

Public Board Meeting

Wed 10 December 2025, 10:00 - 12:00

Thistle House, Edinburgh/Microsoft Teams

Agenda

- 10:00 - 10:00
0 min

1. Welcome and Apologies

verbalKatharina Kasper

To update

 0. Board Meeting Agenda DEC 25.pdf (1 pages)
- 10:00 - 10:05
5 min

2. Declarations of Interest

verbalKatharina Kasper

To update
- 10:05 - 10:10
5 min

3. Approval of the Minute from the Meeting on 24 September 2025

paperKatharina Kasper

To approve

 3. CHS-2526-24 CHS Board DRAFT Minute 24.09.25.pdf (9 pages)
- 10:10 - 10:10
0 min

4. Action Log Update

paperKatharina Kasper

To update

 4. CHS-2526-25 Board Action Log - SEPT 2025.pdf (1 pages)
- 10:10 - 10:20
10 min

5. Chair Update

verbalKatharina Kasper

To update
- 10:20 - 10:30
10 min

6. Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair Update

verbalSean Austin

To update
- 10:30 - 10:40
10 min

7. People and Culture Committee (PaCC) Chair Update

verbalKatie Docherty

To update
- 10:40 - 10:55
15 min

8. National Convener/CEO Update

paperElliot Jackson

To update

 8. CHS-2526-26 National Convener CEO Update.pdf (6 pages)

ITEMS FOR NOTING

10:55 - 11:00 **9. Finance Update P7**

5 min

paper *Lynne Harrison*

To note

 9. CHS-2526-27 Finance Update P7 2025-26.pdf (4 pages)

11:00 - 11:10 **10. Strategic and Business Planning Update**

10 min

paper *Lynne Harrison*

To note

 10. CHS-2526-28 CHS Strategic and Business Planning Update Dec Board.pdf (2 pages)

11:10 - 11:25 **11. Legislative Update**

15 min

paper *Carol Wassell*

To note

 11. CHS-2526-