue to work with our Scottish Government colleagues on this. Notwithstanding these actions, CHS has committed to two recruitment campaigns in the 2025/26 business year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Point 3.2 Children’s Hearings Reform Landscape</b> – CHS will be impacted by the necessary legislative reforms required to transform the hearings system and improvements to children’s care in Scotland. As a result, CHS are reviewing our training for our volunteers, and this will be discussed in more detail under item 20 of the agenda.</li> <li>• <b>Point 3.4 Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry</b> – EJ and members of the CHS community attended an evidence session on 28 February as part of the inquiry chaired by Lord Brailsford. The Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA) also provided evidence. This was to provide information from an organisational perspective on the response to the pandemic.</li> </ul> <p>The three key takeaway messages that were shared with the CHS Community were that; CHS did an excellent job in protecting children and young people during this time, CHS worked in partnership with other agencies, with improvements made to our systems and the CHS Community was commended following the three sessions by Lord Brailsford for their unique contribution as volunteers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Point 3.5 Chair Meeting the Child</b> – It has been confirmed with the Scottish Government that no legislative change is needed to incorporate this child-</li> </ul>	

### Agenda Item 3. CHS-2526-01

centred practice into the role of the chair and there is no need to wait for children and young people to benefit from it. Following this, a national sequenced rollout following the successful pilot, will begin week ending 28 March. Panel Chairs are excited about this as this should create a more comfortable environment for the children, young people, and families.

- TA left the meeting.

The following feedback/comments were provided by the Board:

- BM welcomed the update and asked if CHS have a list of changes that young people and panel members would like to see, that do not need legislative change and how do we stage gate this.
- EJ advised that the SLT and Board will together discuss the prioritisation of competing agenda items, in the second half of the year. This will be discussed in the context of reform. CW added that the Children's for Hearings publication has been reviewed and from this CHS have a list of areas to progress, following prioritisation, as soon as possible.
- BM asked if we know the next steps from the Scottish Government following consultation and are there formal tangible deliverables to be taken forward and timescales for this.
- It was advised that the Scottish Government response to the consultation sets out recommendations. This will go to Ministers for debate and agreement which should happen in the summer.
- NR confirmed that work is ongoing and agreed with these approximate timescales. Reassurance was provided that the Sponsor Team are working with EJ and the SLT on the legislative changes but noted this is a complicated process. The parliamentary process drives the timescales for this.
- BM asked what provision for the lived experience voice to be heard to drive forward on the Redesign Board.
- EJ reassured BM and the Board that the Redesign Board will connect with the Experts by Experience and Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV) groups to help shape the implementation of the legislation in a child centric way.
- KD welcomed the update on capacity and commented that it would be good to have a clear understanding of current and predicted panel members and what the triggers are which would mean a risk to the service.
- LH advised that this is currently being looked at and a more detailed report will be brought back to the Board in June.
- SA reassured the Board that capacity is discussed at each ARC meeting as the number one risk for CHS.
- BN provided an observation of how quickly the organisation adapted to the pressures and challenges faced and is thankful for being part of this. In relation to the Chair Greeting the Child, BN also expressed the importance of humility and treating people with kindness, but also the need to do this in the right way.
- EJ confirmed that the initial pilot identified a range of success factors to use within the wider rollout, which will be done incrementally. Initial concerns raised have now been worked through to ensure a well thought out engagement approach that Panel Members can use with the child, young person, and their family.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SA commended EJ and colleagues for the performance of the organisation throughout the pandemic and for the current quality of work being undertaken. The way the Change agenda is being driven forward is hugely impressive.</li> <li>NR left the meeting at 11:10.</li> </ul>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Finance Report P11</b>	
	<p>JMac introduced the paper to the Board for noting and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The final forecast for this quarter has reduced primarily due to the recruitment freeze brought about from the Scottish Government.</li> <li>SA asked if the resignations and underspend on salaries has had an impact on delivery on any key areas.</li> <li>JMac advised that there was a slight delay in the procurement of services for one project due to the resignation of the postholder, but overall, there has been no other significant impact.</li> <li>The Board noted the paper and welcomed the update.</li> </ul>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Quarter 4 Performance Report</b>	
	<p>JMac introduced the paper to the Board for noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SA commended the team for the phenomenal amount of work that has been completed over the year and welcomed the update.</li> </ul>	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Digital Annual Report 2024/25</b>	
	<p>JMac introduced the paper to the Board for noting and provided the following response to questions raised out with the meeting by SA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The reference to CRM in the report stands for Customer Relationship Management. Microsoft dynamics are being used for rota managers, whom had been managing this manually previously which was not sustainable or efficient. CRM was introduced to improve this process.</li> <li>The Digital Lab was clarified as being a new governance forum being established in this business year to enable the prioritisation of digital change projects.</li> <li>The data displayed under item 4; Appendix 1 was clarified as being the plan for the replacement of digital devices for 2025/26. The vertical spike lines show the points that devices will be purchased with the orange blocks being the inventory level which reduces as devices are distributed.</li> <li>SA asked how the Digital Lab relates to the Change Board. JMac clarified that this has been considered, however not all digital work comes through Change. Any requests from Change will go through the Digital Lab. The Change Manager has oversight through the Digital Lab Group therefore is aware of priorities. A regular report will be submitted to the Senior Leadership Team and the Change Board meetings.</li> <li>SA thanked JMac for the update and clarification and the Board noted the paper.</li> </ul>	
<b>12.</b>	<b>Refreshed Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) Strategy 2025/26</b>	
	<p>JO introduced the paper to the Board for noting, following approval at the People and Culture Committee (PaCC) meeting on 11 March:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SA commented that it is positive to see this as part of business as usual for CHS and the Board welcomed the update.</li> </ul>	

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<b>13.</b>	<b>2025/26 Annual Business Plan</b>	
	<p>JMac introduced the paper to the Board for approval, in advance of Key Performance Indicators and budget figures being added at the end of the financial year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board approved the Annual Business Plan for 2025/26.</li> </ul>	
<b>14.</b>	<b>Budget Approval 2025/26</b>	
	<p>KK welcomed AW and SB to the meeting following agreement at the Board meeting in January for them to return to provide an update on the actions raised. An update was provided as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SG are working hard to provide the Budget and Monitoring Allocation (BAM) letter prior to the year end and are hopeful this will be achieved.</li> <li>• The SG recognise the additional demands CHS have in the coming financially year due to the upcoming implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) Act (CCJA) and system reform. The SG expressed their commitment to continuing to work in partnership and support of CHS throughout the financial year to help CHS meet statutory obligations.</li> <li>• The SG advised that it is committed to continue to keep the future spending requirements for 2026/27 and CHS need for a more stabilised position. AW discussed the ambition of a multi-year settlement to aid organisations plan for transformation.</li> </ul> <p>The Board approved the budget for 2025/26, subject to the Scottish Government providing a BAM letter that reflected a commitment to support our assessed need; and that AW would attend the September meeting of the Board to update on the progress of a sustainable budget settlement for 2026/27.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KK thanked AW and SB for attending the meeting and for the ongoing commitment to partnership working. KK left the meeting at 10:35 and SA took over as Chair.</li> </ul>	
<b>15.</b>	<b>Financial Regulations</b>	
	<p>JMac introduced the paper to the Board for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board approved the paper.</li> </ul>	
<b>16.</b>	<b>Accounting Policies</b>	
	<p>JMac introduced the paper to the Board for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board approved the paper.</li> </ul>	
<b>17.</b>	<b>ARC Terms of Reference</b>	
	<p>SA introduced the reviewed and updated document to the Board for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board approved the updates outlined in the paper.</li> </ul>	
<b>18.</b>	<b>PaCC Terms of Reference</b>	
	<p>KD introduced the reviewed and updated document to the Board for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board approved the updates outlined in the paper.</li> </ul>	
<b>19.</b>	<b>PaCC Workplan 2025</b>	
	<p>KD introduced the reviewed and updated document, to the Board for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board approved the updates outlined in the paper.</li> </ul>	
<b>20.</b>	<b>Legislative Landscape and Impact on CHS</b>	
	<p>CW introduced the paper to the Board for discussion, with the following points highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The two key areas of impact for CHS are implementation of the CCJA and the</li> </ul>	

**Agenda Item 3. CHS-2526-01**

	<p>significant legislation proposals in the summer to keep The Promise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A discussion took place around the needs of the 16- and 17-year-old young people that will be referred into the service, upon the implementation of the CCJA. The Board agreed the importance of having good, clear communication in place to ensure public and panel member confidence and good quality training for panel members. The importance of volunteer and staff wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of the young people.</li> <li>• The Board agreed on the need for a focus on the need's aspect of the young people and compassion and care. It is important for CHS to take the lead in engagement with politicians and stakeholder groups on this.</li> <li>• EJ assured the Board that a Senior Communications post has been agreed for CHS and will be key in taking this forward, along with SLT and Board. A high-level plan will be brought to the next Board meeting in June on next steps.</li> <li>• EJ offered further reassurance to the Board that partnership working is key and will continue to collaborate with wider stakeholder groups and Experts by Experience on this.</li> <li>• In relation to capacity mentioned previously, SA asked what the impact has been on National Team colleagues and the importance of staff colleagues to feel appreciated and supported.</li> <li>• CW reassured the Board that colleagues are incredibly positive and having the Change Team in place has been incredibly valuable. CHS colleagues are extremely committed to aims and ambitions, however, agree that SLT need to be mindful of staff wellbeing and will continue to be.</li> <li>• LH agreed and highlighted the need to continue to take learning from previous recruitment campaigns and impact of our community and alternative options for improvements.</li> <li>• Finally, JO highlighted the refreshed People Strategy, and that wellbeing is fundamental to this. Through the staff Pulse Surveys CHS can gather data for real time insight into any gaps or challenges to support colleagues.</li> <li>• SA relayed thanks to the group for the helpful discussion and offered SLT colleagues support, on behalf of the Board, whenever this may be needed.</li> </ul>	
<b>21.</b>	<b>Board Governance Schedule</b>	
	<p>EJ introduced the paper to the Board and provided an update as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board meeting dates from June onwards have been changed from a Tuesday to the Wednesday due to changes to KK workplace arrangement.</li> <li>• A proposal was made for the scheduled Board Strategy sessions on 8 and 9 May to be postponed due to the impending Promise Bill and until the new Board members begin their tenure. The Board agreed to this.</li> </ul>	<b>FC</b>
<b>22.</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	Nothing noted.	
<b>23.</b>	<b>Date of Future Meetings</b>	
	25 June 2025, 10.00am – 12pm, Conference Room 2, Thistle House/Microsoft Teams.	

Agenda Item 4. CHS-2526-02

CH Board Meeting Action Log



Ongoing	0
Overdue	0
Delayed	0
Complete	2
Not Started	0
Closed	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>

Action No	Paper Ref (not for SLT)	Action Title	Action Details	Date Added	Due Date	Owner	Lead	Update	Status	Completion Date	Additional Comments
2	CHS-2425-33	Experts by Experience	Update to come to March Board meeting on support plans for young people.	21/01/2025	24/06/2025	CW		Verbal update and fuller report in June on progress to date.	Complete		On agenda for 25 June.
5	CHS-2425-35	Panel Member Recruitment Update	update to be given at June meeting on recruitment position and timeline of key points.	21/01/2025	12/06/2025	LH			Complete		On agenda for 25 June.
7											
8											
9											

**Agenda Item 8. CHS-2526-03**

<b>Meeting:</b>	CHS Board Meeting
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	25 June 2025
<b>Title:</b>	National Convener/Chief Executive Board Update
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	Elliot Jackson, NC/CEO
<b>Report Author:</b>	Elliot Jackson, NC/CEO

<b>1.</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to ask the Board to note the update from the CHS National Convener/CEO on a range of organisational activity between the last Board in March 2025 and now.</p> <p>The report provides bite sized updates that can be expanded upon during the Board meeting.</p>
1.2	Any member wishing additional information should contact the National Convener/CEO in advance of the meeting.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Board are asked to note the paper and update provided by the CHS National Convener/CEO.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Key Points for Discussion</b>
3.1	<b>Capacity</b>
3.1.1	CHS continues to operate in an increasingly challenging capacity context related to the deployment of our panel volunteers to Children's Hearings across Scotland.
3.1.2	The downward trend in volunteering is not a unique challenge to CHS. The volume of people volunteering across Scotland has fallen from 30% in 2011 to 18% in 2023 (source – Scottish Household Survey). As an organisation reliant on the contribution of volunteers to deliver tribunals in Scotland, this creates a significant challenge and risk for CHS. Additionally, the role of the Panel Member and Chairing Panel Member is increasingly complex with additional responsibilities and scope.
3.1.3	All of this in the context that the Children's Care & Justice (Scotland) Act is expected to generate up to 3300 more hearings each year from early 2026, with the welcome inclusion of 1300 16/17-year-olds to the Children's Hearings system.
3.1.4	In the context of this challenge and in preparation for the Children's Care & Justice (Scotland) Act, the CHS Change Board established the Capacity Programme in February 2024 to increase capacity and reduce organisational risk. Activities within this programme include maximising recruitment, exploring learning as a capacity lever, optimising the way we manage and deploy Panel Members to the

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	rota, increasing retention via wellbeing and working collaboratively with SCRA to deliver capacity via a review of scheduling practices.
3.1.5	To further increase capacity, we will be undertaking two recruitment campaigns annually in September and January 2025/26. Having undertaken this in 2024/25, we recognise the significant organisational resource impact of recruitment activity, especially the vital process of shortlisting and selection which has a particular impact for our Panel Practice Advisers and their ability to support re-appointment and Observation activities – critical parts of their role. We are therefore exploring opportunities to do this differently from September 2025 to enable efficiency but maintain the quality of intake our current processes enable. We are engaging with key stakeholders to generate and explore creative solutions to achieve this and will report on these in due course. Thank you to our volunteer Panel Practice Advisers and Learning Facilitators who have given their time to support trainees from both campaigns.
3.2	<b>Autumn Panel Member Campaign and Recruitment Activities</b>
3.2.1	Plans have been finalised for the autumn campaign. The campaign will launch on 1 September 2025 and will run until the end of the first week in October. Selection across Scotland will commence in mid-October with final recommendations made in November. Their CHS induction and pre-service introduction will be complete by December before starting their pre-service programme in January 2026.
3.2.2	Given the commitment to conduct two Panel Member recruitment campaigns per annum for the next 3-years to meet the increased volume of Hearings associated with the Children's Care and Justice (Scotland) Act, senior colleagues hosted a workshop to generate new ideas to improve the process. The workshop generated over two hundred ideas which have been catalogued along with feedback from Local Clerks, Regional and National colleagues along with Panel Members and PPAs. Ideas are being assessed for feasibility to be delivered in 2025 with a particular focus on reducing the demands on local teams during the selection process. A 'roadmap' will be produced with support from colleagues from the Change Team for future change and improvement.
3.3	<b>Pre-service Update January and April 2025</b>
3.3.1	<p>The January 2025 cohort of newly recruited panel members saw an additional 335 panel members come into service from an initial pool of 426 trainees who were successful at interview. (399 of these began day one of training). This is a retention rate of 84%. This is compared to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 339 in 2024 (90% retention rate) and</li> <li>• 322 in 2023 (92% retention rate)</li> </ul> <p>The main reasons for withdrawal from training was reported as 'work commitments' and 'unforeseen personal circumstance.'</p>

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3.3.2	<p>The second campaign of the year, which saw another pre-service cohort start in April, began with 286 trainees. We will not know final numbers of completers until the course completes at the end of July.</p> <p>Of those who completed pre-service there was a reported 98% satisfaction rate with learning outcomes, materials and in-person training delivery. This has been a consistent score since 2023.</p> <p>Four percent of trainees who attended induction reported they had experience of care, and a small proportion (6%) of those asked for additional support. They worked closely alongside the Learning Team and Well-being Coordinators, participating in 1 to 1's and group activities with a focus on wellbeing support, in addition to what is provided to all trainees.</p>
3.3.3	<p>A new approach was taken with the January cohort with the learning model being redeveloped to include seven training days (instead of the previous 5, with 3 more days later in the year to complete Enhanced Practice and Management of Hearings) with a host of wrap-around support for trainees as they progressed into serving as Chairs and Panel Members. In 2025 trainees left pre-service training equipped to conduct all essential roles for delivering high-quality hearings, including an understanding of the Chairing Role. Management of Hearings learning is now embedded with the 7 days pre-service training. This new approach has led to circa one hundred panel members satisfying the quality criteria to sit as Chairs at the beginning of their volunteer journey as Panel Members. In partnership with local teams, we will provide appropriate and individualized support for those who were not passed to sit as Chairs at the end of their pre-service journey and create opportunities for them to gain experience as Panel Members before fully transitioning into the Chair role in a timely fashion.</p>
3.3.4	<p>Collaboration with stakeholders was central to the redesign process. Input from Area Support Teams, Learning Academy staff, experienced Panel Members, and national leadership was gathered through structured feedback, evaluation sessions, and review workshops. These insights shaped content decisions, delivery structure, and resource enhancements to ensure the revised programme aligned with operational realities and best practice expectations.</p> <p>To evaluate this new approach the Kirkpatrick Four-Level Evaluation Model was used, which looks at reaction to the learning provided, how the learning was applied, feedback on behaviour, and results of completing training including ongoing participation and evidence of competence.</p>
3.3.5	<p>The learning from this evaluation has been incorporated in pre-service activity for the April 25 cohort of new trainees, which saw changes for improvement made to content and delivery of learning. Enhancements have been made to communication with trainees, and a more structured approach to onboarding focusing on digital support and orientation in the organisation.</p>

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3.4	<b>Children's Hearings Redesign</b>
3.4.1	<p>The next meeting of the Redesign Board will take place on 18 June 2025. The Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping The Promise will attend the meeting to hear updates from the Board.</p> <p>The meeting with focus upon proposed legislative changes and the non-legislative reform that the Redesign Board are driving across the Children's Hearings System. These non-legislative improvements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Chair Greeting the Child</b> - By the end of 2025 we will see the introduction of a new practice at Children's Hearings Scotland where the Chairing Panel Member greets the child before the hearing. A practice improvement that we know from the voice of children and young people will make a big difference to support a relational and rights promoting start to a hearing.</li> <li>• <b>Infants and Young Children</b> - In collaboration with CELCIS we are developing a good practice guide to further develop decision making for infants and young children. Infants and young children face vulnerabilities when in need of care and protection. By the end of 2025, the practice guide will have been developed and shared with our volunteer community.</li> <li>• <b>Trauma Informed Practice</b> - By the end of 2025 we will have supported our staff and volunteer workforce to develop Trauma Informed Skills through learning and development.</li> <li>• <b>Language Matters</b> - In 2024 we published and started to implement nationally our new 'Language in the Hearing Room' Guide. Based on an excellent collaboration with Our Hearings Our Voice and the multi partner Language Leaders group, we listened to the impact language was having in hearings and created a new guidance that is bring integrated into our work nationally. Language in the hearing room</li> <li>• <b>Experts by Experience</b> - 2025 has seen the realisation of a long-held vision to welcome an Experts by Experience group to Children's Hearings Scotland, as outlined in our Children's Participation and Rights Strategy. Our Experts, recruited from across Scotland will be at the heart of our practice improvements and transformation in the years ahead. Experts by Experience</li> <li>• <b>Listening</b> - To ensure we continue to listen and amplify voice, in 2024 we launched our children friendly feedback, providing one front door to share your voice with CHS and SCRA. Making it easier for children to give feedback</li> <li>• <b>Involving Young People in Recruitment</b> - We continued to develop and promote our lived experience recruiters for the recruitment of panel members and staff at CHS. The Participation Team have collaborated with our colleagues in HR to produce a guide for effectively involving young people in recruitment. Young people continue to influence and inform the recruitment process and our directly involved in recruiting Panel Members, staff, and CHS Board Members. Children's Participation and Rights Strategy</li> </ul>

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	The Scottish Government have confirmed that the plan to publish a Bill in the Scottish Parliament around the reforms associated with The Promise. If this Bill is published prior to the Board meeting, there will be a separate Board report outlining its key features.
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Townhall Meetings</b>
3.5.1	<p>On 28 May CHS hosted our seventh Town Hall webinar for our volunteer community, titled 'The legislative landscape: changes affecting hearings'. The event focused on four main areas of legislative change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024</li> <li>• Children's Hearings Redesign</li> <li>• UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act implementation</li> <li>• Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019.</li> </ul>
3.5.2	<p>It was co-hosted by Bethany Cunningham, Tribunal Delivery Manager for Tayside and Fife, and Ross Pitbladdo, a Panel Member serving Central.</p> <p>Stephen Bermingham and Kirsty Nelson from our Practice and Policy team gave short presentations, then answered questions submitted in advance, followed by questions submitted live during the webinar. Ross facilitated the discussion.</p>
3.5.3	We had around 210 attendees throughout the event. We have had thirty-eight responses to a feedback survey: overall incredibly positive and with some useful suggestions for improvements.
3.5.4	<p>Kirsty and Stephen have provided short written answers to around a dozen questions that they ran out of time for, and these will be shared with our volunteers and flagged up in our monthly Community newsletter.</p> <p>Thanks are due to Ross for representing the voice of the volunteer so well on the night.</p>
<b>3.6</b>	<b>National Youth Justice Conference 2025</b>
3.6.1	Together with the Chair and other members of the CHS Practice and Standard team, we attended the National Youth Justice Conference 2025 on 11 June 2025 in Stirling. The theme for the conference was 'Childhood, Safeguarding and the Children's Hearing System.' This annual event attracts a range of inputs from academia, professional advisers, and leading thinkers in the world of social care, social work, and youth justice.
3.6.2	CHS had a leading role in contributing to the conference on the first day with an input on, 'Children's Hearings – risk, protection and meeting the needs of the older child.' This session set out our views on the introduction of the Children's Care and Justice (Scotland) Act and how we are preparing Panel Members. We also

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	took the opportunity to talk, albeit it at a very high-level, on our hopes and aspirations for the redesign of the Children's Hearings System.
3.7	<b>Recognising the CHS Community</b>
3.7.1	<p>I am consistently in awe of the incredible commitment shown across our community to their volunteering role with CHS and their dedication and commitment to infants, children, and young people across Scotland. This year I wanted to particularly acknowledge a handful of exceptional individuals who in this year are celebrating an incredible 45+ years of voluntary service as CHS Panel Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ian Hart MBE East Dunbartonshire 50 years</li> <li>• Alisdair Barron, Glasgow 48 years</li> <li>• Babs Paterson, South Lanarkshire 47 years</li> <li>• Prof Stephen Phillips MBE, West Dunbartonshire 45 years</li> <li>• Gordon Wyness, Highland &amp; Moray 45 years</li> </ul> <p>To consider the many hundreds of children that these Panel Members will have listened to, engaged with and for whom whose lives the decisions they have made may have positively influenced is quite breathtaking.</p> <p>To be able to continue to contribute over such a considerable period not only requires a commitment to prepare for and attend hearings, but also has required a commitment to lifelong learning, keeping up to date with the numerous and varied legislative changes that have impacted Children's hearings over the past 45 years, including of course the creation of CHS.</p> <p>At a point in the UK and Scotland when volunteering is in decline these are truly exceptional achievements and a reflection of Scotland's most outstanding citizens.</p>
3.7.2	<p>I am delighted that more than thirty members of our Panel Community will be guests of the King and Queen at the Royal Garden Party in Edinburgh on 1<sup>st</sup> July. Nominated by Lord Lieutenants, the King's representatives in Scotland, CHS volunteers from across Scotland will attend the Palace of Holyroodhouse.</p> <p>This is fantastic recognition of the unique role our volunteers play in making Scotland the best place to grow up for those infants, children, and young people in most need of support.</p>

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<b>4.</b>	<b>Alignment to CHS Strategic Outlook</b>
4.1	<p>This work is aligned to the CHS Strategic Outcome 2024-2027:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Theme 1 - Delivering Positive Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Develop a 5-year learning strategy to maximise learning impact across CHS.</li> <li>• Objective 2 - Quality will be the cornerstone of our hearings system.</li> <li>• Objective 3 - Upholding and promoting children's rights is at the forefront of what we do, and those rights are well understood by our people.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Theme 2 - Driving Transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Work with partners and stakeholders to lead and influence change.</li> <li>• Objective 2 - We will become a data-informed and data-driven organisation.</li> <li>• Objective 3 - We will make effective use of technology, capitalising on its potential for enhancing performance and delivering efficiency.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Theme 3 - Valuing Our People</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Implement a three-year People Strategy that attracts and retains top talent and committed individuals and drives the success and sustainability of the organisation.</li> <li>• Objective 2 - The organisational design remains agile, adaptable, and responsive to support ongoing organisational transformation.</li> <li>• Objective 3 - To become a more inclusive and diverse organisation and create a culture where everyone feels valued, included, and engaged.</li> <li>• Objective 4 - to develop our people capabilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Key Risks</b>
5.1	No risks identified in relation to the paper. Any risk in relation to any specific areas detailed in the paper have been considered and reflected in the CHS Strategic Risk Register.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Risk Register</b>
6.1	As above.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Impact on Inequality/Rights</b>
7.1	Not required for this specific paper, however any requirements for an impact assessment in relation to the individual areas outlined in the paper will have been considered separately.

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<b>8.</b>	<b>Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)</b>
8.1	Not required for this specific paper, however any requirements for engagement in relation to the individual areas outlined in the paper will have been considered separately.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
9.1	None in relation to this specific paper, however any resource implication in relation to the individual areas outlined in the paper will have been considered separately.
<b>10.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	None

## Agenda Item 9. CHS-2526-04

<b>Meeting:</b>	CHS Board Meeting
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	25 June 2025
<b>Title:</b>	Financial Forecast Outturn 2025/26
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	Jessica MacDonald, Director of Business and Finance
<b>Report Author:</b>	Klaus Berchtenbreiter, Finance Manager

<b>1.</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to ask the Board to note the report and the stated interim financial position pre audit.
1.2	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead in advance of the meeting.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Board is asked to acknowledge the pre audit financial position
<b>3.</b>	<b>Key Points for Discussion</b>
3.1	24/25 P12 interim update
3.1.1	<p>The published revenue Grant in Aid (GiA) allocation for CHS for 24/25 is £4,575k, with an acknowledgement from Scottish Government (SG) that CHS is carrying an additional ongoing pressure against the board approved budget of £10,299k.</p> <p>A formal letter of assurance from SG was received which clarified SG's commitment to meet CHS pressures. Following SG announcement of significant funding pressures across SG budget, spending restrictions were issued across SG as well as to all NDPBs. In response to this savings challenge and active expenditure management, CHS was able to reduce pressures by a further £199k.</p>
3.1.2	<p>The P12 figures have been signed off by the Director of Business and Finance and submitted to the sponsor team. <b><u>The below Figures are the current pre audit accounts and are still subject to changes following the audit.</u></b></p> <p>In the year ended 31 March 2025, CHS reported net expenditure before Scottish Government funding of £9.104m against Scottish Government funding of £9.357m, an excess of Scottish Government funding over net expenditure of £0.253m with revenue grant-in-aid of £8.857m. The General Fund has a surplus of £0.251m as of 31 March 2025.</p> <p>Capital GiA was £0.5m. Spend within the financial year of £1.138m funded a significant strategic investment into windows devices to phase out and replace Chromebooks, which will continue into 2025/26. The excess over the grant-in-aid funding was met through the release of reserves.</p>

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CHS has actively engaged with Scottish Government via the ABR (Autumn Budget Review) and SBR (Spring Budget Review) budget monitoring and review processes to manage the existing pressures and assist closing the funding gap.

These figures also represent budget savings of over £1m against the board agreed budget, resulting from Scottish Government spending restrictions which were achieved through active vacancy management. These savings have also been delivered whilst moving towards running a second, spring recruitment campaign to get closer to reaching the required volunteer panel members in anticipation of the legislative change coming in 2025/26.

### Financial Statements

#### Children's Hearings Scotland

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure  
for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Year to 31 March 2025 £000	Year to 31 March 2024 £000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Staff costs	2	4,965	3,341
Other administration costs	3	3,734	3,340
Depreciation	4,5,6	392	470
<i>Expenditure</i>		9,091	7,151
<b>Income</b>			
	1.8	0	0
<b>Net expenditure</b>		9,091	7,151
Pension scheme finance cost	10	2	(4)
Finance lease interest	5	11	1
<b>Net expenditure before Scottish Government funding</b>		<b>9,104</b>	<b>7,148</b>
<b>Other comprehensive net expenditure</b>			
Items which will not be reclassified to net expenditure:			
Actuarial loss/(gain) on pensions	10	(1,895)	152
<b>Comprehensive net expenditure for the year</b>		<b>7,209</b>	<b>7,300</b>

### 3.2. 25/26 P1 & p2 update

3.2.1 It is still too early in the new fiscal year to issue a formal forecast. The official monitoring cycle with SG will not start until P3 has closed.

The finance team will invite all budget holders and the directors to monitoring meetings and agree the principles of submissions and timelines before the official monitoring is required. We will aim to have a first spending overview ready after P3 has closed.

### 3.3 25/26 Draft Capital Spending

3.3.1 For the financial year 25/26 a capital spend of £803k has been budgeted and the spend has been broken down in the table below. It is important to know that this was done on a BAU basis.

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<b>4.</b>	<b>Key Risks</b>
4.1	No new risks have been identified following this report. The budget for 2025/26 has gone through the approval process and is subject to the already established risks that are being managed via the agreed processes.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Risk Register</b>
5.1	Already exists as a risk on the risk register. No Update to risk register required.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Impact on Inequality/Rights</b>
6.1	No impact assessment required
<b>7.</b>	<b>Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)</b>
7.1	Financial position has been discussed with Director of Business and Finance and after sign-off reported to SG
<b>8.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
8.1	There are no known resource implications.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	None.

**Agenda Item 10a. CHS-2526-05**

<b>Meeting:</b>	CHS Board
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	25 June 2025
<b>Title:</b>	Quarterly Data Summary (April-May 2025 data)
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	Jessica MacDonald, Director of Business and Finance
<b>Report Author:</b>	Elaine Gray, Data & Performance Analyst

<b>1.</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1.	The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an overview of the quarterly data
1.2.	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead in advance of the meeting
<b>2.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1.	<i>1. The Board is asked to consider if all the data provided are still relevant and if there are data they would like to see that is not currently presented</i>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Key Points for Discussion</b>
3.1.	<p>Disclaimer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much of the data reported here are live operational data and subject to change</li> <li>• Data are to 31/05/25 unless otherwise specified</li> <li>• All changes in the data are since Q4-end unless otherwise specified</li> <li>• “Active” is defined as being on rota in the past 3 months or has an assignment (session/observation) in future; for Chairs it does not mean they Chaired</li> </ul>
3.2.	<p>Panel Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,164 (+210) Panel Members</li> <li>• 1,902 (+257) active Panel Members = 87.9% (+3.7%)</li> <li>• See Figure 1 in Appendix for Panel Member trend lines</li> </ul>
3.3.	<p>Panel Member targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The targets are based on data and calculations from work carried out in December 2024</li> <li>• The Panel Member target is 2,086 with an actual of 2,164 = 103.7% (+10.1%)</li> <li>• The available Panel Member target is 1,790 with an actual of 1,738 = 97.1% (+10.7%)</li> <li>• The percentages are quite high but may not reflect how easy rota allocation is due to some areas having more Panel Members than the target suggests is required, although this may be mitigated by more Panel Members sitting in other areas</li> </ul>
3.4.	<p>Chairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,388 Chairs (+136) = 64.1% (+0.1%)</li> <li>• 1,284 active Chairs (+159) = 92.5% (+2.7%) (note the active % increases when non-Chair-Qualified active Panel Members end service)</li> <li>• See Figure 1 in Appendix for Chair trend lines</li> </ul>
3.5.	Chair targets:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair target will increase each month to provide time for eligible Panel Members to complete chair training</li> <li>• This is due to the changes in the Charing policy whereby all Panel Member will be encouraged to completed chair-training</li> <li>• The Chair target was last updated at the end of May 2025</li> <li>• The Chair target is 1,659 with an actual of 1,388 = 83.7% (+3.4%)</li> <li>• The available Chair target is 1,423 with an actual of 1,190 (+4.6%)</li> </ul>
3.6.	<p>PPAs and AST volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 122 (+1) PPAs</li> <li>• 84 (+3) active PPAs = 68.9% (+1.9%)</li> <li>• 3 (0) AST volunteers (who are neither a Panel Member nor PPA)</li> </ul>
3.7.	<p>Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been only slight changes in the volunteer demographic information, despite a new cohort of trainees being appointed; it will also have been changed by ends of service</li> <li>• Length of service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Small decrease (&lt;1 year) seen in Panel Members, now a mean of 5.9/median of 2.9 years</li> <li>○ Little change for PPAs/AST members, now a mean of 3.4/median of 2.8 years</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Gender: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Small increase in female/decrease in male Panel Members to 73.3% female/25.6% male</li> <li>○ Similar gender ratio for PPAs/AST members to 60.8% female/27.2% male</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Age: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Similar age in Panel Members (decrease of &lt;1 year), now a mean of 54.2 years/median of 56.5 years</li> <li>○ Similar age for PPAs/AST members, now a mean of 59.5 years/median of 62.2 years</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Experience of the children's hearing system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This is previous experience of the hearing system (experience type (i.e. lived) is not defined)</li> <li>○ Increase in % for Panel Members to 5% (+1.5%)</li> <li>○ Increase in % for PPAs/AST members to 8.0% (+3.0%)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3.8.	<p>Hearings, slots and sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Q1 data are not yet available</li> </ul>
3.9.	<p>Panel Member Forecast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Panel Member forecast can be seen in Figure 2 of the Board Data Summary. The underlying data, assumptions, and targets were last updated in December 2024, following the last full re-forecast. Data on the current number of Panel Members, expected ends of service, ends of service during reappointment, and provisional appointments from the last recruitment campaign were updated in May 2025. All data are subject to change as more information becomes available.</li> </ul>

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3.10. Chair Forecast:

- The Chair forecast can be seen in Figure 3 of the Board Data Summary. The new Chairing policy will see all appointed Panel Members encouraged to complete training, and all new trainees supported to complete training during pre-service. The data was updated in May 2025 so capture the current number of Chairs.
- The new ambitious Chair target is for CHS to have 100% of eligible Panel Members Chair-qualified (ineligibility comes from inactive Panel Members and a small number of exemptions). The target has been modelled as a stepped approach – seeing a steady incline in the target, rather than a sudden increase despite policy change. The forecast has also taken a stepped approach – seeing a steady incline each month. Neither is a concrete vision of what is expected to happen. The forecast is only until December 2025 due to the lack of data on how the Chairing policy will be taken up by current Panel Members and how trainees will adapt to the new training programme. The number of current and new Panel Members becoming Chair-qualified will be monitored over the year to assess how likely we are, and when, to reach the target and how capacity is impacted.
- The target has been plotted to increase by 50 each month, from the current target of 1,659. The large reappointment period in July 2025, when a higher than usual number of Panel Members are anticipated to end service, many of which will likely be Chairs, is anticipated to create some fluctuation in Chairing numbers. The Chair target should see an increase from November 2025 when the spring 2025 cohort could be recognised as Chair-qualified.
- As it stands, there are around 560 current appointed active Panel Members who CHS hopes will complete Chair-training (not accounting for the small number of exemptions).
- The forecast indicates that over the course of 2025, it will remain a challenge to meet the Chair target. The challenges come from starting with a high number of Panel Members who are not Chairs, the large reappointment period in July 2025, Chairs continuing to end service every month, and the incremental addition of new Chairs. Should the forecast be realised, by December 2025, CHS should have a more robust number of Chairs. However, realising the forecast is dependent on there being enough training courses and places available on dates and in locations suitable for Panel Members, on Panel Members booking into and completing Chair-training, and on when newly appointed Panel Members feel ready to Chair. The forecast will be updated in Q2 when more data are available.
- It is worth noting that the number of Chairs does not directly translate to the number of Panel Members chairing Hearing slots, therefore, a higher number of Chairs may not necessarily ease Chairing capacity unless they actively Chair Hearings sessions.

**Agenda Item 10a. CHS-2526-05**

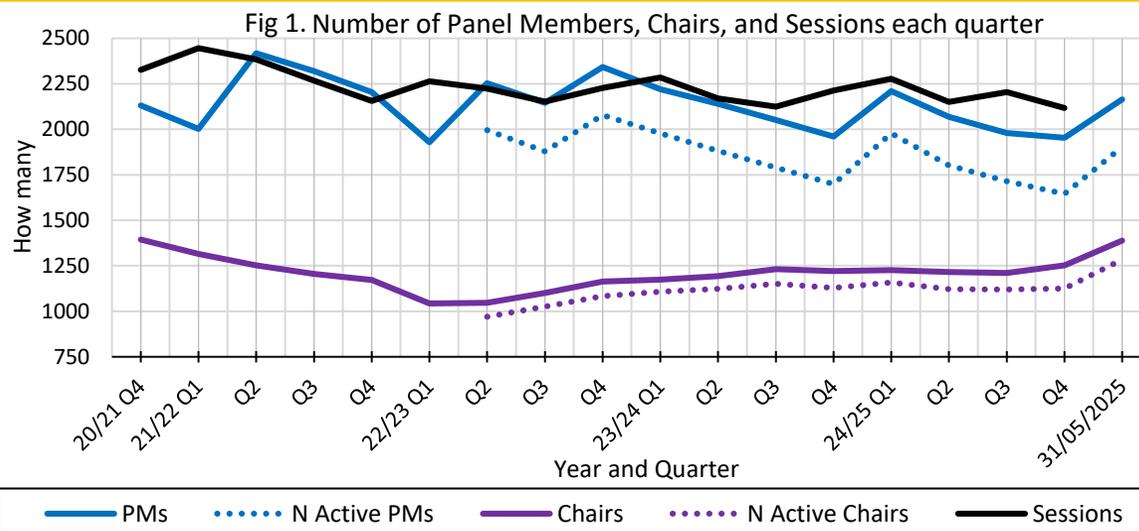
3.11.	Compulsory Supervision Order Implementation Breaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0 Compulsory Supervision Order implementation breaches have been reported in 25/26 (to 10/06/25)</li> </ul>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Key Risks</b>
4.1	<p>1. Uncertainty around the timeline and impact of the implementation of the Care and Justice Act may be a risk for Panel Member capacity if CHS does not have enough Panel Members at the time of impact.</p> <p>2. Chair capacity remains a risk; through 2025 that the number of Panel Members completing Chair-training may not be enough to reach CHS's aim for every eligible Panel Member to be Chair-trained. The difference between being Chair-qualified and Chairing may also not relieve Chairing capacity.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Risk Register</b>
5.1	There is no requirement for anything to be added to the Risk Register at this stage.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Impact on Inequality/Rights</b>
6.1	Impact assessment not required
<b>7.</b>	<b>Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)</b>
7.1	There is no requirement for engagement and consultation in relation to this paper.
<b>8.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
8.1	There is no specific resource implication associated with this paper.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
9.1	Appendix 1: Board Data Summary: 2025-26 Q1

Volunteer data 31/05/25

	PMs	Active PMs	Chairs	Active Chairs	PPAs	Active PPAs
<b>Total</b>	2,164	1,902	1,388	1,284	122	84
<b>Change vs. Q2 end</b>	+210	+257	+136	+159	+1	+3

Demographics 31/12/24	PMs	Change	PPAs/AST	Change
Mean length of service (yrs)	5.9	-0.7	3.4	-0.1
Median length of service (yrs)	2.9	-0.8	2.8	-0.1
% Female	73.3%	+0.9%	60.8%	+0.5%
% Male	25.6%	-1.3%	27.2%	-0.1%
% Other genders or no data	1.0%	+0.5%	12.0%	-0.4%
Mean age (yrs)	54.2	-0.6	59.5	0.0
Median age (yrs)	56.5	-0.4	62.2	-0.1
% has exp. of hearings system	5.0%	+1.5%	8.0%	+3.0%

Trends over time to 31/05/25



Performance overview 31/05/25

Appointed PMs (2,164) against target (2,086)	103.7% (+10.1)
Available PMs (1,738) against target (1,790)	97.1% (+10.7)
Chairs (1,388) against target (1,659)	83.7% (+3.4)
Available Chairs (1,190) against target (1,423)	83.6% (+4.6)

**CSO breaches**  
0 breaches reported (to 10/06/25).

**Trends: Volunteer Numbers**  
**Demographics** have changed only slightly. Average length of service has decreased for PMs. Gender %s have changed slightly for PMs with more females. PM age has decreased slightly. % who state they have experience of the hearing system has increased (this is not lived experience).

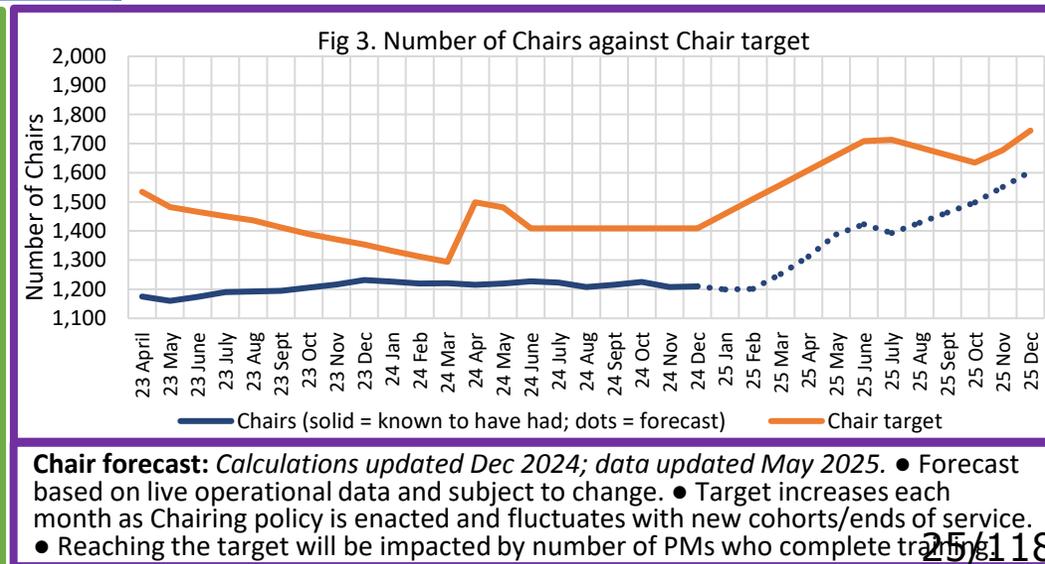
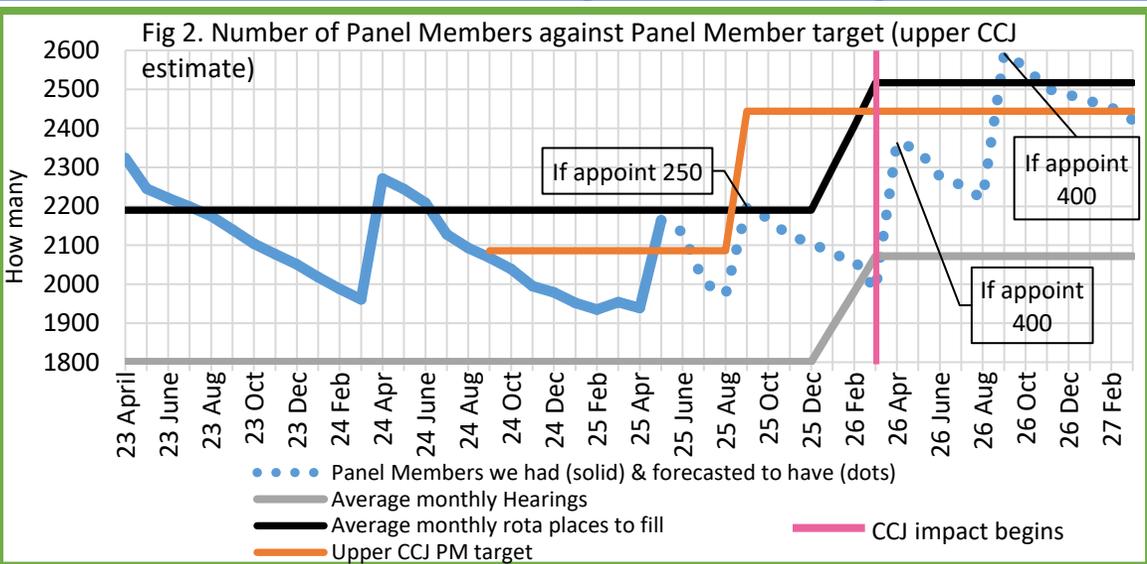
**Panel Member** numbers increased by 210 due to appointments. Active PMs increased by 257.

**Chair numbers** increased by 136. Active Chairs increased by 159.  
**PPA numbers** increased by 1. Active PPAs increased by 3.

**Hearings & Sessions**  
Hearings and session data unavailable until Q1-end.

**Definition**  
*Active = on rota in the last 3 months or scheduled for future.*

**Panel Member forecast:** Calculations updated Dec 2024; data updated May 2025. ● Forecast based on live operational data and subject to change. ● Care & Justice Act sessions (upper estimate) modelled from Jan 2026 with impact for CHS from April 2026. ● We continue to closely monitor capacity and risk as well as timelines for CCJ. ● Risk is impacted by service-ends, inactive rate, number of sessions PMs can do and do do, rota optimisation, and number of rota sessions.



**Chair forecast:** Calculations updated Dec 2024; data updated May 2025. ● Forecast based on live operational data and subject to change. ● Target increases each month as Chairing policy is enacted and fluctuates with new cohorts/ends of service. ● Reaching the target will be impacted by number of PMs who complete training.

**Agenda Item 11a. CHS-2526-06**

<b>Meeting:</b>	CHS Board
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	25 June 2025
<b>Title:</b>	Q1 Performance Report 2025/26
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	Jessica MacDonald – Director of Business and Finance
<b>Report Author:</b>	Karen Griffin, Corporate Governance Manager

<b>1.</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to ask the Board to note on the Q1 Performance Report that monitors the delivery of the objectives in the CHS Business and Corporate Parenting Plan 2025/26.
1.2	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead in advance of the meeting.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Board are asked to review and note Appendix A - CHS Performance Report and the following summary and key points.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Key Points for Discussion</b>
3.1	<b>Q1 Summary</b>
3.1.1	<p>During the period there was one milestone to be completed, this being “review and publish approach to EDI” which was successfully completed within the quarter. All other milestones due for Q2, Q3, Q4 remain on track and within budget, with the exception of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 6.2 – Design and deliver high quality learning offer aligned to the Learning Strategy has been re-timed as the work is now scheduled to commence in Q4. Timescale has been changed from “Progress through to Q4” to “commence in Q4”. This has been approved by SLT.</li> <li>• Objective 6 – Reworded to take out reference to the support and implementation of the Children’s Care and Justice Act and this is covered in objective 3 “Fulfil our obligations and prepare our people for the implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024”.</li> <li>• Milestone 6.1- Changed timescale from “completed by end Q2” to “ongoing” as this milestone relates to overall function deliverables which will remain ongoing.</li> <li>• KPI reworded from “Number of young people in the design and deliver of the recruitment of panel member” to “% of regions involving young people in the design or delivery of the recruitment of panel members” as per the previous year’s KPI to enable more detailed and accurate reporting.</li> </ul>
3.2	<b>KPI's</b>

**Agenda Item 11a. CHS-2526-06**

<p>3.2.1</p>	<p>The Board are asked to note the following reasons for the KPI for “% invoices not in dispute paid within 10 working days, during normal operations keep” having fallen to 76% during Q1 of 2025/26 (target set at 95%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tech issues with e-financials (SCRA and CHS finance operating system)</li> <li>• Internal staff not authorising invoices in timely manner</li> <li>• Supplier’s invoices not matching with their support docs (mainly local authority invoices)</li> <li>• Late receiving invoices from suppliers but have much early date on invoice</li> <li>• Under resourced in finance team due to a member of staff’s departure</li> <li>• Increase in volume of email traffic coming through the finance mailbox</li> <li>• New Suppliers invoices require Verification Checks (mandatory requirement to prevent fraud) often causes delay due to supplier not responding in timely manner.</li> <li>• Additional pressure points with Finance Year End workload – some deadlines in April for reporting</li> <li>• Bringing on board a new staff member and staff training</li> </ul> <p>The finance department are actively looking at various ways to manage these issues and believe that with the combination of the new staff member now fully integrated and the implementation of a number of new processes including encouraging suppliers to email invoices instead of posting via royal mail that for Q2 they will better, if not meet their payment performance target.</p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Alignment to CHS Strategic Outlook</b></p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>This work is aligned to the CHS Strategic Outcome 2024-2027:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Theme 1 - Delivering Positive Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Develop a 5-year learning strategy to maximise learning impact across CHS</li> <li>• Objective 2 - Quality will be the cornerstone of our hearings system.</li> <li>• Objective 3 - Upholding and promoting children's rights is at the forefront of what we do, and those rights are well understood by our people</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Theme 2 - Driving Transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Work with partners and stakeholders to lead and influence change.</li> <li>• Objective 2 - We will become a data-informed and data-driven organisation.</li> <li>• Objective 3 - We will make effective use of technology, capitalising on its potential for enhancing performance and delivering efficiency.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Theme 3 - Valuing Our People</b></li> </ul>

**Agenda Item 11a. CHS-2526-06**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Implement a three-year People Strategy that attracts and retains top talent and committed individuals and drives the success and sustainability of the organisation.</li> <li>• Objective 2 - The organisational design remains agile, adaptable and responsive to support ongoing organisational transformation.</li> <li>• Objective 3 - To become a more inclusive and diverse organisation and create a culture where everyone feels valued, included and engaged.</li> <li>• Objective 4 - to develop our people capabilities.</li> </ul>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Key Risks</b>
5.1	No risks identified.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Risk Register</b>
6.1	There is no requirement for anything to be added to the Risk Register at this stage.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Impact on Inequality/Rights</b>
7.1	N/A
<b>8.</b>	<b>Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)</b>
8.1	'There is no requirement for engagement and consultation in relation to this paper.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
9.1	There is no specific resource implication associated with this paper.
<b>10.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	Appendix 1 – CHS Performance Report

## Children's Hearings Scotland: Quarterly Performance Report QUARTER 1 (April, May, June 2025)



**Quarter Summary - Milestones:**

	Q1 Milestones				
	B	G	A	R	-
<b>Theme 1 - Outcomes</b>					
<b>Theme 2 - People</b>	1		1		
<b>Theme 3 - Transformation</b>					
<b>Critical Enablers</b>					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Key:</b>
Blue = Objective completed
Green = Objective on track to be completed on time / budget
Amber = Objective at risk of not being delivered on time / budget, partially descope, or whole objective re-timed
Red = Objective at serious risk of not being delivered on time / budget - or Objective has been descope
Dash (-) = Not yet due for reporting / update

**Milestones:**

	Number of Milestones at End Q1
Planned to Complete in this quarter*	1
Completed in this quarter - Actual	1
Still to Complete during year	42
Overall number competed in year to date	1
Ongoing as part of the 2024-2027 Strategic Outlook	TBC
Descope	0

\* as published in the Business Plan

## Theme 1: DELIVERING POSITIVE OUTCOMES

	Business Objective and Owner	Status				Actions / Milestones / Deliverables	Timescales / Target	% Complete	Update
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
1	Implement year 1 of the Quality Strategy					1.1 Deliver year 1 of the implementation plan for the Quality Strategy, identifying and progressing key milestones and priority objectives	Progress through Q4		On track, Quality team project approach and planning infrastructure, processes, plans and tools developed or in development
						1.2 Develop tools and approach to evaluation and audit, reviewing the national guidance, developing cohesive approaches to evaluation, self-assessment and audit at national and regional levels	Complete by end Q3		On track, pilot audit appeals data project as at 4.2
						1.3 Develop the resourcing and retention plan for PPAs increasing understand of the role and enhancing the efficacy of deployment	Complete by end Q4		On track, current capacity reviewed, exploration of current challenges complete, targeted recruitment for 3-4 priority areas launching in June along with new updated webpage with clear messaging on role
						1.4 Review and align the approach to quality-supporting data including establishment of baseline data	Complete by Q2		On track, national team data and evidence survey step one analysis complete, improvement work on observations progressing
2	Enhance practice and standards across all areas					2.1 Implement and operationalise the agreed plans for participation at CHS through a refresh of our participation activity aligned with the revised Children's Rights and Participation Strategy	Complete by end of Q4	25%	On track. Annual evaluation complete - excellent feedback from young people. Expert by Experience Group established.
						2.2 Enhance intelligence sharing, information and learning between regional and national teams and improving governance and reporting of complaints and feedback	Complete by end of Q4	25%	On track. Regular meetings and structured information sharing between regional staff and complaints team. Developing thematic log reporting to ensure regional issues are shared with complaints team to progress thematic issues.
						2.3 Develop the P&P team as the subject-matter experts on all aspects of practice, standards and policy, increasing communications with volunteer community and enhancing levels of engagement with the practice bank	Progress through to Q4	25%	On track. Currently recruiting new staff. Regular briefing and training / town hall events to community. Developing expertise of team.

Ongoing - part of Strategic Outlook 2024-27

Owner	

3	Fulfil our obligations and prepare our people for the implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024.				3.1	Deliver the second module of Care & Justice Act Learning to ensure our Panel Community understand the specific needs and impact of trauma and legislation on older young people	Progress through Q4	25%	The build of the second part of C&J e-learning offer is 75% complete. Slight delays incurred due to people resource pressures with contractors, however this is not expected to impact CHS objectives or operational plans.		
4	Build on existing mechanism to capture experience of children and families in the hearings system to drive quality at all levels.				4.1	Implementation and operationalisation of the Experts by Experience group	Complete by Q2	25%	Group fully operational and engaging in operational and strategic issues. High quality and robust support structures in place.		
					4.2	Appeals data used to create a feedback loop to panel members to inform practice	Complete through end Q3		On track, initial pilot appeals audit project infrastructure-processes and mechanisms in place, draft audit tool designed, project team identified		
					4.3	Creation of Quality Measures and improvement plans aligned to key priorities	Progress through end Q3		This work will be informed by evidence and outputs from projects, eg data and evaluation survey, pilot audit, observation data and reporting improvements. These projects are on track but early stages		
5	Continue to support and retain our Panel Community through the embedding of regional support structures that promote engagement and provide meaningful opportunities for our volunteers				5.1	Review recruitment application process to improve volunteer experience and attract diverse volunteers to join our Community	Complete by Q2		The review of the digital recruitment application sits within the Capacity Programme as a key deliverable for the January 2026 recruitment campaign. Delivery is due quarter 3	Claire Gibson	
					5.2	Review of CHS recruitment campaign to support attraction of diverse volunteer applicants.	Complete by Q4		As part of the Capacity Programme, new approaches to recruitment selection and interviewing are being considered following ideation workshops with key stakeholders. This work is on track	Claire Gibson	
					5.3	Develop an internal department plan to manage Capacity across the volunteer community	Progress through Q4		On track, the Capacity Programme hosts key projects related to our volunteer community capacity including collaborative scheduling work with SCRA, rota optimisation and changes to preservice to deliver new chairs to practice sooner.	Claire Gibson	
					5.4	Continue to improve approaches to rota and resource allocation to improve the volunteer experience and enable more effective panel deployment processes	Progress through Q4		Continue to work with our colleagues in SCRA regarding the diary scheduling to reduce cancellations. Latest update to CSAS should address ongoing issues with record of proceedings. Further developments on CSAS have allowed Resource Allocation Team to see when the HIP has been uploaded and resolve Panel Members issues at first point of contact	Judy Wilson	

Theme 2: VALUING OUR PEOPLE								
Business Objective and <i>Owner</i>	Status				Actions / Milestones / Deliverables	Timescales / Target	% Complete	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				

Owner

Ongoing - part of  
Strategic Outlook  
2024-27

6	Ensure an effective learning offer is in place to support Panel Member training for the year and support the implementation of the Children's Care and Justice Act	Green				6.1	Deliver an effective learning offer to support Panel Members and the wider volunteer Community	Ongoing		Successful implementation of re-structured pre-service with 30% of newly recruited volunteers appointed as Chair qualified. Comprehensive programme of support in place to facilitate successful transition into role in partnership with regions. Second cohort due to complete mid-July. Focused period of MOH training delivered to support PDA completions before contract end.		
						6.2	Design and deliver high quality learning offer aligned to the Learning Strategy	Progress through Q4		This work is scheduled to commence in Q4.		
7	Progress our ambition to become a Trauma Informed Organisation	Green				7.1	Deliver the 2nd phase of Trauma training modules and resources to all volunteers and colleagues	Progress through Q4	30%	Language guide embedded in training materials with animation that has been nominated for a national award. CHS working with OHOV and language leaders to progress this work across the sector. Trauma Skilled training was launched to the volunteer community in January 2025 as planned and to colleagues at the end of May.		
						7.2	Continue to embed trauma informed language through the Language in the Hearing Room project	Progress through Q4	50%			
8	Build on our existing approach to how we support our Volunteers	Green				8.1	Implement a nationally consistent approach to wellbeing, recognition and volunteer support.	Progress through Q4		Wellbeing support continues. Regionally-based colleagues in Tribunal Delivery continue to support current and new PMs with reasonable adjustments, times of absence, and reflective debriefs after challenging hearings. In Q1, a consistent approach to check-ins for new PMs was developed with Tribunal Delivery and Learning colleagues, to be implemented in Q2. National work to embed wellbeing and retention through revised processes, policies, and communications routes in place and continues to develop.		
						8.2	Implement processes to ensure expectations are communicated to volunteers in a transparent and timely manner	Progress through Q4		Review of communications for new and current volunteer community underway. Development of Volunteer Commitment document being drafted in consultation with Community colleagues.		

9	Implement Year 2 of the People Strategy				9.1	Deliver management and leadership training and development	Progress through Q4	25%	Sm@rt working programme training delivered to line managers across Q1 and Q2. Work to implement Sm@rt Working principles across the organisation from this training to commence following Q2. Core management skills training to be schedule for Q3 and Q4.
					9.2	Continuous workforce planning to support organisational design activities	Progress through Q4	25%	Monthly WFP meetings continued. Processes for the group have now also been aligned with the update SG reporting process for external recruitment campaign. This update provides further reassurance for CHS around external recruitment.
					9.3	Improve offering and promotion of CHS Total Reward package to support our approach to attract, retain and reward colleagues	Progress through Q4	25%	CHS benefits summary updated in April 2025 to include increase volunteer leave allowance and better highlight car benefit scheme.  Promotional webinars planned throughout 2025/26 to drive uptake of benefits, financial savings, and opportunities for national team.
					9.4	Review and publish CHS approach to EDI	Q1	90%	Reviewed EDI strategy completed and approved by CHS Board. Strategy to be published by end of Q1 on CHS website.


### Theme 3: DRIVING TRANSFORMATION

	Business Objective and Owner	Status				Actions / Milestones / Deliverables	Timescales / Target	% Complete	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
10	Deliver year 1 of the Hearings Redesign 2030 programme					10.1 As a member of the Children’s Hearings Redesign Board, agree governance and delivery structures with partners for delivery of the agreed recommendations	Progress through Q4		CHS have strong representation on the Redesign Board and SG Planning Group. Governance and delivery structures are maturing in collaboration. CHS have developed links between external governance and our Hearings Redesign 2030 Programme
						10.2 Develop productive, equitable partnership relationships with our stakeholders nationally and regionally, focused on children and young people’s outcomes that drive hearings improvement	Progress through Q4	25%	On track. Established partnership structures with key organisation in the sector including SCRA. Work closely with national CHIP and work has started to establish equivalent regional structures. Representation on a number of national leadership groups in the sector.
						10.3 Develop an implementation plan for the agreed reforms for CHS incorporating the key strategic, practice and operational changes to the hearing system	Progress through Q4	5%	Awaiting detailed information on legislative change which will inform activity . The Hearings Redesign 2030 Programme has been initiated at our CHS Change Board and will be the space in which this work will be coordinated across CHS.
11	Develop new Data Strategy 2025-30					11.1 Establish our future data needs and develop a pathway to meet those needs	Complete by end Q3		On track. A stakeholder consultation took place and the scope of requirements for the data strategy has been mapped out. A business case to acquire external consultancy for the data strategy has been written and will be submitted the Technology and Data Oversight Group this month.
						11.2 Identify the required structure to deliver the data strategy	Complete by end Q3		See 11.1
						11.3 Work with partners to develop effective data-sharing practices	Progress through Q4		See 11.1

Owner	Ongoing - part of Strategic Outlook 2024-27
Claire Gibson	
Claire Gibson	

12	Develop new Digital Strategy 2025-30				12.1	Establish our future digital ecosystem and develop a pathway to deliver it	Complete by end Q3	<p>- Currently working with SCRA in realignment of our digital architecture. Roadmap will be delivered following the Digital Strategy paper being delivered. Planning session being scheduled with senior team to discuss in next 4 weeks</p> <p>-Work ongoing to clarify Joint Investment Work next steps in alignment with future digital ecosystem.</p>		
					12.2	Identify the required structure in the digital team to deliver the digital strategy	Complete by end Q3	<p>Procurement of supplier to deliver CRM, API and Website integration is due to be finalised next week.</p> <p>-Temporary Delivery Manager being recruited to manage the overall deployment with supplier</p> <p>-Data team still under resourced and potential new Data Product role likely needing agreed and signed off in near future</p> <p>-Data Strategy and potential support needs being identified with a business case being defined for potential procurement of supplier</p> <p>-ISO27001 project in discovery/gap analysis stage however expected key requirements will be identified through this that will inform Digital Team capacity and capability needs to deliver Digital Strategy.</p> <p>-Data Analyst/Digital Support resource has been extended 6 months to support CRM and CHS Digital Platforms.</p>		
					12.3	Drive digital transformation through the Digital Lab taking a systematic approach to planning and delivering digital change initiatives	Progress through Q4	<p>Digital Lab continues to evolve and key focus will be given to the elaboration of needs under the requests and issues received through the lab to aid in prioritisation and also identifying solutions across the varying themes underlying the digital lab</p> <p>Technology and Data Oversight Group has been stood up and approved procurement of new supplier. It is expected that this group will govern all deployments, releases and Data engagement approaches as it becomes more established</p> <p>Potential introduction of Data Lab still being reviewed in lieu of Digital and Data Strategies being published.</p>		

## ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND CRITICAL ENABLERS

	Business Objective and Owner	Status				Actions / Milestones / Deliverables	Timescales / Target	% Complete		Owner	Ongoing - part of Strategic Outlook 2024-27
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4						
13	Further develop and build on CHS's change architecture to support the delivery of critical programmes of improvement					13.1 Continue to evaluate how change is delivered to continually improve practice and process	Progress through Q4		As a new function at CHS, we are continually evaluating the effectiveness with each change programme initiated and closed. A new global lessons learnt process is now in place to capture the opportunities to improve and celebrate the change architecture we have built.	Claire Gibson	
						13.2 Adhere to good change governance practices, recognising and understanding risks at every stage	Progress through Q4		Risk and issue logs for each programme kept by the change manager, programme group contribution and governance within the change board cycle from PMO. A recent audit of a closed programme gave high levels of assurance	Claire Gibson	
						13.3 Review and enhance the structures around change to ensure we have the skills and knowledge to deliver successful programmes	Progress through Q4		A review of the change and PMO function is underway, led by the CEO.	Claire Gibson	
14	Fortify and strengthen our cyber and digital security measures					14.1 Gain ISO27001 accreditation and ensure that our security practices and governance are fit for purpose	Complete by end Q4		BSI an ISO audit specialist successfully procured. GAP analysis completed by BSI in May 2025. Additional procurement of technical consultants to be carried out to assist with the work required as has been identified. First interim audit scheduled for 5 November 2025 with final audit for accreditation set for February 2026.		
						14.2 Formalise and standardise the use of process maps and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) across the organisation to enable clearer understanding of processes and fulfilment of services	Complete by end Q4		Business and Finance SOPs are near completion.		
						14.3 Deliver the Business Contingency Plan and Digital Disaster Recovery Plan testing to ensure CHS is prepared to manage unforeseen critical business impacts	Complete by end Q4		First testing carried out in April 2025. Annual testing plan approved by ARC in May 2025.		
15	Build on our established communications channels and approaches to adequately reflect our growth and meet needs of our people and					15.1 Respond to the recommendations of the internal communications audit	Complete by end Q4	100%	Have received and responded to recommendations, which have been welcomed by ARC, during Q1. Some implementation already started; rest to be led by Senior Comms Manager once in post in Q2.		
						15.2 Improve and enhance the communications and engagement platforms and mechanisms.	Progress through Q4	25%	Work in progress with Community Hub and regional sharepoint content. Wider review and optimisation of community comms planned for Q2-Q4		

	Support people and communities				15.3	Deploy management information to enhance communications to improve and support the volunteer community	Progress through Q4	25%	Currently reviewing channels and format for regular leadership communications to community, to be progressed by new Senior Comms Manager.		
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## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Strategic Theme	Objective	Performance Measure	Baseline	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Performance	Owner
Positive Outcomes – Feedback and Complaints	Objective 2, 4	# Number of feedback items received from children and young people	2023/24: 12 2024/25: 49	100 % increase on last year	Participation and Feedback Joint Delivery Group established. New post created in the Feedback and Complaints Team with a focus on child friendly feedback.	
Positive Outcomes – Learning	Objective 3, 6,7	% of required volunteers and colleagues who have completed trauma-informed training	2024/25: 91%	100%	99.5% Volunteers 84% Staff (NOTE: all outstanding completions chased on an ongoing basis. As a part of 2025 appraisals, managers will be provided with list of outstanding essential learning to ensure target reached by end of Q2)	
Positive Outcomes – Learning	Objective 3, 6,7	% of required volunteers and colleagues completed trauma skilled training	New Measure	100%	N/A due Q4	
Valuing our people – Learning	Objective 5,6	% of pre-service trainees who felt that the learning objectives were met	2020/21: 98% 2021/22: 99% 2022/23: 98% 2023/24: 99% 2024/25: 98%	99%	98%	
Valuing our people - Learning	Objective 5, 6, 8	% of recommended applicants appointed as Panel Members	2020/21: 83% 2021/22: 75% 2022/23: 84% 2023/24: 83% 2024/25: 79%	90%	75% (to 11/06/25, but appointments are still in progress so may increase; data includes those who deferred)	
Valuing our people – Learning	Objective 6	% of active and eligible Panel Members who are Chair-qualified	2024/25: 70%	75%	69% (to 11/06/25)	
Positive Outcomes – Participation	Objective 4, 5	% of regions involving young people in the design or delivery of the recruitment of panel members	2024/25: 100%	100%	Work in progress between the CHS Communications Team and the Experts by Experience on creating a workshop to plan the branding for the next campaign.	
Valuing our people	Objective 5,6 ,8, 19	% of all Panel Members due for reappointment within the year who were successfully reappointed	New Measure	55%	29% (to 11/06/25, but this will likely increase over the year as more people go through reappointment)	

	Valuing our people	Objective 5,6 ,8, 19	% of Panel Members retained during the year	2021/22: 86% 2022/23: 78.5% 2023/24: 83% 2024/25: 84%	85%	96% (to 11/06/25)	
	Critical Enablers		% CHS employee attendance keep	2020/21: 99% 2021/22: 85% 2022/23: 97% 2023/24: 97% 2024/25: 98%	97%	99% (to 13/06/25)	
	Critical Enablers		% invoices not in dispute paid within 10 working days, during normal operations keep	2020/21: 85% 2021/22: 85% 2022/23: 89.3% 2023/24: 87% 2024/25: 84.3%	95%	76%	

## Record of Changes to Planned Delivery

Milestone(s) Changed	Date of Change	Details of Change	Rationale for Change
Objective 6	Jun-25	Removed C&J from overall objective as it is covered seperately in objective 3	Already covered in prior objective
Objective 6.1	Jun-25	Changed timescales to ongoing	Milestone relates to overall function deliverables which are ongoing
Objective 7.1	Jun-25	Completion date changed to Q4	Deadlines extended in agreement with SLT due to current mandatory learning
KPI line 76	Jun-25	Owner changed to Feedback and Complaints	Team who has access to feedback data
KPI line 82	Jun-25	To match last years KPI	To enable accurate reporting

**Agenda Item 12a. CHS-2526-07**

<b>Meeting:</b>	CHS Board
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	25 June 2025
<b>Title:</b>	Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2024-25
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	Jessica MacDonald, Director of Business and Finance
<b>Report Author:</b>	Karen Griffin, Governance Manager

<b>1.</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>																								
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to ask the Board to approve the ARC Annual Report 2024-25.</p> <p>The report covers the work of the ARC from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.</p>																								
1.2	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead in advance of the meeting.																								
<b>2.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>																								
2.1	<p>The Board is asked to note the annual report for the period 2024-25. This report was approved by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025, prior to final Board approval.</p> <p>ARC meets quarterly and is responsible for providing the CHS Board and Accountable Officer with advice and assurance about the arrangements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial control and reporting</li> <li>• Risk management</li> <li>• Corporate and information governance</li> <li>• Legal and regulatory compliance.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee scrutinises all audit reports and actions taken by managers in response to audit recommendations.</p>																								
<b>3.</b>	<b>Key Points for Discussion</b>																								
3.1	<b>ARC Meeting Attendance</b>																								
3.1.1	<p>The ARC met on four occasions during the 2024-25 financial year: 4 June 2024, 20 August 2024, 19 November 2024, 25 February 2025.</p> <p>The serving Committee members during this reporting period and attendance was as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="274 1783 1426 1980"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th><b>4 June 2024</b></th> <th><b>20 Aug 2024</b></th> <th><b>19 Nov 2024</b></th> <th><b>25 Feb 2025</b></th> <th><b>Attendance</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sean Austin</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Barbara Neil</td> <td>Apologies</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>Apologies</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Henry Robson</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<b>4 June 2024</b>	<b>20 Aug 2024</b>	<b>19 Nov 2024</b>	<b>25 Feb 2025</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	Sean Austin	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	Barbara Neil	Apologies	✓	✓	Apologies	50%	Henry Robson	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
	<b>4 June 2024</b>	<b>20 Aug 2024</b>	<b>19 Nov 2024</b>	<b>25 Feb 2025</b>	<b>Attendance</b>																				
Sean Austin	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%																				
Barbara Neil	Apologies	✓	✓	Apologies	50%																				
Henry Robson	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%																				

**Agenda Item 12a. CHS-2526-07**

	<p>For the meeting to be quorate, a minimum of two members must be in attendance, which was met for 2024/25.</p> <p>Over the course of the meetings, the ARC met its Terms of Reference during 2024/25.</p>
3.1.2	In addition to the Committee members noted above, the meetings are attended by the National Convener/CEO (Accountable Officer) and/or the Depute CE and the Director of Business and Finance.
3.1.3	During 2024-25, also in attendance at the meetings were the CHS/SCRA Finance Managers, representative(s) from Audit Scotland who are appointed external auditors, representative(s) from BDO who are appointed internal auditors, Governance Manager and other officials where appropriate to assist with discussions and offer expertise.
3.2	<b>ARC Meeting Workplan</b>
3.2.1	A programme of work was agreed at the ARC meeting on 27 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 and items allocated over the four meetings during 2024/25.
3.2.2	<p>The standard agenda items on the agenda for each meeting are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declarations of Interest</li> <li>• Approval of the Minute of the previous meeting</li> <li>• Action Log Update</li> <li>• Chair Update</li> <li>• Accounting policies and approval of annual accounts</li> <li>• External Audit and Internal Audit planned activity and updates</li> <li>• Quarterly Compliance Report – including updates on Finance (Procurement and Fraud Reporting), Health and Safety, Information Governance, (FOI and SAR and Data Protection), Programme Management and Risk Register.</li> <li>• Quarterly Feedback and Complaints report – this was a separate report however from February 2025 it was agreed for this to be incorporated into the Compliance Report.</li> </ul>
3.3	<b>Review of 2023/24 Annual Accounts</b>
3.3.1	The 2023/24 Annual Accounts, including the Governance Statement were reviewed and approved and the Committee recommended the signing of the Accounts to the Board and Accountable Officer. The 2023/24 Annual Accounts received an unqualified opinion from the External Auditors.
3.4	<b>Strategic Risk Register</b>
3.4.1	Changes in the strategic risk register were reviewed at each meeting and the Risk Management Policy was reviewed and approved at the June 2024 meeting with its next review scheduled for the May 2026 meeting.
3.4.2	A framework for identifying, measuring, controlling and monitoring strategic risks was in place throughout the financial year. Operational responsibility for strategic risk

**Agenda Item 12a. CHS-2526-07**

	management sits with SLT where risk management is a standard item on SLT meeting agendas.
3.4.3	Risk management is embedded in CHS' planning management processes. At the strategic level, corporate and business strategies are aligned to the risk management process; at the operational level, senior managers review the operational risk register and follows a similar process of risk review/interrogation.
3.4.4	The Committee routinely interrogates key strategic risks to test the robustness of CHS' risk management processes and assurances provided through the executive process. The CHS Board has an oversight role and receives a quarterly update from the ARC Chair at Board meetings.
3.4.5	The key strategic risks identified and monitored during 2024/25 included: inability to fulfil business objectives due to lack of budgetary support via Grand in Aid; lack of quality assurance and consistency of practice; failure to contribute to positive outcomes by not creating a future focussed learning and development strategy; systems failure due to poor cyber resilience, inability to implement agreed reform due to digital system constraints and not driving transformation; inability to fulfil statutory duties due to over reliance on volunteers' senior change skills and oversight of organisational change; capacity of panel members and not valuing our people; an inability to operationalise the coming reform and legislative agenda; the current reform agenda losing political support; loss of credibility and influence in the sector; and a failure to adequately engage and support its workforce during period of significant growth.
3.5	<b>Information Governance</b>
	Under information governance, the ARC focussed its work on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring of data breaches and subsequent actions and</li> <li>• Monitoring of compliance with statutory guidance on FOISA/SAR activity.</li> </ul>
3.6	<b>Feedback and Complaints</b>
	Under feedback and complaints, the ARC focussed its work on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring of compliance and CHS and Scottish Public Services Ombudsman policy around complaint handling</li> <li>• Understanding trends and actions from feedback and complaints</li> <li>• Monitoring the development of child friendly mechanisms to capture feedback using different approaches and platforms.</li> </ul>
3.7	<b>Internal Audit</b>
3.7.1	The Annual Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 was presented to the ARC by BDO in February 2024 and approved. The following internal audits were carried out during 2024/25: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow Up 2023-24 – carried out in April 2024</li> <li>• Core Financial Processes – carried out in September 2024</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage Gate Process – Governance and Implementation of Change – carried out in November 2024</li> <li>• Cyber Security (moved to 2025/26) and Communications Advisory Review brought forward - carried out in March 2025</li> </ul>																																								
<p>3.7.2</p>	<p>Follow-up 2024-25</p> <p>The Follow Up 2025/25 internal audit report was to seek confirmation that the recommendations from previous audits had been implemented, and evidence sought. The following recommendations were subject for review:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="279 705 1348 1332"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">YEAR</th> <th rowspan="2">AUDIT</th> <th colspan="4">RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWED UP</th> </tr> <tr> <th>HIGH</th> <th>MEDIUM</th> <th>LOW</th> <th>TOTAL</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2018/19</td> <td>Business Continuity</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>Learning Academy</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023/24</td> <td>Independent Report Writer Function</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024/25</td> <td>Core Financial Controls</td> <td>-</td> <td>5</td> <td>-</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>TOTAL</b></td> <td></td> <td>-</td> <td><b>8</b></td> <td><b>2</b></td> <td><b>10</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>As the Core Financial Control recommendations were not due to be implemented at the time of the audit, they were discounted. All recommendations relating the learning academy and the independent report writer function were implemented during 2024/25.</p> <p>The only remaining outstanding recommendation is the development of a business continuity testing plan, which is due for completion during Q1 of 2025/26.</p> <p><b>Identified Risk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a risk that key weaknesses or exclusions have not been identified within the business continuity plan due to the limitations identified.</li> </ul>	YEAR	AUDIT	RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWED UP				HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	TOTAL	2018/19	Business Continuity	-	1	-	1	2021/22	Learning Academy	-	1	-	1	2023/24	Independent Report Writer Function	-	1	2	3	2024/25	Core Financial Controls	-	5	-	5	<b>TOTAL</b>		-	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>
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<b>TOTAL</b>		-	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>																																				
<p>3.7.3</p>	<p>Core Financial Processes</p> <p>The audit of Core Financial Processes identified a number for areas of good practice including the application of Financial Regulations which gives a high-level overview of arrangements in place including responsibilities, budgeting arrangements, monitoring and control, assets, income &amp; expenditure, special provisions, and accounting &amp; audit. Together with frequent bank reconciliations, an annual asset verification exercise, the process of monthly returns, a robust delegation of authority matrix.</p>																																								

**Agenda Item 12a. CHS-2526-07**

	<p>There were also areas identified for improvement including the absence of procedural documentation, the reliance on manual processes, asset disposal approvals and the clarity of purchase order requirements.</p> <p>Two of the five recommendations have been fully implemented with the remaining three partially implemented. The remaining three will be fully implemented during Q1 of 2025/26.</p>
3.7.4	<p><b>Stage Gate Process – Governance and Implementation of Change</b></p> <p>The Stage Gate Process audit summary provided a substantial level of assurance on both the design and effectiveness of the process and did not identify any concerns surrounding the controls in place to mitigate risks covering governance, progression or the delivery on milestones.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the good practice identified the audit also identified some opportunities for improvement, which are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Change Architecture Framework Documentation</b> – develop a single definitive version of the stage gate change management framework and draft documentation of staff roles and responsibilities and the closing of delivery change programmes.</li> <li>▶ <b>Stage Gate Documentation Logs</b> - Enhance the evidence included within the documentation log used to substantiate stage gate progress and streamline the documentation logs presented to the Change Board.</li> </ul>
3.7.5	<p><b>Communications</b></p> <p>The Communications advisory review covered strategy, policies and procedures, internal and external communications. As the review process was carried out late in Q4 of 2024/25 and final report has not yet been issued. The findings and recommendations of this advisory review will be carried forward to Q1 of 2025/26.</p>
3.8	<p><b>External Audit</b></p>
3.8.1	<p>The Committee endorsed the accounting policies to be adopted by CHS for the preparation of its statement of accounts for 2024/25. The CHS Board approved the accounting policies at its meeting on 25 March 2025.</p>
3.8.2	<p>The Committee reviewed the outline annual audit plan and strategy in relation to the 2024/25 accounts at their meeting in February 2025. The Director of Business and Finance, Finance Manager and Accountable Officer/CEO were comfortable with the high-level timetable for financial statements and reporting deadlines for the August CHS Audit and Risk Committee meeting.</p>
3.9	<p><b>Terms of Reference (ToR)</b></p>
	<p>The Committee reviewed its ToR (see Appendix 1) in February 2025. The CHS Board approved the ToR in March 2025.</p>

## Agenda Item 12a. CHS-2526-07

3.10	<b>Strategic Issues to be Examined During 2025/26</b>
3.10.1	The 2025/26 internal audit plan was reviewed and approved at the meeting on 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2025. The internal audit will cover the Risk Management, Tribunal Delivery and CHS' Cybersecurity and resilience.
3.10.2	<p>The Committee anticipates focusing its energies on the key strategic risks facing the organisation over the next year. The following areas are highlighted as areas of challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ongoing challenges to our capacity and ability to recruit and retain Panel Members to fulfil our statutory duties.</li> <li>• The transfer of the Foundation for Learning Programme from West Lothian College to inhouse.</li> <li>• Not maximising opportunities to improve outcomes and hearing experiences through a lack of appropriate training, practice and policy, engagement, quality control and quality assurance.</li> <li>• The ongoing risk to CHS' cyber security and resilience.</li> <li>• The ability to access and harness data for quality improvement.</li> </ul>
3.10.3	The external auditors will complete their review of the 2024/25 annual accounts in June 2025 and the audited accounts will be presented to the ARC in August 2025 and to the Board in September 2025.
3.11	<b>Support to the Committee</b>
3.11.1	<p>On behalf of the Committee, the ARC Chair, Sean Austin, would like to record his thanks to the CHS Leadership Team, the Internal Auditors, BDO, and the External Auditors, Audit Scotland, for their contribution and support throughout the year.</p> <p>The Chair would also like to express his appreciation thanks to his fellow Committee members, Henry Robson and Barbara Neill, for their insights and contributions past, present and future. Henry's tenure as a Board Member has now finished and his contribution will be greatly missed.</p> <p>Finally, special thanks to the Governance team, Rachel Kavish Wheatley (until September 2024) and, more recently, Frieda Cadogan and Karen Griffin, without whom the Committee (and the Chair) would not function nearly so effectively.</p>
4.	<b>Alignment to CHS Strategic Outlook</b>
4.1	<p>This work is aligned to the CHS Strategic Outcome 2024-2027:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Theme 1 - Delivering Positive Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Develop a 5-year learning strategy to maximise learning impact across CHS</li> <li>• Objective 2 - Quality will be the cornerstone of our hearings system.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Agenda Item 12a. CHS-2526-07**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 3 - Upholding and promoting children's rights is at the forefront of what we do, and those rights are well understood by our people</li> <li>• <b>Theme 2 - Driving Transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Work with partners and stakeholders to lead and influence change.</li> <li>• Objective 2 - We will become a data-informed and data-driven organisation.</li> <li>• Objective 3 - We will make effective use of technology, capitalising on its potential for enhancing performance and delivering efficiency.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Theme 3 - Valuing Our People</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Implement a three-year People Strategy that attracts and retains top talent and committed individuals and drives the success and sustainability of the organisation.</li> <li>• Objective 2 - The organisational design remains agile, adaptable and responsive to support ongoing organisational transformation.</li> <li>• Objective 3 - To become a more inclusive and diverse organisation and create a culture where everyone feels valued, included and engaged.</li> <li>• Objective 4 - to develop our people capabilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Key Risks</b>
5.1	No risks identified.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Risk Register</b>
6.1	There is no requirement for anything to be added to the Risk Register at this stage.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Impact on Inequality/Rights</b>
7.1	N/A <i>See templates and guidance for this on the shared drive at <a href="G:\CHS\CHS Central Resources\Impact Assessments">G:\CHS\CHS Central Resources\Impact Assessments</a></i>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)</b>
8.1	There is no requirement for engagement and consultation in relation to this paper.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
9.1	There is no specific resource implication associated with this paper.
<b>10.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference

## Agenda Item 12b. CHS-2526-07 Appendix 1

### Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Terms of Reference (ToR) 2025-2026

#### 1. Constitution

- 1.1 The Board hereby resolves to establish a committee of the Board to be known as the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC).

#### 2. Membership

- 2.1 The ARC comprises a minimum of three non-executive members appointed by the Board, not including the Chair of the Board.
- 2.2 The Board appoints one of its members to serve as the chair of the committee. Details of the current members, including the committee Chair, are shown in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 All members are appointed for the length of their current Board appointment which may be extended in line with any Board re-appointments. The Board must approve all re-appointments.
- 2.4 The ARC may co-opt independent members who are not members of the Board for a period (not exceeding a year) to provide specialist skills, knowledge, and experience subject to budgets agreed by the Board.
- 2.5 The Committee may appoint a substitute drawn from the membership of the Board of CHS, except for the CHS Board Chair, in line with the requirements at 2.1.
- 2.6 A committee substitute may participate at a committee meeting in place of a member.
- 2.7 When a committee substitute attends a meeting (or other committee activity), he or she assumes the full rights of an ordinary member of the committee. In particular, the substitute can vote and is entitled to receive all committee papers.

#### 3. Authority

- 3.1 The ARC is authorised by the Board to review and approve any activity within its terms of reference.

#### 4. Meetings and Quorum

- 4.1 The ARC meets at least four times a year. The Chair of the committee may convene additional meetings as he/she deems necessary. Meetings may be held virtually if required.

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- 4.2 The Chair of the Board may also ask the ARC to convene further meetings to discuss issues on which he/she seeks the Audit and Risk Management committee's advice.
- 4.3 A minimum of two members of the ARC must be present for the meetings to be deemed quorate. In the absence of the Chairperson, one of the other non-executive members will assume that role for the duration of the meeting. To ensure that the meeting is quorate, committee substitute(s) may be required to attend.
- 4.4 The National Convener/Chief Executive Officer and the Director of Business and Finance are required to attend each meeting.
- 4.5 The Audit and Risk Management committee may ask any other officials to attend, to assist with discussions and offer expertise on a particular matter.
- 4.6 The CHS Governance team will provide the ARC with secretarial support services.
- 4.7 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee will attend one meeting of the CHS People and Culture Committee Meetings, per year and vice versa.
- 4.8 The agenda and meeting papers are issued to members at least seven calendar days prior to the meeting, unless agreed otherwise.
- 4.9 The CHS Governance team minutes the proceedings and resolutions of all committee meetings including the names of those present and in attendance.
- 4.10 Minutes of every committee meeting are circulated to the committee for approval and approved minutes referred to the Board for noting as soon as practical.
- 4.11 The internal and external auditors attend all meetings.
- 4.12 The ARC may ask any or all of those who normally attend, but who are not members, to withdraw to facilitate open and frank discussion of matters.
- 4.13 An Action Log is maintained to monitor progress on key issues raised at meetings.

## 5. Reporting

- 5.1 The Chair of the committee reports back to the Board, verbally or in writing, after each meeting. The committee takes directions from the Board on general or specific actions.
- 5.2 The ARC provides an Annual Report, timed to support preparation of the Governance Statement, summarising its conclusions from the work it has done during the year.

## 6. Responsibilities

The Audit Committee advises the Board and the Accountable Officer on:

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- 6.1 The strategic processes for risk control and governance.
  - 6.2 Corporate and information governance arrangements.
  - 6.3 The accounting policies, the approval of the Unsigned Annual Report and Accounts following completion of the audit and Management's Letter of Representation to the external auditors.
  - 6.4 The planned activity and results of both Internal and External Audit.
  - 6.5 The adequacy of management response to issues identified by audit activity, including external audit's report to those charged with governance.
  - 6.6 The annual and longer-term operating plans for internal audit and the resourcing of the internal audit to deliver these plans.
  - 6.7 Monitoring the implementation of approved recommendations.
  - 6.8 The external audit reports and, where appropriate, reports to the Board of any issues from the external audit of CHS, and any matter that the external auditors bring to the attention of the committee.
  - 6.9 The adequacy of the arrangements for the management of CHS' compliance with legislation and regulation focusing on data security, freedom of information, health and safety and equality.
  - 6.10 Fraud and Corruption prevention policy, Whistleblowing policy, and arrangements for special investigations.
  - 6.11 Quality Strategy Monitoring.
- 7. Information Requirements**
- 7.1 Agree a work programme at the start of each financial year for the year ahead.
  - 7.2 For each meeting, the ARC is normally provided with:
    - 7.3 a report on performance relating to risk management, including a summary of any key changes to the risk register.
    - 7.4 Information Governance reports.
    - 7.5 a report from Internal Audit detailing, as appropriate:
      - 7.6 audit performed.
      - 7.7 key issues emerging from internal audit work.

## Agenda Item 12b. CHS-2526-07 Appendix 1

- 7.8 management responses to audit recommendations.
- 7.9 the current internal audit plan including proposed changes.
- 7.10 any issues affecting the delivery of internal audit objectives.
- 7.11 progress on the implementation of agreed recommendations.

### **8. As and when appropriate, the Committee:**

- 8.1 Annually reviews its Terms of Reference. Proposals for amendment to the terms are submitted to the Board for formal approval.
- 8.2 Annually reviews its own effectiveness.
- 8.3 Considers the Draft Annual Report and Accounts prior to submission to the Board and reviews the compliance check list and draft Governance Statement.
- 8.4 Reviews any changes to accounting policies.
- 8.5 Reviews the Management's letter of Representation.
- 8.6 Reviews the effectiveness of CHS' financial and other control systems.
- 8.7 Monitors CHS' arrangements to secure Value for Money, whether these are made via internal or external audit or other means.
- 8.8 Monitors the effectiveness of Internal and External Audit, reviews the Internal Audit Annual Report and the ISA 260 from External Audit.
- 8.9 Alerts the Board and, where necessary, Scottish Ministers to factors which might affect the ability of CHS to conduct its statutory functions and achieve its strategic objectives.

**Appendix 1 - Membership of the Audit and Risk Management Committee**

Name	Term	Term	Term
	1 <sup>st</sup> Appointment	2 <sup>nd</sup> Appointment	3 <sup>rd</sup> Appointment
Sean Austin ARC Chair	06/21-06/24	07/25-06/29	
Barbara Neil	05/19-05/22	05/22 – 01/25	02/25-01/27
TBC			

**Agenda Item 13a. CHS-2526-08**

<b>Meeting:</b>	CHS Board
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	25 June 2025
<b>Title:</b>	People and Culture Committee Annual Report 2024-25
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	Jo O'Leary, Director of People and Culture
<b>Report Author:</b>	Jo O'Leary, Director of People and Culture

<b>1.</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>																								
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to ask the Board to approve the PaCC Annual Report 2024-25.</p> <p>The report covers the work of the PaCC from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.</p> <p>The report was endorsed at the People and Culture Committee (PaCC) meeting on 17 June, prior to final Board approval.</p>																								
1.2	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead in advance of the meeting.																								
<b>2.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>																								
2.1	<p>The Board are asked to approve the draft annual report for the period 2024-25.</p> <p>The PaCC meets quarterly and is responsible for assisting the CHS Board and Accountable Officer to deliver its responsibilities for effective staff performance management, recruitment, remuneration and appointment in accordance with its Terms of Reference.</p>																								
<b>3.</b>	<b>Key Points for Discussion</b>																								
3.1	<b>PaCC Meeting Attendance</b>																								
3.1.1	<p>The PaCC met on four occasions during the 2024-25 financial year: 18 June 2024, 10 September 2024, 17 December 2024 and, 11 March 2025.</p> <p>The serving Committee members during this reporting period and attendance was as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="274 1646 1428 1848"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>18/06/2024</th> <th>10/09/2024</th> <th>17/12/2024</th> <th>11/03/2025</th> <th>Attendance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Jo Derrick</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Beth-Anne McDowall</td> <td>✓</td> <td>Apologies</td> <td>✓</td> <td>Apologies</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Katie Docherty</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>For the meeting to be quorate, a minimum of two members must be in attendance.</p> <p>The meeting on 11 March 2025 was inquorate due to Jo Derrick's end of tenure on 31 January 2025 and apologies from Beth-Anne McDowall. Sean Austin, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee attended the meeting to make this quorate.</p>		18/06/2024	10/09/2024	17/12/2024	11/03/2025	Attendance	Jo Derrick	✓	✓	✓	N/A	100%	Beth-Anne McDowall	✓	Apologies	✓	Apologies	50%	Katie Docherty	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
	18/06/2024	10/09/2024	17/12/2024	11/03/2025	Attendance																				
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Beth-Anne McDowall	✓	Apologies	✓	Apologies	50%																				
Katie Docherty	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%																				

**Agenda Item 13a. CHS-2526-08**

	Over the course of the meetings, the PaCC met its Terms of Reference during 2024/25.
3.1.2	In addition to the Committee members noted above, the meetings are attended by the National Convener/CEO (Accountable Officer) and/or the Depute CE and the Director of People and Culture.
3.1.3	During 2024-25, also in attendance at the meetings were the Co-Chairs of the Team Forum and other officials where appropriate to assist with discussions and offer expertise.
3.2	<b>PaCC Meeting Workplan</b>
3.2.1	A programme of work was agreed at the PaCC meeting on 19 December 2023 and items allocated over the four meetings during 2024/25.
3.2.2	The standard agenda items discussed at each meeting were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declarations of Interest</li> <li>• Approval of the Minute of the previous meeting</li> <li>• Action Log Update</li> <li>• Chair Update</li> <li>• People Strategy and Planning Update</li> <li>• Policy reviews as required</li> <li>• Team Forum Update.</li> </ul>
3.2.3	Other items of business discussed throughout the 2024/25 year were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CHS Policies approved, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Pension Discretionary Policy and the Foster Friendly Policy</li> <li>• The Whistleblowing Policy was discussed with the Audit and Risk Committee asking for testing to be carried out which was agreed.</li> <li>• The Volunteer Policy was updated and approved.</li> <li>• The Neonatal Care Policy was presented, and it was agreed to align this to the Sickness Absence Policy. This was created in line with the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023</li> <li>• Children's Participation and Rights Strategy was approved along with the CHS Wellbeing and Retention approach and the CHS Staff Pulse Survey programme.</li> <li>• The refreshed People and Culture strategy was developed and approved.</li> <li>• The new Car Benefit Scheme was formally launched along with written guidance which was presented to the Committee to note.</li> <li>• Refreshed EDI Strategy was approved along with updated Equalities Mainstreaming Outcomes.</li> <li>• The NC/CEO 6-month review, annual appraisal, and objectives were reviewed and approved</li> <li>• A 3-year Staff Pay Strategy, and CEO pay recommendations were considered and approved</li> <li>• The Annual Report on outcomes of staff appraisals was reviewed</li> <li>• The Committee reviewed its own effectiveness</li> </ul>

**Agenda Item 13a. CHS-2526-08**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee welcomed the continued engagement with the Team Forum who attended every meeting.</li> </ul>
3.3	<b>Terms of Reference (ToR)</b>
	The Committee reviewed its ToR (see Appendix 1) on 11 March 2024. The CHS Board approved the ToR on 25 March 2024.
3.4	<b>Support to the Committee</b>
3.4.1	<p>On behalf of the Committee the PaCC Chair, Katie Docherty, would like to record thanks to Jo Derrick for her role as Chair of the Committee prior to the end of tenure on 31 January 2025. KD would also like to record thanks to the CHS Leadership Team for their contribution and support throughout the year and to Frieda Cadogan for the governance support provided to the Chair and Committee. The Chair would also like to note thanks to her fellow Committee members for their insights and contributions past, present and future.</p> <p>The Chair will work with the Board Chair over the coming year on the membership of the Committee due to Jo Derrick's end of tenure and Beth-Anne MacDowall's end of tenure.</p>
4.	<b>Alignment to CHS Strategic Outlook</b>
4.1	<p>This work is aligned to the CHS Strategic Outcome 2024-2027:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Theme 1 - Delivering Positive Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 3 - Upholding and promoting children's rights is at the forefront of what we do, and those rights are well understood by our people</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Theme 2 - Driving Transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 1 - Work with partners and stakeholders to lead and influence change.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Theme 3 - Valuing Our People</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 1 - Implement a three-year People Strategy that attracts and retains top talent and committed individuals and drives the success and sustainability of the organisation.</li> <li>Objective 2 - The organisational design remains agile, adaptable and responsive to support ongoing organisational transformation.</li> <li>Objective 3 - To become a more inclusive and diverse organisation and create a culture where everyone feels valued, included and engaged.</li> <li>Objective 4 - to develop our people capabilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5.	<b>Key Risks</b>
5.1	No risks identified.
6.	<b>Risk Register</b>

**Agenda Item 13a. CHS-2526-08**

6.1	There is no requirement for anything to be added to the Risk Register at this stage.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Impact on Inequality/Rights</b>
7.1	N/A
<b>8.</b>	<b>Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)</b>
8.1	There is no requirement for engagement and consultation in relation to this paper.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
9.1	There is no specific resource implication associated with this paper.
<b>10.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference

**People and Culture Committee (PaCC)**  
**Terms of Reference**  
**2025/26**

**1. Constitution**

- 1.1 The Board of CHS hereby resolves to establish a committee of the Board to be known as the **People and Culture Committee**.

**2. Membership**

- 2.1 The members of the committee are appointed by the Board from its membership. There is a minimum of three members of the committee, including the Chair of the committee and the deputy Chair. Details of the current members are shown in Appendix 1.

The Board appoints one of its members to serve as the Chair of the committee. The committee determines the procedure to appoint its Deputy Chair. If the Chair of the committee is absent from the meeting, his/her Deputy chairs the meeting and assumes all the functions and authority of the Chair.

- 2.2 All members are appointed for the length of their current Board appointment which may be extended in line with any Board re-appointments. All re-appointments must be approved by the Board.
- 2.3 The Committee may appoint a substitute drawn from the membership of the Board of CHS.
- 2.4 A committee substitute may participate at a committee meeting in place of a member where a committee member:
- (a) is unavailable for a committee meeting (or any committee activity taking place other than at a meeting) because of illness, family circumstances, adverse travel conditions beyond the member's control, a requirement to attend to other urgent business; or
  - (b) has ceased to hold that office and a replacement committee member has yet to be appointed.
- 2.5 When a committee substitute attends a meeting (or other committee activity), he or she assumes the full rights of an ordinary member of the committee. In particular, the substitute can vote and is entitled to receive all committee papers.
- 2.6 The Chair of the Board is not a committee substitute.

- 2.7 The PaCC may co-opt independent members who are not members of the Board for a period (not exceeding a year) to provide specialist skills, knowledge, and experience subject to budgets agreed by the Board.

### **3. Authority**

- 3.1 The committee is authorised by the Board to review and approve any activity within its Terms of Reference (ToR). In so doing, the committee is authorised by the Board to obtain outside legal or other independent professional advice and to secure the attendance of outsiders with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this is necessary, subject to budgets agreed by the Board.

### **4. Meetings and Quorum**

- 4.1 The PaCC meets at least three times a year subject to the possibility of cancelling a meeting should it not be required. The Chair of the committee may convene additional meetings as he/she deems necessary. Committee meetings are held in private and may be held virtually if required.
- 4.2 The Chair of the Board may also ask the Chair of the committee to convene further meetings to discuss issues on which he/ she wants the People and Culture Committee's advice.
- 4.3 A minimum of two members of the committee must be present for the meetings to be deemed quorate. To ensure that the meeting is quorate, committee substitute(s) may be required to attend.
- 4.4 If any matter falls within the remit of more than one committee, the committees concerned may, if they wish, seek the agreement of the Board to meet jointly.
- 4.5 The People and Culture Committee may ask any other officials to attend to assist with discussions and offer expertise on a particular matter.
- 4.6 The Chair of the People and Culture Committee will attend one meeting of the CHS Audit and Risk Committee Meeting, per year and vice versa.
- 4.7 The Governance Officer will provide the PaCC with secretarial support services.
- 4.8 The agenda and meeting papers are issued to members at least seven calendar days prior to the meeting, unless agreed otherwise.
- 4.9 The Governance Officer minutes the proceedings and resolutions of all committee meetings including the names of those present and in attendance.
- 4.10 Minutes of every committee meeting are circulated to the Chair for approval and approved minutes referred to the Board for noting as soon as practical.

4.11 An Action Log is maintained to monitor progress on key issues raised at meetings.

## **5. Decisions and voting**

5.1 Where consensus on a decision is not arrived at and a vote is necessary, members should refer to, and apply, the procedure laid out in CHS Board Standing Orders.

## **6. Attendance**

6.1 The National Convener/Chief Executive Officer and the Director of People and Culture are required to attend each meeting.

6.2 The People and Culture Committee may require any other officials to attend to assist it with its discussions on any matter.

6.3 The committee may ask any or all of those who normally attend and who are not members of the committee, to withdraw to facilitate open and frank discussion of matters. No attendee should be present for discussion of his/her own remuneration and conditions of service

## **7. Reporting**

7.1 The Chair of the committee reports back to the Board, verbally or in writing, after each meeting. The committee takes directions from the Board on general or specific action it should take.

7.2 The committee reports on its activities, to the extent that it can, without breaching confidentiality, in the CHS Annual Report and Accounts.

## **8. Responsibilities**

The committee has the following responsibilities:

8.1 Approves and reviews procedures/policies and any changes in procedure/policies for CHS colleagues for:

- the setting of performance objectives for the National Convener/ CEO.
- the appraisal of performance for CHS colleagues.
- the pay and reward structure within CHS.
- the employee life cycle process.
- and any other people strategies, policies and guidance as applicable.

8.2 Approves and reviews applicable people related procedures/policies and any changes in procedure/policies for CHS community.

- 8.3 Notes and/or approves CHS' employment policies and their revision from time to time, including the Pensions Discretionary Policy.
  - 8.4 Approves the annual pay remit for submission to the Scottish Government.
  - 8.5 Approves the recruitment/reappointment process for the NC/Chief Executive when a vacancy arises.
  - 8.6 Formulates proposals for the Chief Executive's salary progression and other aspects of their remuneration for recommendation to the Scottish Government.
  - 8.7 Notes the Remuneration report in the CHS Annual Report and Accounts and seek assurance it fulfils disclosure requirements.
  - 8.8 Considers the redundancy, early retirement or severance arrangements in respect of all CHS colleagues, excluding retirement on grounds of ill-health, and approve these or refer to CHS Board as it sees fit.
  - 8.9 Considers/approves reports on progress against the People Strategy. This will include links across other organisational strategies such as the Learning and Development Strategy, EDI Strategy etc.
  - 8.10 Approves any Employment Tribunal settlement.
  - 8.11 Engages directly with representatives of the CHS Team Forum at PaCC meetings.
  - 8.12 Where a question arises about whether a matter is within the committee's Terms of Reference, it is for the Board, after consultation with CHS Senior leadership Team as appropriate, to decide.
  - 8.13 Learning, including the annual prospectus, CHSLA report and any monitoring performance against the Learning Strategy and Implementation Plan.
  - 8.14 Participation including any updates to the workstreams within the Children's Participation and Rights Strategy.
  - 8.15 Wellbeing including updates on the delivery and implementation of the Wellbeing and retention approach for paid colleagues, as well as volunteers, in-line with the People and Culture Strategy.
- 9. Review**
- 9.1 The committee reviews its Terms of Reference annually. Proposals for amendment to the terms are submitted to the Board for formal approval.

Chair

Date

**1**

**Membership of the People and Culture Committee (PaCC) Committee**

Name	Term	Term	Term
	1 <sup>st</sup> Appointment	2 <sup>nd</sup> Appointment	3 <sup>rd</sup> Appointment
<b>Kathryn Docherty (New Chair)</b>	<b>06/21- 06/25</b>	<b>07/25-06/29</b>	
<b>Beth-Anne Logan (Deputy Chair)</b>	<b>05/17- 05/20</b>	<b>05/20 – 06/25</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>TBC</b>			

**Other Attendees**

Name	Designation
<b>Jo O’Leary</b>	<b>Director of People and Culture</b>
<b>Elliot Jackson</b>	<b>National Convener/CEO</b>
<b>Katharina Kasper</b>	<b>CHS Chair</b>
<b>Frieda Cadogan</b>	<b>Governance Officer (note taker)</b>

**Agenda Item 14. CHS-2526-09**

<b>Meeting:</b>	CHS Board
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	25 June 2025
<b>Title:</b>	EDI Strategy & Equality Outcomes update
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	Jo O'Leary, Director of People & Culture
<b>Report Author:</b>	Umar Malik, People & Culture Partner and EDI working group convenor

<b>1.</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to ask the Board to approve the update on the current status of the EDI Strategy and Equality Outcomes that were approved at the previous Committee meeting
1.2	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead in advance of the meeting.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Update and next steps</b>
2.1	<p>Following approval by SLT and PaCC, the EDI working group met to discuss next steps in the implementation and driving forward the equalities work within CHS for both the panel community and national team.</p> <p>The working group provided comments on the strategy which will help inform an action plan and steps towards implementing the strategy going forward.</p>
2.2	<p>At present the group are working with the Communications &amp; Engagement Team to get the Strategy ready to be published on the website and shared with the community this month. Resource constraints and competing organisational priorities has caused a delay in earlier publication.</p> <p>Engagement with the panel community will begin by holding a focus group with the Practice &amp; Policy group in early July while wider engagement with the panel community will take place later in the summer and will be guided by colleagues from the regional teams, particularly the Regional Tribunal Delivery Managers.</p>
2.3	Some preliminary discussions have taken place with the Participation Coordinator in relation to how best to engage and involve young people in the implementation of the strategy working towards achieving the outcomes stated therein. Further discussions are planned over the coming weeks to ensure constructive and meaningful engagement.
2.4	The EDI working group convenor was added to the SCRA Inclusion and Diversity Steering Group at the beginning of the year which meets every quarter and has provided useful insight and learnings in relation to the approach CHS takes towards EDI.

**Agenda Item 14. CHS-2526-09**

Advice has been sought from the Mainstreaming Policy and Engagement Team at the Scottish Government including attending an online roundtable event held in late 2024. From that event, the EDI working group convenor reached out to the Non-Departmental Public Bodies Equality Forum and has joined this community established in 2012 which is a complementary and collaborative network for those NDPB organisations in Scotland involved in delivering on the equality and diversity agenda, and specifically the requirements of public sector equality duties.

A meeting with the forum chair and deputy chair has been scheduled in the coming weeks to explore areas of collaboration and how CHS as a new member of this established network can benefit from resources the network can offer.

**Agenda Item 15a. CHS-2526-10**

<b>Meeting:</b>	CHS Board
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	25 June 2026
<b>Title:</b>	Annual Accounts & Governance Statement 2024
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	Jessica MacDonald, Director of Business and Finance
<b>Report Author:</b>	Karen Griffin, Corporate Governance Manager

<b>1.</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>	
1.1	The purpose of this report is to ask the Board to note on the key dates in the preparation of the CHS's 2024/25 financial statements and review the Accountable Officer's draft Governance Statement and draft Performance Report for inclusion in the 2024/25 Annual Accounts.	
1.2	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead in advance of the meeting.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	
2.1	The Board are asked to note the key steps in the preparation of the 2024/25 Annual Accounts and to review the draft Governance Statement and draft Performance Report for inclusion in the 2024/25 annual Accounts. It should be noted that the Accounting Policies were approved at ARC in February 2025 and noted at Board in March 2025.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Key Points for Discussion</b>	
3.1	<b>Audit Timetable</b>	
3.1.1	<b>Audit Activity</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
	Submission of audited annual report and accounts and all working paper	16 June 2025 (Completed)
	Latest Date for audit clearance meeting	5 August 2025
	Agreement of audited and unsigned annual report and accounts	12 August 2025
	Issue of draft letter of representation, proposed independent auditor's report and proposed annual audit report	12 August 2025 (to ARC 26 August 2025)
	Approval by those charged with governance and signing of audited annual report and account	23 September 2025 (to Board 24 September)
	Signing of independent auditor's report and issue of annual audit report	23 September 2025 (or after Board)
3.2	<b>Governance Statement</b>	
3.2.1	The draft 2024/25 Governance Statement is attached as Appendix A for inclusion in the annual accounts, for noting.	

**Agenda Item 15a. CHS-2526-10**

3.3	<b>Performance Report</b>
3.3.1	<p>The draft Performance Report is attached as Appendix B. It should be noted that the FReM requirements set out the expectations of what this report should contain and look like. In summary it should be easy to read by the general public who may have no knowledge of CHS, it should include graphics and where appropriate colour codes and RAG status. The report is divided into two parts the “performance overview” and the “performance analysis” with each section having required elements.</p> <p>Audit Scotland picked up in 2022/23 and the 2023/24 audit that they considered the format and some of the content was not in compliance with the accounting FReM requirements. All FreM requirements have now been considered and have been incorporated into the 2024/25 performance report, as agreed with Ross Mackenzie from SCRA.</p>
4.	<b>Alignment to CHS Strategic Outlook</b>
4.1	<p>This work is aligned to the CHS Strategic Outcome 2024-2027:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Theme 1 - Delivering Positive Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Develop a 5-year learning strategy to maximise learning impact across CHS</li> <li>• Objective 2 - Quality will be the cornerstone of our hearings system.</li> <li>• Objective 3 - Upholding and promoting children's rights is at the forefront of what we do, and those rights are well understood by our people</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Theme 2 - Driving Transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Work with partners and stakeholders to lead and influence change.</li> <li>• Objective 2 - We will become a data-informed and data-driven organisation.</li> <li>• Objective 3 - We will make effective use of technology, capitalising on its potential for enhancing performance and delivering efficiency.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Theme 3 - Valuing Our People</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Implement a three-year People Strategy that attracts and retains top talent and committed individuals and drives the success and sustainability of the organisation.</li> <li>• Objective 2 - The organisational design remains agile, adaptable and responsive to support ongoing organisational transformation.</li> <li>• Objective 3 - To become a more inclusive and diverse organisation and create a culture where everyone feels valued, included and engaged.</li> <li>• Objective 4 - to develop our people capabilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5.	<b>Key Risks</b>

**Agenda Item 15a. CHS-2526-10**

5.1	No risks identified.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Risk Register</b>
6.1	There is no requirement for anything to be added to the Risk Register at this stage.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Impact on Inequality/Rights</b>
7.1	N/A
<b>8.</b>	<b>Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)</b>
8.1	There is no requirement for engagement and consultation in relation to this paper.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
9.1	There is no specific resource implication associated with this paper.
<b>10.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	Appendix 1 – Governance Statement DRAFT Appendix 2 – Performance Report DRAFT

## **Appendix 1 - CHS 2024/25 Governance Statement**

### 1. Scope of Responsibility

1.1 As Accountable Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of CHS' policies, aims and objectives, as set by Scottish Ministers, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in the Memorandum to Accountable Officers for Other Public Bodies.

### 2. Governance framework

2.1 CHS' governance framework accords with generally accepted best practice principles and guidance from Scottish Ministers in the Scottish Public Finance Manual and has been in place for the financial year ended 31 March 2025 and up to the date of the approval of the annual report and accounts.

2.2 CHS has a Board which meets at least every three months to consider the overall strategic direction of CHS within the policy, planning and resources framework determined by the Scottish Ministers. The Board seeks assurance that corporate objectives are being progressed through the delivery of agreed targets in the business plans and corporate plan on performance, implementation of strategic projects, effective use of resources and management of strategic risks.

2.3 The Board Committee structure comprises a People and Culture Committee and an Audit and Risk Management Committee. Each Committee has developed its terms of reference which are documented, approved and reviewed on an annual basis.

2.4 The People and Culture Committee meets quarterly, and its responsibilities include:

- approving and reviewing procedures/policies for CHS staff and applicable procedures/ policies for CHS community members, including employment policies
- reviewing the objectives of senior staff annually
- approving the annual pay remit for submission to Scottish Government
- approving the recruitment process for the National Convener/Chief Executive
- considering/approving reports on People and Recognition, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Learning and Development and Staff and Community Wellbeing
- approving any Employment Tribunal settlements

2.5 The Chair of the People and Culture Committee briefs the Board following each meeting and the latter receives an annual report on the performance of the Committee.

2.6 The Audit and Risk Management Committee meets quarterly and reviews the adequacy of the arrangements for ensuring sound internal control arrangements and

## Agenda Item 15b. CHS-2526-10

provides the Board and Accountable Officer with advice and assurance with regard to the arrangements for:

- financial control and reporting;
- risk management;
- Information Governance;
- legal and regulatory compliance;
- Digital Programme.

2.7 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee briefs the Board following each meeting and the Board receives an annual report on the performance of the Committee.

2.8 CHS has an internal audit service provided under contract by BDO, which operates to standards defined in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. During 2024/25 Internal Audit undertook three reviews; core financial processes, stage gate process and a communications advisory review. The Committee scrutinises all internal audit reports and the actions taken by managers in response to audit recommendations.

2.9 In the internal auditor's opinion, the risk management activities and controls in the areas which they examined were found to be suitably designed to achieve the specific risk management, control and governance arrangements. Based on their verification reviews and sample testing, the risk management, control and governance arrangements were operating with sufficient effectiveness to provide reasonable, but not absolute assurance that the related risk management, control and governance objectives were achieved for the period under review.

### 3. Operation of the Board

3.1 The Board met five times during 2024/25, held four Board development sessions for training opportunities and discussion. In addition, the Board held a development session on the Scottish Government's Children's Hearings Redesign Consultation.

3.2 Key issues for the Board in 24/25 included:

- Approval of the Children's Participation and Rights Strategy 2024
- Approval of the Quality Strategy 2024-27
- Approval on the People and Culture Strategy 2024-2027
- Ongoing planning for the full implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024
- Ongoing planning for the implementation of reforms in line with the accepted recommendations from the Hearings for Children Report
- Approving quarterly performance reports
- Reviewing and approving the Board Standing Orders and Self-Assessments
- Scrutiny of ongoing work to improve capacity
- Approving the Budget for 2024/25
- Approving the Strategic Outlook 2024-27

## Agenda Item 15b. CHS-2526-10

- Approving the Business and Corporate Parenting Plan for 2024/25
- Approving the Annual Accounts and Impact Report
- Reviewing Learning Academy progress
- Volunteer Recruitment
- Equalities and Outcome reporting
- Approving the accounting policies to be used for the preparation of CHS' statement of accounts for 2024/25

3.3 Strategic and operational finance support is provided through a shared services arrangement with SCRA and CHS has a dedicated HR/OD Lead. SCRA's Head of Finance & Resources provides strategic finance advice to the CHS Board and Committee meetings and other meetings as appropriate.

### 4. Assessment of corporate governance arrangements

4.1 As Accountable Officer, I have reviewed the effectiveness of corporate governance arrangements. My review is informed by:

- the executive managers within CHS who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, including the organisation's Senior Information Risk Officer
- the work of the internal auditors who submit to the Audit and Risk Management Committee
- regular reports which include the Head of Internal Audit's independent and objective opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of CHS' system of internal control together with any recommendations for improvement
- comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports

4.2 Internal control systems around risk management, business planning, major investment, project management, financial management, fraud, procurement, human resources, equality and diversity, information management, health & safety and compliance are assessed annually as part of the Scottish Government Certificates of Assurance process. The National Convener completed this assessment for 2024/25, and no major control gaps were identified.

### 5. Assessment of procurement activities

5.1 As Accountable Officer, I have reviewed the effectiveness of procurement activities and arrangements. CHS is committed to fair process and best value resourcing and therefore in sourcing suppliers utilises SG procurement frameworks where possible and utilises shared service expertise from the SG procurement team through their Procurement Lite service. CHS has put in place a series of procurement KPI's to help demonstrate the contribution of procurement approaches to the efficient, effective and economical running of the organisation.

## Agenda Item 15b. CHS-2526-10

5.2 CHS reports on the effective contract management CHS Learning Academy by monitoring the contract meetings held, the financial management of the contract, and the KPI's delivered. CHS also reports against procurement activity for its annual recruitment campaigns as well as any contracts awarded above £5,000, contracts awarded using the SG framework above £20,000, and the number of contracts awarded using the 'quick quotes' approach.

5.3 In 2024/25 the following procurement activities took place which were awarded either via Quick Quotes, through the SG framework, and other procurement exercises.

- Procurement activities awarded with a value between £5,000 - £20,000 included the following services: campaign media support services, evaluation services, internal and external auditing, legal services, IT, wellbeing support, website design, and business services.
- Procurement activities awarded with a value above £20,000 which included the following services: ISO27001 certification, specialist Human Resource consultancy, IT licensing, IT equipment, media services for the recruitment campaign, Leadership Coaching Programme, Learning for Managers Programme, and the provision of the CHS Learning Academy.

## 6. Key issues and risks

6.1 A framework for identifying, measuring, controlling and monitoring strategic risks has been in place throughout the financial year during which time the senior team and the Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the approved Risk Management Policy. A regular review of the Operational and Strategic Risk Registers is undertaken by the Senior Management Team and the Strategic Risk Register is reported to the Audit and Risk Management Committee on a quarterly basis. Strategic and operational risk management is embedded in CHS' corporate and business planning processes and performance management arrangements.

## 7. Digital Programme

7.1 The main focus of activity throughout 2024/25 has been continued functional improvements to our CSAS platform across several areas including Rota management and the development of the Customer Relationship Management tool (CRM), Observations and Recruitment, and ongoing support of the new Tribunal Support Model. Joint Change Control Board and Control Assurance Boards are in place with SCRA to support the governance and implementation of improvements or changes to the digital platform.

7.2 Continual improvement of the CHS Microsoft platforms, including improvements in its CRM as well as the ongoing deployment of CHS owned Windows devices to its volunteer community, was implemented in 2024/25.

7.3 We continue to support Panel Members to participate in virtual children's hearings through training and provision of devices to support virtual activity including provision to all new trainees in year.

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### 8. Personal data related incidents

8.1 During 2024/25, CHS had 45 information security incidents recorded and investigated, including near misses. 1 of the 45 data protection occurrences was self-reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The increase in recorded incidents points to an increase in the levels of reporting of suspected incidents following the organisational restructure and our move to more centralised processes providing more oversight and increase awareness of data protection. .

8.2 Mitigating measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of data breaches and include compulsory training for all panel and AST members, Clerks, CHS National Team and Board members. Observed trends in breaches lead to the introduction of new or updated mitigations when necessary.

### 9. Conclusion

As Accountable Officer, I am satisfied that CHS has effective corporate governance arrangements in place.

**Elliot Jackson**  
**National Convener**  
**June 2025**

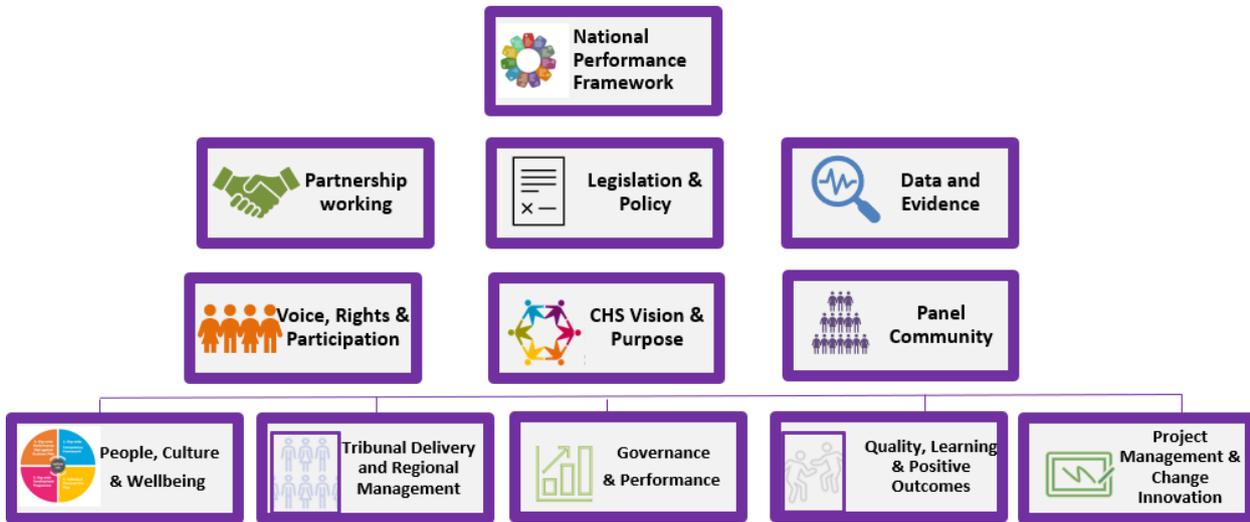
## Appendix 2 - Performance Overview

### Introduction:

Children’s Hearings Scotland (CHS) is one of a number of organisations that work within the Children’s Hearings System, Scotland’s unique care and justice system that exists to ensure the safety and wellbeing of infants, children and young people in Scotland.

The children’s hearings system was established as Scotland’s unique care and justice system for children and young people over 50 years ago. It exists to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who experience vulnerability in their lives through a decision-making lay tribunal called a children’s hearing. Each hearing is made up of 3 members of the national Children’s Panel which is comprised of specially trained volunteers drawn from local communities. You can find more about what we do on our website [www.chscotland.gov.uk](http://www.chscotland.gov.uk)

Under The Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 the main responsibilities of the national convener of CHS are to recruit, train and support over 2,500 volunteers across Scotland to ensure all hearings make child-centred decisions which respect and protect children’s rights and support them to thrive. This performance report sets out how CHS have achieved this during the period 2024-2025 under the CHS strategic framework and incorporating the CHS values as shown below.



All CHS activities are underpinned by our values, seeks to deliver on our aims and objectives and aspires to meet our vision



## From Our National Convener / Chief Executive

In 2024/25 we completed our first year in delivering our identified strategic themes as set out in our Strategic Outlook 2024-2027. These are:

- Delivering positive outcomes
- Valuing our people
- Driving transformation

As you will see in this Annual Report, I am pleased to report that strong progress across these areas was achieved during the year. We have continued to shape and inform what we expect to be some of the most transformational changes since the inception of the children's hearings system.

In June 2024, The Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act received Royal Assent. This landmark legislation further strengthens the rights of children in Scotland and will enable all people under 18 to access the protection and support of the hearings system. Within three months of it passing into law, we saw an end to any child being held in Young Offenders Institutions. This Act, along with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, reinforces that the work of Panel Members is one of the strongest ways in which children's rights are protected in Scotland.

Another key policy development was the Scottish Government's Children's Hearings Redesign consultation, which was undertaken between July to October 2024, as the next step following the Hearings for Children Report. CHS worked with our community and wider stakeholders to develop a considered and detailed response, laying out the changes we believe are required to future-proof and build on the strengths of the hearings system to safeguard and champion the rights of children.

In the last business year, we fully implemented our new Tribunal Support Model to more effectively support our Panel Community. This has included local partnership roles who are developing relationships and working to create effective spaces at local level for collaborative improvement and reform where they aren't in place i.e. local Children's Hearings Improvement Partnerships. A Wellbeing offer for our community is in place, and wellbeing colleagues have been instrumental in liaising with our learning teams to support Panel Members through their journey to chairing. We also adopted a new approach to change management to implement this important and significant programme of work which won the Public Sector Award for Project and Programme Management.

We have been preparing for the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 coming into full effect, and the anticipated changes that the Scottish Government may introduce in response to the Hearings Redesign consultation. CHS has continued to work with the Scottish Government, our community and our partner organisations to ensure that the best possible outcomes for infants, children and young people remain our highest priority throughout the changes to come.

- Elliot Jackson

## **Who We Are and What We Do:** Our Purpose, Activities, Structure and Values

CHS is divided into 4 key directorates: Positive Outcomes; People and Culture; Tribunal Delivery; and Business and Finance. It is supported and led by a dedicated and professional national team which provides leadership, guidance, operational support, quality standards and support for people across all areas of our work. Children’s Hearings Scotland would not function without our dedicated volunteer panel members; the people who make the decisions in the hearings. All functions work together to deliver excellence in the children’s hearings system.

### **Positive Outcomes**



With responsibility for participation, quality, practice, policy, participation, standards and learning, the Positive Outcomes Directorate provides a cohesive approach to how we deliver hearings in a trauma-responsive and rights-upholding way consistently across Scotland. The function provides CHS and external partners with assurance about the outcomes that are achieved for our infants, children and young people and drives improvement where we need to change.

### **People and Culture**



The People and Culture function plays a key role in supporting the organisation’s most valuable asset – our people – by providing guidance, support and resources across the organisation. The team has overall responsibility for driving forward an organisational culture for colleagues and Panel Community which is fair, inclusive and transformative and one that promotes diversity, equality, inclusion and wellbeing aligned with our CHS values and objectives.

### **Business and Finance**



The Business and Finance function is a central corporate service that provides excellent governance, change assurance, data insight, digital infrastructure and financial management to support CHS to deliver its statutory functions and to achieve its ambitious transformation strategy and its long-term vision.

### **The Tribunal Delivery Model**

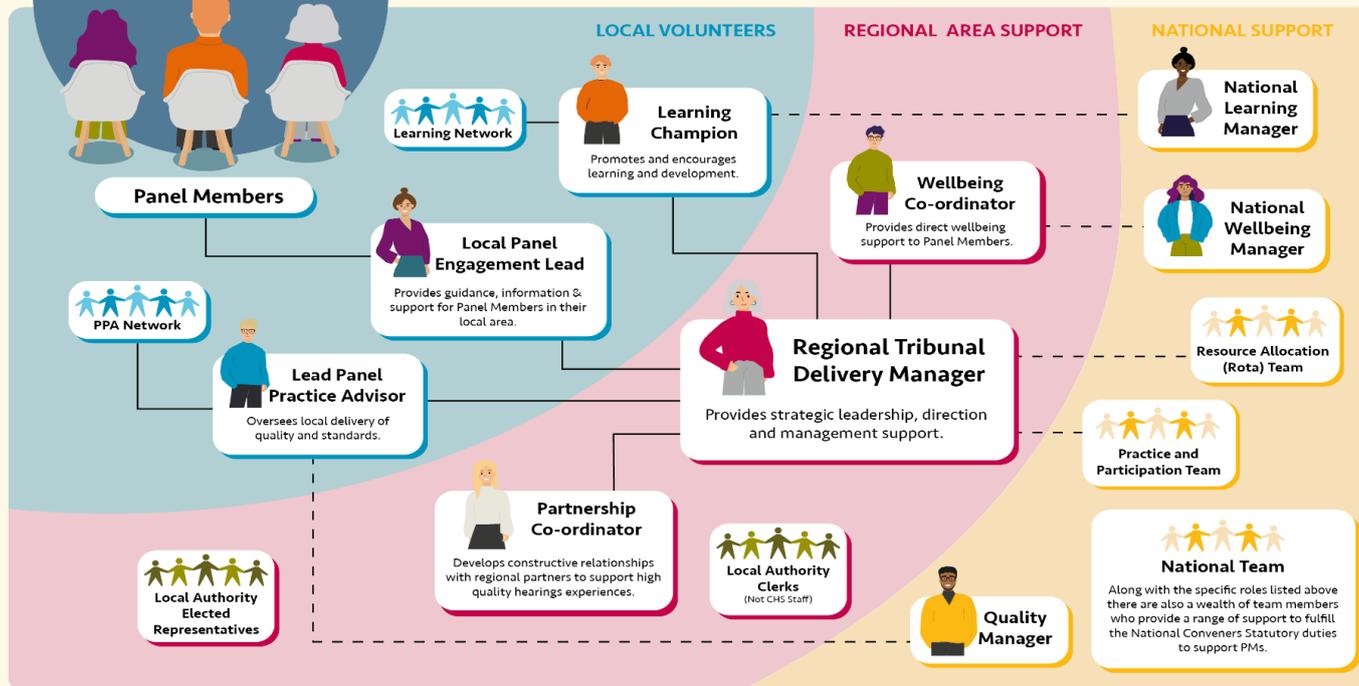


Children’s Hearings Scotland is implementing a sustainable Tribunal Support Model that delivers support for our panel members and ultimately improves the outcomes for children and young people. This new operating model is aligned to SCRA localities, providing connection with our key hearing system partner.

## HOW CHS SUPPORTS OUR PANEL MEMBERS



Behind every Panel Member who is making decisions for, and with, infants, children and young people, is a **Regional Area Support Team (AST)** to provide support, learning and wellbeing of Panel Members. The Regional Area Support Team (AST) is the operational group that manages the effective delivery of CHS's statutory functions in one of nine geographical localities across Scotland.



The Tribunal Delivery Model addresses some of the additional burdens on our volunteers whilst continuing to provide fulfilling, sustainable volunteer opportunities beyond panel membership. It provides a centralised, fair and consistent approach to resource allocation that maximises our opportunities to fulfil hearings; an enhanced support structure to Panel Members that will be consistent across the country; and a strong foundation to support and enable our panel community to deliver quality decisions and take on new responsibilities derived from The Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act, and any recommendations Scottish Government take forward from the Hearing System Redesign report.

### What We Want to Achieve: Our Strategic Themes and Business Objectives

Children’s Hearings Scotland works to a set of National Standards, and we make sure that our vision, purpose and values are visible in everything that we do. This is set out in the CHS Strategic Outlook 2024-27 and the CHS Business and Corporate Parenting Plan 2024-25 supports the first year of this approach.

#### Our Vision

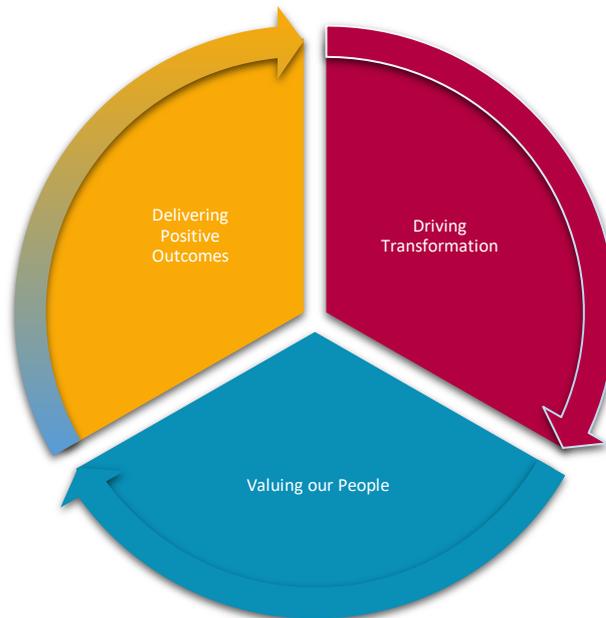
Our vision is for all infants, children, young people and their families to be safe, loved, and supported to realise their full potential.

## Our Purpose

Our purpose is to ensure our hearings make child-centred decisions which respect and protect children’s rights and support them to thrive.

Our strategic themes will deliver our vision through strong principled leadership, resilient systems, effective partnerships and organisational efficacy, all underpinned by our unwavering commitment to our values and delivering our contribution to Scotland’s National Outcomes.

## CHS Strategic Outlook 2024-27



### Theme 1: Delivering Positive Outcomes:

- Develop a 3-year quality strategy which informs and drives our areas for change and improvement.
- Codesign a revised Children’s Rights and Inclusion strategy with care experienced young people aligned to the accepted recommendations from the Hearings for Children Report and upcoming changes to legislation.
- Improve young people’s experience of the hearing by building on the work of the Language Leaders to ensure language used in the hearing system supports children to feel safe, included and at the centre of their Children’s Hearing.
- Fulfil our obligations and prepare our people for the implementation of the Care and Justice Bill in children’s hearings.

### Theme 2: Valuing Our People:

- Develop a nationally consistent approach to recognition within our community to improve the experience of Tribunal Members and strengthen our culture of appreciation.

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- Continue to support our Panel community through the embedding of regional support structures that promote engagement, retention, and provide meaningful opportunities for our volunteers.
- Develop a 5-year Learning Strategy which offers innovative solutions for learning, meeting the changing needs of the hearing system and our Panel community.
- Implement a strategic approach to Wellbeing that supports an improved experience for volunteers and colleagues.

### Theme 3: Driving Transformation:

- Work with partners and stakeholders across the sector on the implementation of the Hearings for Children accepted recommendations.
- Improve the extent to which CHS has access to and can collaborate with partners on the use of data to inform decision making.
- Improve the experience, delivery and fulfilment of Hearings through a nationally fair and consistent approach to rota management.
- Continue to lead and influence change in the sector and hearings system through on-going collaboration with national partners and our community.

### CHS Business and Corporate Parenting Plan 2024/25

This Business and Corporate Parenting Plan for 2024-2025 directly underpins our new Strategic Outlook 2024/27 and identifies those activities CHS will achieve within the business year, and over the next three years, which progress the delivery of our renewed vision, purpose, and strategic goals. The following objectives were set out in line with the three strategic outlook themes.

	Complete		On track
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CHS Business Plan Objectives 2024/25		Completion Rate
<b>Delivering Positive Outcomes</b> 		
1	Develop a 3-year quality strategy which informs and drives our areas for change and improvement	100% on track
2	Continue to embed and give further effect to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Scotland) Act in our work and practice	100% completed
3	Codesign a revised Children’s Rights and Inclusion strategy with care experienced young people aligned to the accepted recommendations from the Hearings for Children Report and upcoming changes to legislation	100% on track

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4	Fulfil our obligations and prepare our people for the implementation of the Children's Care and Justice (Scotland) Act in children's hearings	100% on track
5	Improve young people's experience of the hearing by building on the work of the Language Leaders to ensure language used in the hearing system supports children to feel safe, included and at the centre of their Children's Hearing	100% completed
6	Encourage hearing experienced feedback by young people through the provision of a unified complaints and feedback processes	100% completed
7	Drive Panel Member recruitment through national and local improvements	100% completed
<b>Valuing our People</b> 		
8	Develop a nationally consistent approach to recognition within our community to improve the experience of Tribunal Members and strengthen our culture of appreciation	100% on track
9	Continue to support our Panel community through the embedding of regional support structures that promote engagement, retention, and provide meaningful opportunities for our volunteers	100% completed
10	Develop a 5-year Learning Strategy which offers innovative solutions for learning, meeting the changing needs of the hearing system and our Panel community	100% completed
11	Progress our ambition to become a Trauma Informed Organisation	100% on track
12	Implement a strategic approach to Wellbeing that supports an improved experience for volunteers and colleagues	100% completed
13	Refresh our people strategy which promotes the key principles behind a healthy, happy organisation including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Recruitment and Retention; Learning and Development; Wellbeing; and Reward and Recognition	100% on track
<b>Driving Transformation</b> 		
14	Work with partners and stakeholders across the sector on the implementation of the Hearings for Children accepted recommendations	100% on track
15	Improve the extent to which CHS has access to and can collaborate with partners on the use of data to inform decision making	100% on track
16	Enhance our digital designs but making effective use of technology and improving our user engagement journey	100% on track
17	Improve the experience, delivery and fulfilment of Hearings through a nationally fair and consistent approach to rota management	100% on track

18	Continue to lead and influence change in the sector and hearings system through on-going collaboration with national partners and our community	100% on track
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### Performance Summary

In addition to the objectives set out above, CHS mapped out further six objectives relating to organisational effectiveness and critical enablers. Overall, we tracked the delivery of twenty-five business objectives through the year. These objectives were broken down into milestones with timescales and/or targets. Progress on the milestones and objectives were reported to the CHS Board and Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis. As in-year performance and delivery are reviewed, Board approval is sometimes sought to remove milestones or objectives from CHS’ planned delivery for the year. This may be due to internal or external factors.

For the year 2024/25 under the twenty-five business objectives there were sixty-three milestones. Twenty-six of these milestones had been marked to completed within the year. This was achieved except for four milestones that have been pushed in the business year 2025/26. A further thirty-five of the milestones are considered ongoing under the strategic outlook and remain on track. The remaining two of the overall sixty-three milestones were descoped during the year.

### What Concerns Us: Our Key Issues and Risks

The CHS Board monitors the strategic risks through the Audit and Risk Committee. The Committee carefully scrutinises those risks which have the potential to impact significantly on CHS’ performance, fulfilment of statutory duties, future prospects and developments. In 2024/25 the identified key strategic risks and mitigations are summarised below:

Risks	Mitigations
<b>Budget</b> - CHS is unable to deliver its business and statutory functions due to lack of budgetary support via Grant in Aid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business planning</li> <li>• Budget allocation and monitoring letter</li> <li>• 5-year financial plan</li> <li>• Effective engagement with sponsor team at Scottish Government</li> </ul>
<b>Learning</b> – Uncertainty over the timing and extent of legislative reform impacts and, or delays CHS’s ability to deliver its ambition for learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning strategy</li> <li>• Hearing reform process</li> <li>• Hearing redesign boards</li> <li>• Effective engagement with Scottish Government</li> </ul>

<p><b>Cyber Security</b> – CHS system experiences failures/breaches due to lack of cyber resilience measures or processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital support runbook towards gaining ISO27001 accreditation</li> <li>• Robust maintenance contracts in place for CSAS platform</li> <li>• SCOTS network monitored by iTECS</li> <li>• Cybersecurity training</li> <li>• Information governance reporting system</li> </ul>
<p><b>Data Sharing</b> – System constraints and data sharing arrangements hinder CHS from quality assuring its statutory functions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration improvement programme with SCRA</li> <li>• Working towards ISO27001 accreditation and cyber essentials</li> <li>• Mapping of data maturity feeding into data strategy and improvement plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>Capacity</b> – CHS does not have sufficient Panel Members to fulfil its statutory requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-design of recruitment campaigns</li> <li>• Engaging experts by experience</li> <li>• Capacity tracking</li> <li>• Continuous upskilling of volunteers/panel members</li> <li>• Retention and wellbeing project</li> <li>• Rota optimisation project</li> <li>• Tribunal delivery support model</li> <li>• Redesign board</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organisational Impact</b> – CHS does not realise the benefit of its organisational restructure to maximise outcomes for infants, children and young people through greater support for Panel Members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People strategy</li> <li>• Workforce planning group</li> <li>• Management infrastructure</li> <li>• Senior management training programme</li> <li>• Communication strategy</li> </ul>

CHS have a number of tools to manage these identified risks and operates under a comprehensive risk management framework. This risk framework extends to operational risk throughout the national team and wider volunteer community. Further information on the risk management framework is set out in the performance analysis below.

## Performance Analysis

### What We Did and Achieved in 2024-25: Performance Analysis and Key Activities

#### Financial Performance



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In the year ended 31 March 2025, CHS reported net expenditure before Scottish Government funding of £9.104m (2024: £7.148m) against Scottish Government funding of £9.357m (2024: £7.735m), an excess of Scottish Government funding over net expenditure of £0.253m (2024: £0.587m) with revenue grant-in-aid of £8.857m (2024: £7.235m). The General Fund has a surplus of £0.251m as at 31 March 2025 (2024: a deficit of £0.002m).

Capital grant-in-aid was £0.5m (2024: £0.5m). Spend within the financial year of £1.138m funded a significant programme of investment in technology for volunteers.

In accordance with *International Accounting Standard 19 (revised) 'Employee Benefits'*, the financial statements reflect at fair value the assets and liabilities arising from CHS' retirement benefit obligations. As a result, CHS has a surplus of £1.718m on its pension reserve at 31 March 2025 (2024: £1.637m). Further details of pension assets and liabilities are provided in the Remuneration Report and the Notes to the Financial Statements.

The Board of CHS has no reason to believe that the Scottish Government's future sponsorship and future Ministerial approval will not be forthcoming or will only provide a reduced support to CHS. Given the above it is considered appropriate to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of these financial statements. This is in line with the underlying assumption in the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRM) that Government accounts are prepared on a going concern basis.

In line with Scottish Government guidance, CHS' policy is to pay all invoices, not in dispute, within the lesser of 10 working days and the agreed contractual terms. During the year ended 31 March 2025, CHS paid xx% (2024: 87%) of invoices within the terms of its payment policy. CHS's Senior Leadership Team and Board have taken steps to ensure CHS has policies in place to guard against corruption and bribery, including CHS' procurement policy, Financial Regulations and Fraud and Corruption Policy.

## 2024/25 Key Activities



In 2024-25 CHS continued to face a challenging fiscal environment alongside the wider public sector. We remain indebted to our Panel Community, National Team, and partners across the sector who continued to be present and strive for better outcomes for infants, children, young people and their families.

- We delivered two successful Panel Member recruitment campaigns bringing new, fresh talent and dedication into the volunteer community with the **involvement and input of lived experience recruiters**.
- We continued to **deliver high-quality training** for Panel Members, adopting a refreshed approach to our pre-service programme. This included integrating training of the Charing role and increasing opportunities for practical skills development to strengthen both competence and confidence.

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- **We worked collaboratively with our Panel Community** to inform, influence and respond to the Scottish Government's Children's Hearings Redesign consultation.
- We worked alongside our **Experts by Experience** group ensuring that young people with lived experience of the hearings system play a key role in CHS decision making.
- We worked with Scottish Government colleagues and partners in the sector to advise, influence and implement the **legislative changes** that support and uphold children's rights, such as the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024.
- We celebrated and thanked our community through local recognition events and nationally during **Volunteers' Week**.
- We **reappointed over 373 Panel Members** for a further three years.
- We **refreshed our website and communications materials** to make them more accessible.
- We fully **implemented a new Tribunal Support Model** to more effectively support our Panel Community. This has included local partnership roles who are developing relationships and working to create effective spaces at local level for collaborative improvement and reform where they aren't in place i.e. local Children's Hearings Improvement Partnerships. A Wellbeing offer for our community is in place, and wellbeing colleagues have been instrumental in liaising with our learning teams to support Panel Members through their journey to chairing.
- CHS adopted a new approach to change management to ensure implementation of significant change programmes across the organisation, with the team winning a Public Sector Award for Project and Programme Management.

## National Convener Functions

The National Convener carried out the following statutory duties set out in the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011:

- **XXXX requests for panel member continuity were made as part of decisions for XXX children. (We won't have this data until SCRA publish their statistics, usually late June)**
- We received and responded to 2 requests for written advice, relating to 5 children, under section 8 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.
- 2 requests to serve notice on the implementation authority of their failure to implement the terms of a Compulsory Supervision Order were made under section 146 and 147 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.
- 0 applications were made to the Lord President of the Court of Sessions to remove a panel member under para 1(6) of Schedule 2 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.
- 0 referrals were received about excluded pupils under section 127 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.

## Organisational Performance Summary

CHS internal performance report is designed to allow the Board, on a quarterly basis, to monitor the delivery of the objectives in CHS’ Business Plan and scrutinise the overall performance of the organisation. The format of this reporting is Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The targets set considered realistic and achievable as the objective of any KPI is to be a mechanism for learning and delivering continuous performance improvement.

	Target Met or exceeded		Within 10% of Target		Target Missed
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KPI	2024/25 Target	2024/25 Result	Past Results
No. of submissions made through the child friendly feedback complaints portal	48	49	2023/2024: 12
% of volunteers and colleagues completed Trauma Informed training phase 2	100%	100%	New measure
% of active and eligible Panel Members observed in year	100%	76%	2023/24: 71%
% of pre-service trainees who felt that the learning objectives were met	99%	98%	2020/21: 98% 2021/22: 99% 2022/23: 98% 2023/24: 99%
% of recommended applicants appointed as Panel Members	90%	79%	2020/21: 83% 2021/22: 75% 2022/23: 84% 2023/24: 83%
% of eligible PMs completed Enhanced Practice and Management of Hearings training	70%	30% (base on active and eligible during 24/25)	New measure
% of regions involving young people in the design or delivery of the recruitment of panel members (9 regions)	100%	100%*	New Measure
% of Panel Members successfully reappointed	85%	82% (based on who was still a PM in the month before reappointment)	2022/21: 79% 2021/22: 62% 2022/23: 70% 2023/24: 80%
% of Panel Members retained during the year	85%	84%	2021/22: 86% 2022/23: 78.5 2023/24: 83%

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% CHS employee attendance keep	97%	98%	2020/21: 99% 2021/22: 85% 2022/23: 97% 2023/24: 97%
% invoices not in dispute paid within 10 working days, during normal operations keep	95%	84.3%	2020/21: 85% 2021/22: 85% 2022/23: 89.3% 2023/24: 87%

Regarding the KPI's above:

- % of active and eligible Panel Members observed in year – With a current reliance on volunteers for observation of a panel member, we have prioritised groups of panel members for observation. This includes new panel members, those for whom there has been a complaint and those who were required to be observed to achieve their professional development award. Due to this change this KPI has now been retired.
- % of pre-service trainees who felt that the learning objectives were met – As this KPI was only 1% from the expected target and this KPI has been consistently met or within 1% of target for the last five years no recommendations or change to this KPI are deemed necessary.
- % of recommended applicants appointed as Panel Members – After further analysis of the data captured the data is based on the number of learners that have passed training only, it does not consider why those who passed were not appointed. Non-appointment may be a result of a number of reasons such as change in circumstances, re-location, PVG checks etc. This KPI will be reviewed and if the data capture can be extended to include the reasons for non-appointment.
- % of eligible PMs completed Enhanced Practice and Management of Hearings training - The 24/25 initial target was set at 70% of eligible Panel Members to complete Management of Hearings (MOH) training during the year. A new approach has been taken where principles of enhanced practice and the skills taught in the Management of Hearings course are now incorporated in a refreshed and extended pre-service learning offer. As this KPI is no longer relevant it has been retired.
- % of Panel Members successfully reappointed – As this KPI was only 4% from the expected target, there is no change or direct recommendation for altering this KPI. Panel member retention remains a high priority for CHS, and it continues to support and retain the panel community through the embedding of regional support structures that promote engagement and provide meaningful opportunities for all volunteers.
- % of Panel Members retained during the year – As this KPI was only 1 % from the expected target, there is no change or direct recommendation for this KPI. However, panel member retention remains a high priority for CHS, and it continues to support and retain the panel community through the embedding of regional support structures that promote engagement and provide meaningful opportunities for all volunteers.

- % invoices not in dispute paid within 10 working days, during normal operations keep – The current process flow for the approval of invoices is the main contributing factor for not meeting this target. This is now being addressed by the planned implementation of a digital enhancement to the current e-financials platform of an automated flow management system. During the course of the next financial year, quarterly analysis on the payment process and execution dates for payments will be provided to the senior management team for review and monitoring. This KPI will remain unchanged, and the target set at 95%,

## Risk Management Arrangements



CHS operates under a risk management framework that is set out in the Risk Management Policy (Policy) which is overseen by the senior management team, the CHS Board and the Audit and Risk Committee. The Policy sets out five key objectives:

- increase confidence in our ability to achieve our objectives;
- facilitate the identification, evaluation, and control of key risks and ensure that any residual risks are at an acceptable level;
- integrate Risk Management into the operational and management practices and procedures of CHS to promote a culture of risk awareness;
- support planning and performance reporting, ensuring strategic risks are monitored and escalated to mitigate any risks to our planned strategic objectives;
- provide information to support the CHS' annual governance statement, as to the effectiveness of the arrangements for risk management and internal control mechanisms in practice.

Strategic and operational risk registers form part of the risk management procedures and are used to identify, evaluate and document response plans to mitigate potential risks. The strategic risk register is reviewed on quarterly basis by the senior leadership team and the risk and audit committee. Operational risk registers are managed by operational managers and the senior leadership team on a regular basis.

CHS adopts a “three lines of defence” model for the overall arrangements for managing risk and exercising control within the organisation. First line of defence includes the implementation and management of operational policies and procedures by staff, the second line is the risk management and governance function and the reporting to senior management, with the third line being provided by CHS's internal auditors on the testing and assurance of key processes and areas of control on a risk-based approach.

## Environmental Impact and Biodiversity



CHS is committed to meeting the Public Bodies duties set out in Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. CHS does not have a property footprint beyond its Head Office, which, for the duration of the reporting year, was in Thistle House, Haymarket, Edinburgh. Office space in Thistle House has been rented by CHS from the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) from April 2019 and we occupy 8.5% of the building.

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
<b>Carbon Emissions (kgCO<sub>2</sub>e) – Gas</b>	7,704	7,538	6,551
<b>Carbon Emissions (kgCO<sub>2</sub>e) – Electricity</b>	7,026	5,781	6,369
<b>SUB-TOTAL (Gas and Electricity Only)</b>	<b>14,730</b>	<b>13,319</b>	<b>12,920</b>
<b>Carbon Emissions (kgCO<sub>2</sub>e) – Water</b>	5	3	3
<b>Carbon Emissions (kgCO<sub>2</sub>e) – Refuse</b>	1	142	177
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,736</b>	<b>13,464</b>	<b>13,100</b>

Our impact associated with business mileage is given below:

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23
<b>Total Travel Distance (miles)</b>	53,977	32,957	14,793
<b>Emission Factor (kgCO<sub>2</sub>/mile)<sup>1</sup></b>		0.28567	0.27436
<b>Carbon Emissions (kgCO<sub>2</sub>e) (travel distance × emission factor)</b>		<b>9,414</b>	<b>4,059</b>

CHS’s acknowledges that its carbon footprint has increased substantially in 2024/25. This increase remains because of increased business mileage due to our new Tribunal Delivery Model which continues to allow our staff provide greater levels of in-person support to Panel Members, as well as further developing local partnership opportunities for improvement work in the children’s hearings system. This face-to-face approach is also important in supporting our wider volunteer community and to help us recruit and train more volunteers. Mileage will continue to be monitored, and greener public transportation options encouraged where possible.

Biodiversity opportunities are kept under review but remain limited due to the structure and size of the organisation. CHS does not own, regulate or manage land but does contribute where it can. This includes promoting hybrid working to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for those members of staff that are not client facing, promote the cycle to work scheme, operate a recycling facility in the

<sup>1</sup> Emission Factor for ‘average sized petrol car’ is used here.

office, operate a paperless office, the purchase of recycled office items where possible, education and training to its staff on environmental issues and encourage staff wellbeing and outdoor activities.

## **Equalities, Social Responsibility and Human Rights**



Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) exists to ensure that children attending hearings receive decisions that uphold and promote their rights, listen to their views and provide a legally competent foundation through which Lead Agencies may intervene in their lives to ensure they are safe and protected. Its mission aligns with the National Performance Framework for Scotland, particularly in advancing children's rights, supporting their full potential, building inclusive communities, promoting education, and tackling poverty.

As corporate parents, CHS prioritises children's rights and promotes participation. In 2023–24, the CHS Board approved a revised Strategic Approach to Participation, which has since been integrated into the new Children's Participation and Rights Strategy, which was published in late 2024. This strategy emphasises respect, inclusion, empowerment, and accountability, ensuring a child-centred hearing system. Key actions from this have been the hiring of a Lived Experience Advisor and establishment of a remunerated Expert by Experience Group. These initiatives will amplify lived experience in decision-making and promote empowerment.

Significant organisational change occurred in 2023–24, with staff numbers increasing by 50%, prompting the expansion of the People and Culture team, which now leads Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) efforts. The EDI working group reconvened in late 2024 to refresh the EDI strategy and update the CHS equality outcomes. The next equality outcomes report will be published in April 2026. A diversity and inclusion gap analysis has been conducted to benchmark progress and identify areas for improvement. CHS's enduring goal is to ensure that EDI efforts lead to better outcomes for children and their families.

CHS's 2024 Gender Pay Gap report showed improvement, with the mean gender pay gap decreasing to 2.03% in favour of men, down from 5.85% two years prior. The median gap, more indicative in small organisations, dropped to 1.45% from 5.75%, demonstrating more balanced pay distribution between men and women. Females make up 73% of staff and 80% of senior management.

The 2024 report also included ethnicity and disability pay gap data. The median ethnicity pay gap was -11.45% in favour of BME staff, while the mean was 5.09% in favour of non-BME staff, indicating that BME individuals are disproportionately represented in lower salary bands. In terms of disability, the median pay gap was -21.32% and the mean -1.86% in favour of those with declared disabilities, though this data is influenced by the low number of those with declared disability. The next report is due in 2026.

CHS is committed to refining recruitment to attract diverse talent and ensuring development opportunities for all. Continued support for employees with disabilities through adjustments, flexibility, and wellbeing resources remains a priority.

## CHS and Island Communities



CHS operates in every Local Authority in Scotland and is conscious of the particular challenges faced by island communities. During the reporting period The Tribunal Delivery Model (TSM) was implemented as a new way of working within island communities. Prior to the TSM implementation we conducted island impact assessments to consider the impact on the island communities, and how they would be best supported within the new model. Island Impact Assessments were used to determine where the northern isles of Orkney and Shetland should sit within the TSM in 2023. There was engagement with Area Conveners (local volunteer leaders) and CHS staff along with further engagement with the volunteer community.

The Tribunal Support Model offers enhanced support for volunteers from the Tribunal Delivery Manager, Partnership and Wellbeing roles. These staff members have worked closely with volunteers and other colleagues in other services (such as social work, children's reporters, third sector organisations) locally. The Tribunal Delivery Team have a presence locally as and when required and since the inception of TSM have been on the island communities several times, to support the local community of volunteers for local learning and recognition events, along with partnership working.

The CHS Learning Academy (CHSLA) deliver training services nationally, regionally, and locally across Scotland offering in person and online learning events. Island requirements are taken into account for all delivery and include commitment to support groups of island learners in the most effective way possible e.g. providing virtual opportunities if preferred, covering accommodation and travel costs for attendance at face-to-face events, or where feasible and preferred by island communities, organising on island training events. Out of pocket expenses, including those incurred through any greater distances travelled, longer stays away from home to attend events etc are reimbursed or pre-paid in advance. CHSLA organises accommodation for training centrally to avoid community members being out of pocket. A combination of face to face and virtual learning sessions have been offered throughout the reporting period. Virtual learning courses and the supporting online resources enabled Panel Community to complete essential and optional learning at times and a pace that suited them. Local Learning Champions, supported by CHS national team and CHSLA continue to offer local learning and sessions to bring island communities together either face to face or virtually to continue to complement national training. These Learning Events happen throughout the year.

## What We'll Do Next Year



As Corporate Parents under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, CHS and the National Convener have responsibilities to make sure our attention and resources are focused

## Agenda Item 15c. CHS-2526-10

on upholding the rights and safeguarding of Scotland's looked after children and care-leavers, and promoting their wellbeing. CHS and the National Convener plan, deliver, monitor and report on these duties together, collaborating with our partner organisations when necessary to deliver these goals. Our commitments in 2025-26 will centre on:

### **Participation**

To ensure that our work is informed by and for the infants, children and young people we serve. We are committed to elevating the participation of those with lived experience as a key tenet of our organisation. We will champion the involvement of children, so it is core to our standards, practices and organisational culture through investment in participation

### **UNCRC**

We welcome the incorporation of the UNCRC into law and will work closely with our partner organisations to ensure we are compliant with every aspect of new legislation. We will continue to conduct hearings and to champion children's rights with our Panel Members ensuring the rights of a child throughout their childhood are the paramount consideration when making decisions.

### **The Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024**

At CHS, we welcome the changes proposed by the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 and have undertaken extensive work to prepare for the impact these will have in the hearing room. We are committed to ensuring that every child under the age of 18 who requires support and guidance benefits from the welfare-based approach of the children's hearings system to give them the best start in life.

### **Children's Participation and Rights Strategy**

As a key priority, we have implemented a new strategy, co-designed with care experienced young people, which enshrines our obligations to put infants, children and young people with lived experience of care at the heart of what we do. We have invested in this work to ensure that the young people we work alongside are supported and have opportunities for influence

**Elliot Jackson**

**Accountable Officer**

**Agenda Item 16. CHS-2526-11**

<b>Meeting:</b>	CHS Board Meeting
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	25 June 2025
<b>Title:</b>	Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	Carol Wassell, Director of Positive Outcomes
<b>Report Author:</b>	Carol Wassell, Director of Positive Outcomes

<b>1.</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to ask the Board to note the main elements of the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill.</p> <p>It also sets out how CHS will manage Phase 1 (supporting the Bill through Parliament) and Phase 2 (Implementation of agreed legislation when the Bill becomes an Act) of the programme that will manage change.</p>
1.2	<p>On 18 June 2025, the Children (Care, Care Experience and Service Planning) (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament.</p> <p>The Bill has previously been referred to as the 'Promise Bill' and recently was known as the Children and Young People (Care) (Scotland) Bill. It proposes changes to the care system, including the hearings system, to enable the Scottish Government and its partners to make further steps to fulfil the Promise.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	To note this report.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Key Points</b>
3.1	The introduction of this Bill is the latest stage in an ongoing process led by the Scottish Government that the CHS National Team, volunteers and care-experienced young people have been contributing to over several years. An important role has also been played throughout the process by paid professionals in our partner organisations and children's service providers.
3.2	The Bill endorses the hearings system and in supporting documents recognises the important ways in which volunteering contributes to protecting the rights of children in hearings. It also recognises that to best protect those rights now and long into the future, the system needs to be able to continually evolve and adapt.

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3.3	<p>There are eight key areas the Bill seeks to address across the care system:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extension of eligibility to receive Aftercare support to young people who have been in care prior to their 16th birthday</li> <li>2. Introduction of a right to advocacy for children, young people, and adults with care experience.</li> <li>3. Actions to improve the language of care</li> <li>4. Legislative steps to tackle profit from residential care</li> <li>5. Strengthening the not-for-profit principle in relation to foster care</li> <li>6. Introduction of a national register for foster carers</li> <li>7. Redesign of the Children's Hearings System, and</li> <li>8. Extension of the statutory responsibility to Integrated Joint Boards in the development of Children Services Plans.</li> </ol>
3.4	<p>In relation to the redesign of the Children's Hearing System the following are the main areas of proposed change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power for the National Convener to convene single-member panels for certain defined preliminary decisions</li> <li>• Remuneration for certain Panel Members (chairing role)</li> <li>• National Convener power to identify and appoint Specialist Panel Members</li> <li>• Removal of the child's obligation to attend their hearing in favour of a presumption of attendance. The Hearing will have a power to ask for a child's attendance where if feels it is necessary for a fair hearing or to assist in its decision making</li> <li>• A change to grounds hearings with 3 options: The Reporter can send a child's circumstances directly to the Sheriff where there is unlikely to be acceptance of the grounds; ask for hearing with a single Panel Member where there is likely to be acceptance; or ask for a hearing to be convened with 3 Panel Members where there is a high degree of certainty that grounds will be accepted</li> <li>• Clarification of existing powers of the Chairing Member and of the hearing to manage the attendance of relevant persons</li> <li>• Power for automatic relevant person status to be removed by the Sheriff when it has been referred to them by a hearing who consider there to be an infringement of a child's Article 8 rights (a child's right to preserve their identity)</li> <li>• Changes to the statutory referral criteria threshold, requiring a referral to be made when compulsory measures "might be necessary" to "is likely to be needed"</li> <li>• Earlier, more agile, and flexible approach to the offer of advocacy to the child</li> <li>• Duty on the Reporter to ensure a child's advocacy worker is provided with sufficient information to enable them to present a child's views at a hearing</li> <li>• Increase the statutory time limit for the duration of Interim Compulsory Supervision Orders</li> <li>• Power of Principal Reporter to call a review hearing.</li> </ul>

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<b>4.</b>	<b>Approach (optional sections)</b>
4.1	After the summer Parliamentary recess (July and August) the Bill will be carefully scrutinised by a committee that will seek evidence and views and then will be amended and voted on by members of the Scottish Parliament. They will have opportunities to debate and amend the Bill and vote on whether it becomes an Act. If it becomes law, it will then take further time for any changes to the hearings system to be implemented.
4.2	The delivery of this work will be managed by CHS within the Hearings Redesign 2030 programme and will be formed of two phases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase 1 is the passing of the Bill through Parliament. During this phase we will analysis how recommendations will impact on CHS, influence and shape it where we are able, contribute to the call for evidence and Parliamentary Committees and put in place a communications plan for volunteers, National Team (including our Experts by Experience) and other stakeholders.</li> <li>Phase 2 will plan for implementation of those elements of the Bill that are enshrined in law.</li> </ul>
4.3	If successful, the Bill will become an Act in March of 2026.
<b>5</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
5.1	The content of the Bill, if enacted, will provide significant improvements to the experience of care for children in Scotland and enhance a focus on their rights under UNCRACK.
5.2	With the provisions that relate specifically to National Convener powers and duties, CHS will be able to drive forward changes for transformation and improvement that were set out in the consultation response to the Scottish Government, and which were highlighted in our role as core members of the Hearing System Working Group.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Key Risks</b>
6.1	The Bill may be subject to significant amendments at committee stage, not all of which will align to our position statements as described in our response to the Scottish Government consultation. There may criticism, that the scope of the Bill is too narrow.
6.2	On achieving royal assent, any legislation that is included and becomes part of the Act needs to be implemented in a timely way for children and young people to realise the benefits. We know that this can be challenging.

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<b>7.</b>	<b>Impact on Inequality/Rights</b>		
7.1	<b>Impact Assessment Duties</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Completed</b>
	Equalities Impact Assessment	Yes (Phase 2)	No
	Children's Rights Impact Assessment	Yes (Phase 2)	No
	Data Protection Impact Assessment	Yes (Phase 2)	No
	Islands Impact Assessment	Yes (Phase 2)	No
<b>8.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>		
8.1	<p>The Bill and its supporting documents can be found <a href="#">here</a> on the <a href="http://www.parliament.scot">www.parliament.scot</a> website. The Policy Memorandum document in particular sets out the content of the Bill with explanations.</p> <p>We understand that OHOV is currently working on a child-friendly version of the documents.</p>		

**Agenda Item 17a. CHS-2526-12**

<b>Meeting:</b>	CHS Board
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	25 June 2025
<b>Title:</b>	Children's Participation and Rights Strategy: Annual Review
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	Carol Wassell
<b>Report Author:</b>	Angela Phillips, Alice Wadkin and Stephen Bermingham

<b>1.</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	This report is to provide an update and annual review of CHS's Children's Participation and Rights Strategy covering the period June 2024 – May 2025.
1.2	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead in advance of the meeting.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>This review reinforces how engaging with those with lived experience will ensure that CHS maximises our commitment of being 'well informed and influential'.</p> <p>The 'Our Journey So Far' video clip highlights the work undertaken. The Three Pillars Implementation Plan outlines our commitments for the next year.</p> <p>The recommendation is to note the progress made in delivering the Children's Participation and Rights Strategy.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Key Points for Discussion</b>
3.1	<p>Background</p> <p>"Our Journey So Far" video clip.</p> <p>Progress against the key milestones identified in the since the Strategic Participation Review in September 2023, see section 2.</p>
3.2	Status and Update of the 2024-2025 Implementation Plan commitments, sections 3 – 13.
3.3	Experts by Experience, section 11.
3.4	Future plans, section 16.
3.4.1	Three Pillars Implementation Plan June 2025 – May 2026, section 17.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Alignment to CHS Strategic Outlook</b>
4.1	<p>This work is aligned to the CHS Strategic Outcome 2024-2027:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Theme 1 - Delivering Positive Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 3 - Upholding and promoting children's rights is at the forefront of what we do, and those rights are well understood by our people.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Theme 2 - Driving Transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Work with partners and stakeholders to lead and influence change.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Key Risks</b>
5.1	Potential risks are identified in section 18.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Risk Register</b>
6.1	There is no requirement for anything to be added to the Risk Register at this stage.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Impact on Inequality/Rights</b>
7.1	Data Protection impact assessment has been completed.  Not required a full suite of impact assessments were undertaken for the Children's Participation and Rights Strategy, this review is an update on progress.
<b>8.</b>	<b>Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)</b>
8.1	In the planning and preparation for this paper we consulted with CHS Staff at the all staff team day on 7 May 2025 and with all nine Experts by Experience during various meetings and individual meetings.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	Appendix 1 - Children's Participation and Rights Strategy: Annual Review Appendix 2 – Implementation Plan Overview Status and Update Appendix 3 – Participation Channels Overview Appendix 4 – ExE Information and Pledge Appendix 5 – Three Pillars Implementation Plan

## Children’s Participation and Rights Strategy: Annual Review

### 1. Purpose and Opportunity

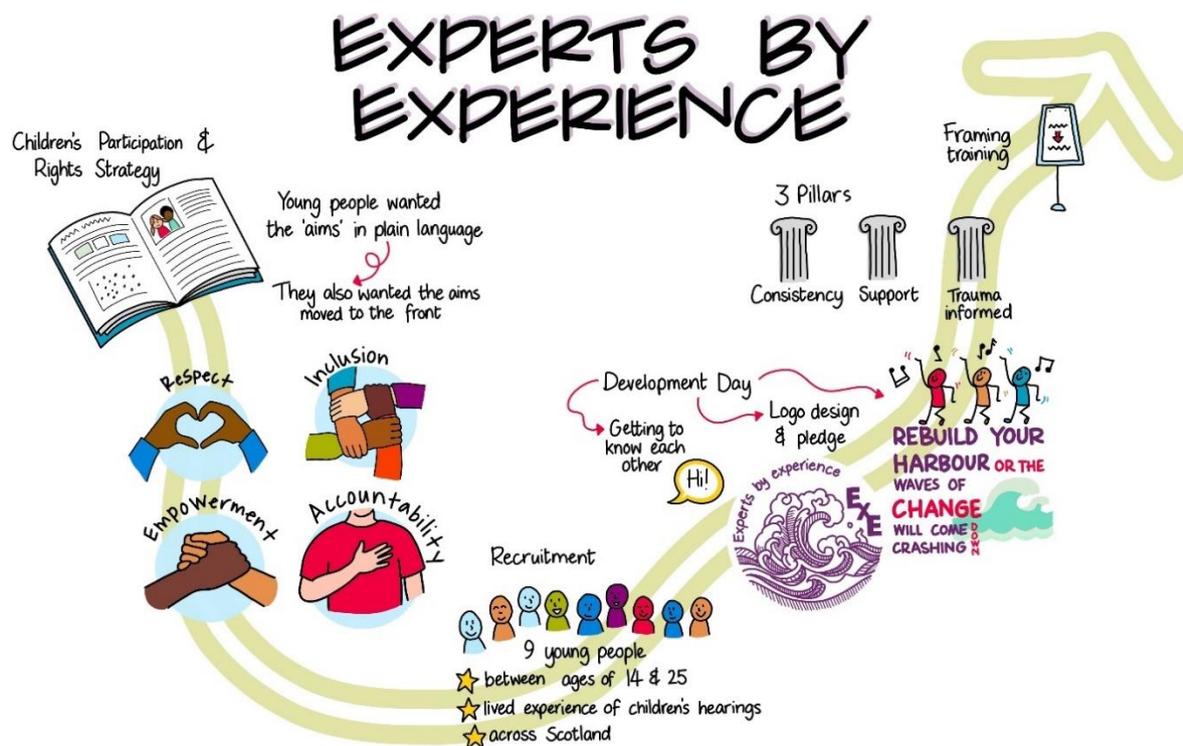
There remains a strong and well-established leadership commitment to participation across CHS. The establishment of the Positive Outcomes Directorate and the organisational restructure has allowed for additional investment and development of a Participation function. The Promise reform agenda and the Hearings for Children Redesign has allowed an opportunity for CHS to strategically develop the participation function to enhance CHS’s influence and credibility within the sector and the children and young people that we engage with.

The participation function, building on the previous Strategic Participation Review carried out in September 2023, lead and manage this strand of work in partnership and with oversight from the Practice and Standards Manager.

This report is to provide an annual review of CHS’s [Childrens Participation and Rights Strategy](#) over the period June 2024 – May 2025.

### 2. Background

To illustrate our work over the last year we have produced a short video clip ‘Our Journey so Far’ featuring key points on our journey. The below info graphic, created during the CHS all staff team day on 7 May 2025 tells the Experts by Experience story so far.



We collaborated with the Experts by Experience in the creation of the clip and recording the voice over.

“Being an Expert by Experience has given me a really valuable sense of involvement in the process – working directly with the system which I always wanted to see change in has been really beneficial to me.” *RM, Expert*

The clip can be accessed here: <https://youtu.be/BnrBylkecWg>

### **3. Children’s Participation and Rights Strategy**

The Children’s Participation and Rights Strategy was approved by the Board in June 2024. CHS will continue to deliver this Strategy as a core component of the Corporate Plan. The Strategy was co-designed with young people from Our Hearings Our Voice (OHOV), The Good Shepherd Centre and Today Not tomorrow (TNT) Champs Board.

“We just want adults to make a difference, be active and do what they say they are going to do.” *R, TNT Champs*

“Know our rights and respect us accordingly.” *Ash, OHOV Board Member*

“The young people were very pleased that they have been taken seriously and that their views are being heard and acted on. They liked the statements by the other young people and staff, and particularly liked how we responded to each quote as this made him feel they had been listened to.” *F, Good Shepherd Centre*

“I love how the quotes from different young people are clearly informing the strategy.”  
*OHOV*

The founding principles of this work are based on CHS commitment that that:

- The duty to respect the rights of children should be fully incorporated within Scotland, as required by the UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Act 2024.
- Children must be made aware of their rights.
- There must be accountability for any breaches of these rights with appropriate routes to remedy.

Our Children’s Participation and Rights Strategy alongside our participation work will continue to empower those with lived experience to have their voice heard and will ensure their views are respected and included in work of the Children’s Hearings Redesign and any future legislative reforms.

### **4. Staffing**

Effective participation work is resource intensive, and it is good practice for this be delivered by more than one staff member.

The Participation Coordinator worked closely with the Practice and Standards Manager to add additional capacity to the function with the creation of the Lived Experience Advisor post. The Lived Experience Advisor has been recruited on a fixed term of two years with year one completed. The Practice and Standards function has just appointed an additional full-time post in the Complaints and Feedback Team, a key part of their role will focus on feedback from young people, they will work closely with the Participation Team and the Experts by Experience. Young people played a key role in the recruitment and selection process for this post.

The additional capacity and skillset of the Lived Experience Advisor has allowed the function to develop and achieve many of the goals outlined in the implementation plan linked to the Children’s Participation and Rights Strategy. An overview of the status of the implementation plan can be found in *Appendix 1* with further explanation provided below.

**5. Strengthen alignment between Participation and the Feedback and Complaints functions**

The Participation and Feedback and Complaints Teams have been working closely to encourage and respond to children’s feedback of hearings. The Complaints Management Officer was a key member of the internal Participation Strategic group. This has resulted in a significant increase in feedback from children and young people.

When meeting with young people, as part of our participation outreach work, we have been reporting on any feedback gathered. During the recruitment of the Experts by Experience, we asked a specific question around feedback and what would encourage more children to share their feedback. Additional feedback/themes gathered during the application and interview process was shared with the Feedback and Complaints team. Members of OHOV have also had the opportunity to share their views to improve the complaints and feedback process, making it more accessible to young people and addressing some of the barriers.

Next steps:

- A joint Participation and Feedback Delivery Group has been established. After a year of meeting as an internal Participation Strategic group it has become clear that Participation and Feedback are facing similar challenges, and therefore, have opportunities to strategically align and share engagement work;
- A smaller focus group is created within Experts the Experience, concentrating on child friendly feedback process and accessibility of the CHS website; and
- We continue to engage members of OHOV on this topic and arrange follow up sessions, following their initial consultation.

**6. Embed participation across CHS**

The internal Participation Strategic working group has been established to develop a robust and consistent culture of involving children and young people in the work of CHS, both at regional and national level. The monthly Participation Ideas Clinic is an opportunity for all staff to hear updates, share ideas and ask questions about participation. The implementation of the 'Ask the Experts' request has allowed the Participation Team to support and track opportunities across CHS. After feedback from staff and the Strategic group, we have reduced the number of questions and made the request accessible. The MS form is now just four questions and gathers essential information only. The Participation Team then arranges a follow up call with the staff member to talk through the opportunity in more depth and agree timescales/project expectations.

Next steps:

- A joint Participation and Feedback Delivery Group is launched. Membership of this group will include several Partnership Coordinators and strong links with staff working regionally;
- The Ideas Clinic is redeveloped with Experts by Experience;
- 'Ask the Experts' requests continue to have an identified participation lead and opportunities are shared via various participation channels, see *Appendix 2*; and
- A CHS case study recording template is created to allow consistent recording and learning across teams.
- We work closely with Communications Team to create a full comms plan to share good news stories and participation work. This will include updates for the panel community, CHS staff and wider audiences.
- We will continue to showcase our work to build confidence in the sector and demonstrate to the children and young people the impact their work is having within CHS.

## **7. Involve young people in recruitment**

Involving young people in recruitment must include training and support, remuneration, influence and adaptation so that young people can participate effectively.

The Participation Team and the Experts by Experience have worked closely with one of the CHS People and Culture Partners to develop a Recruitment Guide for CHS to use when involving young people with lived experience in recruitment. This is currently being testing using various recruitment campaigns and will be published later this year. Experts by Experience will also have access to recruitment training and will be supported to understand and engage effectively in the process.

*"Being able to help on the update of the recruitment guide was a great privilege." GM, Expert*

*"I feel more valued when I get paid for my time and ideas." F, Good Shepherd Centre*

All young people taking part in interview panels are fully supported by a member of the Participation Team throughout the entirety of the process. Feedback is an essential part of this process and follow up calls are arranged between Experts and hiring managers at key

points in the process. Young people have engaged effectively in recruiting staff and CHS Board members.

“One of the first pieces of work the group were involved in was helping recruit new Board members, this was an incredibly rewarding experience and made us feel welcome to the CHS family and community. It showed us the commitment the organisation is making to put lived experience at the heart of everything they do.” *LS, Expert*

The CHS Participation, People and Culture and Communication teams worked closely with OHOV to create a Panel member interview scenario question, this was then developed into a film clip and sent to anyone invited to interview during the autumn Panel Member recruitment campaign. The film clip was well received and feedback from applicants included: - “powerful”, “great to hear directly from young people”, “impressed by the collaborative work between CHS and OHOV” and “demonstrates the importance of listening to young people”.

The Participation Coordinator worked with the Tribunal Support staff to offer Lived Experience Recruiter opportunities in all regions. This had limited success compared to the reach of the film clip, where every applicant heard directly from OHOV on a topic that was important to young people.

Next steps:

- The CHS Recruitment Guide continues to be tested, refined and embedded;
- Based on the success of the video resource developed with OHOV, we will work with our Experts by Experience and OHOV on similar resources for future campaigns; and
- We will continue to work with the TSM, the CHS Recruitment Team and the Experts by Experience on ways to redevelop the Lived Experience Recruiter role for future Panel Member recruitment campaign.

## **8. Create development opportunities for young people with lived experience**

As part of CHS’s Corporate Parenting responsibilities we are committed to providing opportunities that will provide the best outcomes for our looked after children, accept responsibility for them, and make their needs a priority.

Over the next year we are looking to set up a CHS Mentoring Scheme, where CHS staff will become a mentor for our Experts by Experience and the Board Members at OHOV. CHS staff would be carefully matched with a young person. This scheme will be incrementally introduced to ensure it can be delivered to a high standard. This aligns with our strategic objective to ensure that all young people engaging with CHS are supported to thrive.

“Just actively listen and find a route for the individual young person to be heard and make a difference. Help us find our voice.” *R, TNT Champs*

More than 20 CHS staff members have already expressed interest in becoming a CHS Mentor, with the idea being that as well as support there would also be an opportunity for the mentee to shadow their mentor and or work on CHS projects they are leading on.

We are also currently investigating the possibility of recruiting an internship opportunities to increase the capacity of the team and provide opportunities to young people with lived experience that face multiple barriers to access employment opportunities.

Next steps:

- A working group is established to plan and deliver the proposed CHS Mentoring Scheme.
- The Participation Coordinator undertakes mandatory training with the Scottish Mentoring Network to become a mentoring coordinator;
- Mentors are recruited and attend initial training alongside mentee's attending an information session, with the aim for the scheme to be up and running in Q3; and
- We continue to investigate the Internship Scheme as a future development opportunity.

## **9. Create a participation partners network**

Involving children with lived experience of the hearing system often works best in settings of their choice and with trusted adults that they know.

*"Advocacy services, social work, CHS, SCRA and voluntary organisations, like CHAMPS Boards, they are important to us." R, TNT Champs*

*"We would tell someone we trust and have a close relationship with about our Hearing, that's who CHS need to speak to." Andrew, OHOV Board Member*

We have established relationships with some secure care and residential settings and will continue to develop these partnerships through our outreach work. This will provide opportunities for young people to engage with CHS where they feel safe. When meeting with our Experts by Experience we travel to them and meet them at a place and time of their choosing.

The Participation Coordinator identified an opportunity to work strategically with other organisations delivering participation opportunities for young people with care experience. In the last year they have built close partnerships with OHOV, The National Leadership Network (NLN), Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum (Staf), The Fostering Network, Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection (CELCIS), the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) Participation Lead and Each and Every Child. Many of these organisations helped support and develop the scaffolding and governance for Experts by Experience. The Participation Coordinator is also a member of the Scottish Government UNCRC Peer Support Group, which provides opportunity to share practice and learn how other organisations are implementing the UNCRC.

As part of this strategic relationship building the Participation Coordinator as part of the Participation Practitioners Network steering group has planned and presented at recent events. This network provides opportunities for staff and young people to work together to share good practice and provide support to each other. For the network event in June 2025 the Participation Coordinator has organised for Starcatcher's to provide an input on the importance of infant voice after identifying this as a gap in past events.

The Participation Coordinator was invited to work with Each and Every Child to become a 'Framing Champion'. This training and partnership were instrumental in the framing and messaging of the Three Pillars next steps for Experts by Experience.

Next steps:

- We continue to build and strengthen our network of participation partners as a support and consultation mechanism;
- Provide support and opportunities for participation partners to facilitate participation with the children they support;
- Work with dedicated lead staff in the regional teams as part of the newly established Delivery Group to identify and establish connections with partners at a local level; and
- Establish a network of named persons in each organisation as the point of contact for our outreach work.

#### **10. Increase opportunities for children and young people's online participation**

CHS is committed to listening to the voice of lived experience, and we must provide multiple ways for children and young people to participate. Article 12 of the UNCRC forms the foundational policy for directing our approach to participation. It states:

- 12:1 "States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child."
- 12:2 "For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law."

This includes the option for online participation, as well as in-person. There is a feeling of 'survey fatigue' across all sectors, therefore we are keen to try alternative and more creative ways to engage young people online.

"Would also be good for CHS to share projects they are working on with us and any ideas that are generated from the Ideas Clinic. Let young people decide if they need to be involved as adults may not think they need our ideas but maybe we think they do." *Andrew, OHOV Board Member*

We have facilitated online focus groups with members of OHOV, Experts by Experience and other partners in secure and residential care. This works best with small groups, taking care to remain flexible and open if young people prefer to be off camera and type in the chat box.

Next steps:

- We will launch a Participation VoiceBank, taking learning from the Practice and Policy Bank, to create online engagement options. The Lived Experience Advisor will lead on this work, linking in with Comms to design and publish a specific CHS Participation newsletter/blog aimed at children, young people and the adults supporting them. There will be an option to sign up to receive the newsletter via the website and promotion on social media; and
- A sub-group of Experts by Experience is established. Their remit will be to co-design content for the website and newsletter.

**11. Establish participation groups and provide a high level of tailored support to the young people**

In April 2025, we welcomed nine young people (aged 14-25) to CHS as our Experts by Experience.

“I’m very happy and proud to be part of the Experts by Experience Group. I have been doing work with CHS for a long time and pleased this long-anticipated group has now been established. With the commitment given it will be an integral part of the organisation with the full backing of the Board and the staff team.” *LS, Expert*



The Experts, based across Scotland, see below breakdown, regularly come together to share their views and ideas, and influence the work of CHS. Not only do the Experts improve

outcomes for children and young people, but they also develop their own skills, make new friends, and are remunerated, using the [Scottish Government guidance](#) for their time and expertise.

Age	Region
14	South East
18	(taking a break)
22	Central
23	Lanarkshire, Dumfries & Galloway
25	Central
17	Lanarkshire, Dumfries & Galloway
17	Highland, Moray and Eilean Siar
16	Ayrshire
17	Ayrshire

The recruitment campaign took place between Aug-Dec 2024. We received over 100 expressions of interest, and 35 full applications. The Participation team conducted online interviews and offered nine young people the role. Basic Disclosure checks preceded a full and supportive induction process. We held a Development Day in March 2025 where the group first came together and created their pledge, see *Appendix 3*. In designing their logo, the group name shortened to ExE. They had their first Board meeting in April 2025.

“I really did enjoy today. Thank you so much for putting this together it was super fun. I really do look forward to getting to work with you and the rest of the team soon.” *IA, Expert*

We have emergency contact details for all Experts and permission from them for us to make contact in case in emergency or if they need any extra support. The Experts are all supported by parents and or carers and those in residential care have support workers who we are in regular contact with. For our Expert based in Lewis we are in contact with Action for Children and Social Work as they organise his travel and provide a support worker to travel with him. As part of their membership letter, the Experts have contact details for each member of the Participation Team and the two dedicated CHS safeguarders. The new Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and mandatory training that all staff have completed provides a robust framework to ensure that any concerns raised during our engagement work is addressed and responded to consistently.

At all times, the CHS Participation team support our Experts in their work from meeting with them with for a 1:1 (at least once a quarter) in a place of their choosing, for example in a coffee shop near where they live. These 1:1s are split with the Participation Coordinator visiting those based in the West and the Lived Experience Advisor visiting those in the East of the country.

Alongside this we send out regular email updates and share opportunities. We have found that communicating by text message has the best response rate. For a few of our quieter voices we are looking to set up a small focus group where only a few of them work together

as we do have different personalities across the group, and we are cognisant to ensure all of the Experts feel included in opportunities.

Eight Experts have now all been issued with CHS laptops. We have worked with the CHS Digital Team to set up a dedicated Teams Channel. This will allow us a safe and secure way to communicate with the Experts, store files and important documents they may need to reference and hold monthly drop-in sessions as well as meetings and consultation opportunities. By hosting on the CHS platform there is also the safeguard that it will be monitored in the same way as for CHS staff.

In the first few months the Experts have been open and receptive to telling us what support they need, and the structured 1-1 support meetings enables this to happen in a child-centred and bespoke way. We always plan all travel in advance and ensure maps are provided with directions or we meet them in person. We have also developed a risk assessment template which is completed for external opportunities.

“Being an Expert by Experience has given me a really valuable sense of involvement in the process – working directly with the system which I always wanted to see change in has been really beneficial to me.” *RM, Expert*

“My experience with CHS has been absolutely amazing. CHS is like one big family.” *GM, Expert*

Next steps:

- The ‘Ask the Experts’ request is continually promoted, and staff are encouraged to get in touch with the Participation Team to discuss any projects that could involve the Experts;
- We continue to build strong and trusting relationships with the Experts, providing a range of safe and supported opportunities. This includes the development of opportunities for Experts to work directly with panel members, as well as staff;
- Over the next year, research the creation of a younger voices (primary school age) group at CHS.

## **12. Understanding the views and preferences of infants**

As a result of the work on Responding to the Needs of older Children in the hearing room the Participation Coordinator and the Director of Positive Outcomes, who both have professional background in early years background, identified the need for CHS to provide similar guidance for Panel Members when making decisions for babies and infants. There is an opportunity to be sector leaders on this work and highlight the importance of infant voice given the number of hearings that take place for children under the age of five. The Participation Coordinator is currently working with CELCIS and the Policy and Practice Manager to produce a guidance document. In conducting this work, we have recognised that there is scope for this work to be celebrated within CHS and wider amongst other stakeholders in the sector.

Next steps:

- Continue to work with the Policy and Practice Team Manager to implement practice guidance and raise awareness via internal and external messaging of the voice of babies and infants in the hearing room.

### **13. Work with OHOV as an equal partner**

Our Hearings Our Voice (OHOV) is a board of young people with lived experience that co-design and influence improvements to the hearing system on behalf of the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership. The group was established in 2016 and currently consists of about 12 young people aged 16-24.

The Participation Coordinator has been working closely with OHOV, attending Board meetings, two residential weekends and on various projects. CHS supported the Language Leaders workstream and initiated/commissioned the creation of the Articulate animation, co-designed with the Board members at OHOV and produced by Braw Talent. Braw Talent have been nominated for a Scottish Design Award for this animation. The Lived Experience Advisor leads on the Language Leaders work and is co-delivering a workshop with OHOV at eh Children in Scotland conference.

Over the last year OHOV have worked with the CHS Participation Team on various internal projects including; delivering a CHS Townhall on Language in the hearing Room, developing a learning module on responding to the needs of older children in the hearing room, presenting to Panel Members in Central, presenting at a CHS all staff team day, co-designing the Children's Participation and Rights Strategy as well as taking part in Lived Experience Recruiters and also being part of CHS staff interview panels. The Participation Team meet monthly with the OHOV Project Lead and Project Worker monthly to discuss and plan future collaboration.

"It would be great to know what OHOV are focused on and how we can collaborate on what's important to them." *CHS staff*

Next steps:

- CHS continues to build and strengthen the working relationship with OHOV as an equal partner and beneficiary of their feedback;
- The CHS Participation Team and Experts by Experience are involved with the planning and delivery of the OHOV conference in October 2025.
- We continue to look for opportunities of OHOV to be embedded in our work, including the CHS Mentoring scheme.

### **14. Ensure all CHS staff working with children and young people continue to work with a trauma informed lens**

The CHS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy was approved in Feb 2024. All members of the CHS national staff team are required to sign this policy and complete the NSPCC Child Protection online training module.

The Participation Team track all opportunities involving young people and ensure all projects have a clear, trained project lead. CHS has promised to adhere to the four principles outlined in our Children’s Participation and Rights Strategy. Those principles are: Respect, Inclusion, Empowerment and Accountability.



By always following those principles, all involvement activities hosted by CHS will be co-designed and young person led where possible.

CHS is an active member of Language Leaders. The ‘Language in the Hearing Room’ Guide was published in May 2024. This is an aide to help Panel Members (and staff) consider the language they use in a hearing room and whether it could be more effective, personalised to a child or young person and help them to feel included. Members of OHOV presented at a Town hall event in October 2024, bringing the language principles to life.

Next steps:

- CHS continues to embed the work of Language Leaders and the language principles: Personalised, Balanced, Non-stigmatising and Involved.
- The Participation Team support the roll out of the CHS trauma skilled training for all staff and Panel Members.

## 15. Any participation work undergoes quality assurance and evaluation

There is well established policy and practice for ensuring the views of children people are heard and influences the decision-making in hearings for children. Our quality assurance from Practice Panel Advisors observes how well panels engage with children but do not monitor the extent to which the views of children influence decision-making. Children’s participation in hearings is different from attendance, and with partners, we need to do more to provide opportunities for children to share their views in a way, at time and place that works best for them. We will work collaboratively with the CHS Quality team to develop this work.

The Participation Coordinator is working with SCRA on the ‘Hearing about me’ forms, including the data on how they are being used. The Participation Team will continue to work in partnership with SCRA and internally to analyse the effectiveness of these forms with Panel Members and with our Experts by Experience.

“It shows us the commitment the organisation is making to put lived experience at the heart of everything they do.” LS, Expert

To ensure children’s rights are upheld as part of the UNCRC incorporation, CHS will create opportunities:

- Ensuring that children and young people have the opportunity to learn about their rights;
- Ensuring that children and young people have a voice in decisions that affect them – both directly and indirectly;
- Ensuring that you have a child-friendly complaints process in place;
- Publishing information in child-friendly formats;
- Undertaking assessments of how well you are protecting children including children's rights wellbeing assessments;
- Raising awareness and understanding of the UNCRC across the workforce;
- Feedback and celebrate the difference that children and young feedback has made;
- Monitoring progress on children's rights.

We will fulfil the commitment made in the participation review to appoint an external provider with expertise in participation to undertake to undertake an independent evaluation and improvement review of our participation work with children and young people. We will look within existing resources to identify appropriate resources as the work evolves.

## **16. Future Plans**

The Participation Team remain remains ambitious in planning next steps, but it is important to note that to deliver high quality and meaningful participation is resource intensive. We are currently building relationships with the Experts and gradually embedding them into key strategic workstreams at CHS.

As the year progresses one of the Experts will be part of the joint Participation and Feedback Delivery Group. The aim of this group is to align the participation, feedback and complaints and tribunal support model to ensure the messaging and opportunities for the Experts and other groups of children and young people is consistent.

We will continue to look for and create meaningful opportunities for the Experts and wider participation channels to influence the work of CHS and improve outcomes for children and young people. To date we have received eight internal ‘Ask the Experts’ requests, four in Q4 of 2024 and five in Q1 of 2005. We aim to build on this and work with directorates across CHS to ensure opportunities for engagement and collaboration.

In the autumn of 2025, we are looking to launch a mentoring service at CHS. We already have 20 CHS staff who have expressed interest in becoming a mentor and all of the Experts as well as the Board Members at OHOV have said they would welcome the opportunity to have a mentor. The aim of this workstream is to provide support of young people and build meaningful relationships between young people and CHS Staff. We are working with the Scottish Mentoring Service in the setup of the service and have created a small working group between the Participation Team and two CHS Partnership Coordinators who have extensive

mentoring experience. We will start small and evolve this work gradually with incremental improvements to ensure it's a positive experience and manageable within the resources available.

The Experts are also keen to meet the CHS Board, especially after having the opportunity to interview potential new Board Members during the recent recruitment process. We will work with the CHS Governance Team to make this happen.

## **17. Three Pillars Implementation Plan June 2025 – May 2026**

The Three Pillars were developed after thematic analysis of feedback from young people that expressed an interest in the Expert by Experience Group. These themes were worked on during the development day as part of an in-depth discussion session. The Three Pillars are:

### 1. Consistency

**By improving the consistency of panels**, all young people will have a fairer and equal experience. Making them feel respected and valued.

Under this pillar it is proposed that:

- Our Experts work with Panel Members with the consideration of a small forum being created;
- Young people's experiences influence Panel Member recruitment and training;
- Experts shape the Hearings Redesign preparation for Hearings workstream;
- Work starts with CHS Policy and Practice Team to develop new and existing policies;
- Partnership work with the CHS Quality Team and Panel Practice Advisors;
- We provide an evidence-based approach to ensuring rights are respected; and
- The plan is under continuous review as an external evaluation in Q4.

### 2. Support

Young people can thrive if provided with **clear and consistent information and support throughout their hearing journey and beyond.**

Under this pillar it is proposed that:

- Ensure rights are upheld during Hearings and beyond;
- CHS provide support and opportunities for participation work;
- Continue to work closely with OHOV and share opportunities;
- Build on our participation network nationally and regionally with organisations that matter to young people;
- Work with regional teams to identify opportunities for Experts and other groups of young people;
- Deliver the comms plan to share good news stories about participation work, including signposting and highlighting the work of other organisations;
- Operationalise the mentoring scheme at CHS; and
- Continue to work in partnership with other Corporate Parents.

### 3. Trauma informed

**When hearings are trauma informed**, it puts the child at the centre. This makes them feel safe, supported and included.

Under this pillar it is proposed that:

- We operationalise a joint Participation and Feedback Delivery Group for 2025/26;
- Create CHS Voice Bank to encourage online engagement options;
- Build relationships with partners to explore feedback mechanisms that work for YP;
- Continue to embed the work of Language Leaders;
- Carry out outreach work with organisations including secure and residential care settings;
- Consider quieter voices in all strands of our work; and
- Work closely with SCRA and Panel Members on ways to put children at the centre.

It is important to acknowledge that whilst this annual review of the strategy has been informed by the views of the Experts and from feedback gathered from the CHS all staff team day on 7 May 2025, we will be taking a deep dive into the plan at the next ExE Board Meeting in August to develop specific tasks and time scales under each pillar with the Experts. There will also be further engagement with the directorates across CHS to ensure we follow up on any 'Ask the Experts' questions that were provided at the CHS all staff team day. The early Three Pillars Implementation Plan can be found in *Appendix 4*.

## 18. Key risks

Effective participation needs to be agile and therefore plans and activities need to flex and change depending on the feedback from young people and the requirements of CHS. We will continue to bring creativity and innovation to this work, and this will be reflected in how we report on its impact and progress.

Potential risks we have identified include:

Experts' turnover. We are currently very early in the process but already managing Experts being unable to commit to some opportunities. The young people are at a formative stage of lives and their circumstances and opportunities changes regularly.

- The majority of CHS opportunities are within working hours which does not suit a lot of the Experts. Whilst we can try where possible to be flexible, we have no control of the timing of some opportunities or external challenges which may mean Experts cannot commit. We will continue to monitor this but may need to recruit a higher number of Experts, and in addition staff need to recognise that they may need to make themselves available outwith office hours if they wish to engage with the young people.
- Limited engagement from CHS to provide meaningful opportunities. Whilst we are not overly concerned about this, we feel it is important to mention as we must ensure the Experts remain engaged and challenged. We need to ensure that young people can engage and influence appropriate operational and strategic work from the inception.

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- Unplanned events and or activities. These could be conferences and or external events that the Experts are asked to attend/contribute to. Whilst we would be looking for other organisations to cover remuneration for our Experts at non CHS events we would always aim to ensure that they do not miss out on opportunities, therefore the support costs may have to be met by CHS.

### **19. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Implementation Plan Overview Status and Update

Appendix 2 – Participation Channels Overview

Appendix 3 – ExE Information and Pledge

Appendix 4 – Three Pillars Implementation Plan

2024/25 Implementation Plan Overview and Status Update June 2025

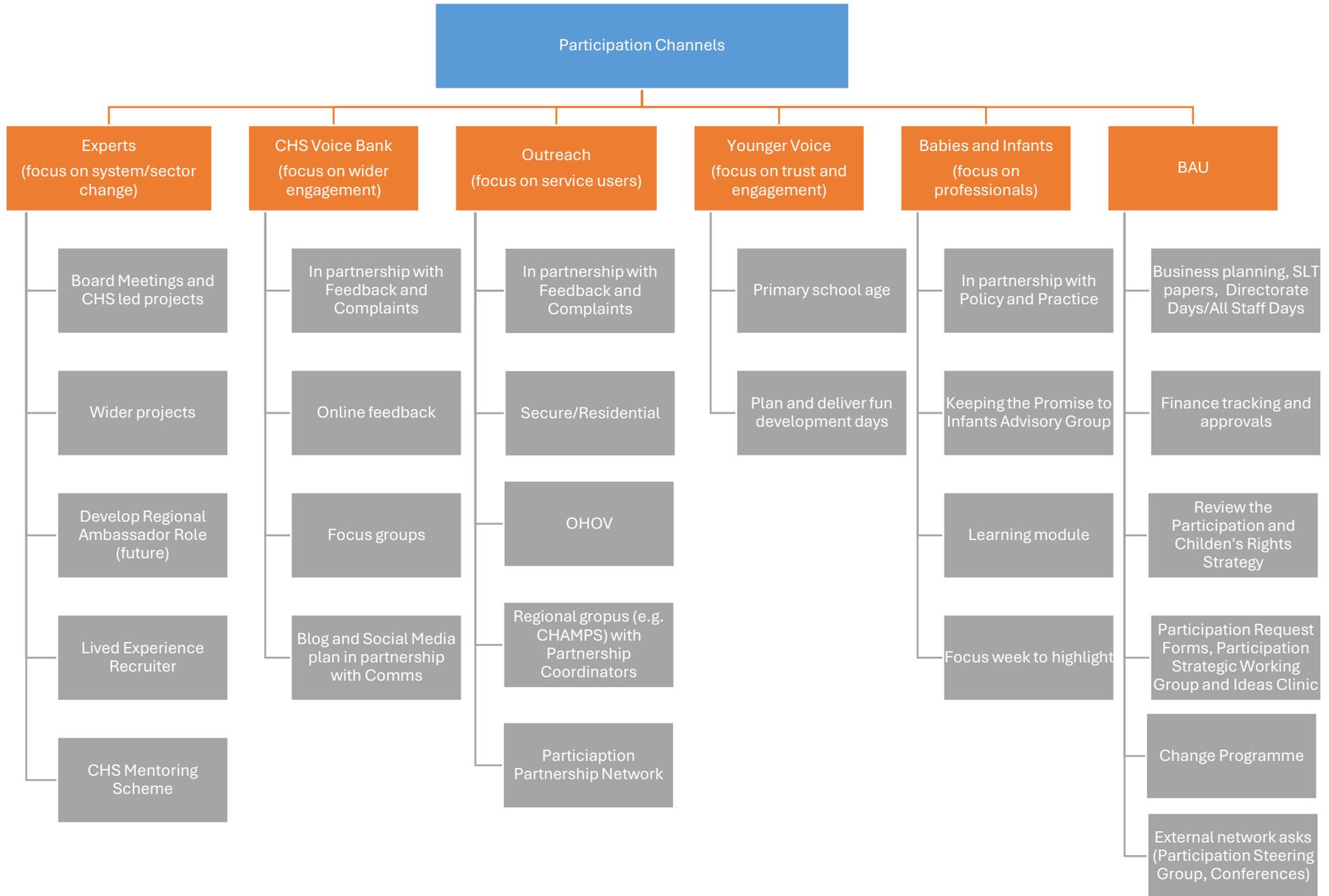
Goal as identified in the strategic participation review	Strategy aim	Next Steps	Status
1. Fully Resource the Participation Team	Inclusion	Lived Experience Advisor in post. Expert by Experience group.	Completed
2. Create alignment between Participation and the Feedback and Complaints Team in the newly established Practice and Standards Team	Empowerment	Review online portal and meet regular with feedback and complaints to monitor trends and consider remedy. Build relationships with partners to explore feedback mechanisms that work for YP. Identify opportunities for YP to shape the complaints and feedback process.	In Progress: launching a joint Participation and Feedback Delivery Group for 2025/26
3. Embed Participation in CHS core working	Inclusion	Form strategic internal group. Create 'Idea's Clinic' for all CHS staff to attend. Link with regional teams – share good practice – identify opportunities for YP. Create a full comms plan to share good news stories and participation work. This will include updates for partners and creation of CHS case study recording template.	In Progress: Delivery Group and full comms plan for 2025/26
4. Involve young people in recruitment	Inclusion	YP to shape scenarios and questions for Panel Member recruitment across all regions and offer Lived Experience Recruitment opportunities in all regions. YP to work with CHS on recruitment guide for CHS national recruitment.	In Progress: CHS staff guidance developed and volunteer recruitment in workplan
5. Create development opportunities for young people with lived experience	Respect	Strengthen external partnerships for cross organisational working with the Expert by Experience group and other YP. Consider mentoring and scholarship options for YP to access at CHS.	Early Stages: mentoring work to start in 2025
6. Create a Participation partners network	Respect	Build a participation network nationally and regionally with organisations that matter to YP. Provide support and opportunities for participation work.	BAU: Outreach workplan will help create more connections
7. Increase opportunities for children and young people's online participation	Inclusion	Build on practice and policy bank to create online engagement options. Ensure YP are involved in shaping this work and in the design of the portal.	Early Stages: working with comms to create the CHS Voice Bank
8. Establish participation groups for children and young people	Empowerment	Recruit Expert by Experience group and look to create a younger voices forum (including focus on infant voice). Apply SG remuneration guidance to work carried out by YP.	In Progress: Remuneration for Experts complete
9. Work closer with OHOV as an equal partner	Empowerment	Implement the OHOV Menti results from the staff team day. Respect their workstream and send regular feedback on what we are working on.	BAU: Monthly meetings with OHOV to plan sessions
10. Ensure all CHS staff working with children and young people continue to work with a trauma informed lens	Respect	Embed the CHS Child and Adult Protection Policy. Ensure all projects with participation has a clear trained project lead. Continue to embed the work of Language Leaders.	Completed

## Agenda Item 17c. CHS-2526-12 – Appendix 2



### 2024/25 Implementation Plan Overview and Status Update June 2025

Goal as identified in the strategic participation review	Strategy aim	Next Steps	Status
11. Any participation work undergoes quality assurance and evaluation	Accountability	Evidence based approach to ensuring rights are respected. Continuous review of this plan as well as an external evaluation at a later date.	Future: planning will commence later this year





## Experts by Experience

Real Change, not just words

### Who we are

We are a group of nine young people, aged between 14 – 25, with lived experience of hearings.

We are based all over Scotland but regularly come together to influence the work of Children's Hearings Scotland and make a difference. We are supported by the Participation team at CHS to take part in different opportunities to drive forward improvements in practices and standards across the organisation.

### Participation Principles

CHS has promised to adhere to the 4 principles outlined in the Children's Participation and Rights Strategy; Respect, Inclusion, Empowerment and Accountability. This means that involvement activities will be co-designed and young person led where possible.



### Waves of Change

One of the first things we did as a group was to create our Logo and Pledge. We liked the metaphor of waves as it symbolises strength and movement.

As a group we also agreed on the three priority areas we would like to work on.

These are called our Pillars:

- **By improving the consistency of panels**, all young people will have a fairer and equal experience. Making them feel respected and valued.
- Young people can thrive if provided with **clear and consistent information and support throughout their hearing journey and beyond.**
- **When hearings are trauma informed**, it puts the child at the centre. This makes them feel safe, supported and included.

Join us as we rebuild the harbour and ride the waves of change.

### Want to know more?

Email: [chsparticipation@chs.gov.scot](mailto:chsparticipation@chs.gov.scot)



The Pledge: Real Change, Not Just Words

# REBUILD YOUR HARBOUR OR THE WAVES OF CHANGE WILL COME CRASHING



**DOWN**

We are not just talking about change—we are building it.

We are rebuilding the harbour—making the hearings system safe, strong, and ours.

Together, we are the waves of change.

Young people with lived experience are the architects of a better system.

We will not be washed aside.

Our stories, our truths, and our vision will shape what comes next.

Together, we will transform hearings into places of hope.

**Want to know more?**

Email: [chsparticipation@chs.gov.scot](mailto:chsparticipation@chs.gov.scot)



**Three Pillars Implementation June 2025 – May 2026**

Commitments	Pillar	Strategy Aim	Tasks
<b>Every journey is different – and every voice matters.</b>	Trauma Informed	Empowerment	Joint Participation and Feedback Delivery Group for 2025/26. Create CHS Voice Bank to encourage online engagement options. Build relationships with partners to explore feedback mechanisms that work for YP. Outreach work with organisations including secure and residential care settings. Continue to work closely with OHOV and share opportunities. Consider quieter voices in all strands of our work.
<b>We will collaborate with Panel Members to rebuild together.</b>	Consistency	Inclusion	YP to influence Panel Member recruitment and training. Consider developing a forum between Experts and Panel Members.
<b>We are not ‘cases. We are people – with stories, strengths and futures.</b>	Trauma Informed	Respect	Strengthen external partnerships for cross organisational working with the Experts by Experience and other YP. Work closely with Panel Members on ways to put children at the centre.
<b>Information that is clear, honest and accessible.</b>	Support	Inclusion	Build a participation network nationally and regionally with organisations that matter to YP. Provide support and opportunities for participation work.
<b>Respectful and trauma informed guidance for every adult in the room.</b>	Trauma Informed	Accountability	Continue to embed the work of Language Leaders. Work with OHOV on producing guidance document. Work with CHS Policy and Practice Team to shape new and existing guidance.
<b>Fair and equal access to support.</b>	Support	Respect	Operationalise the mentoring scheme at CHS. CHS as a Corporate Parent and links with other Corporate Parents.
<b>Strong local connections that build trust and continuity over time.</b>	Support	Inclusion	Work with regional teams to identify opportunities for Experts and other YP. Deliver the comms plan to share good news stories about participation work. Share good practice examples within CHS and wider. Continue to work closely with OHOV and share opportunities.
<b>Policy shaped by lived experience, not assumptions.</b>	Consistency	Empowerment	Hearings Redesign preparation for Hearings workstream. Work with CHS Policy and Practice Team to shape new and existing policies. Further embed ‘Ask the Experts’ at CHS and wider.
<b>Transparent decision making, open communication, and real accountability.</b>	Consistency	Accountability	Work with the CHS Quality Team and Panel Practice Advisors. Ensure an evidence-based approach to ensuring rights are respected. Continuous review of this plan as well as an external evaluation in Q4.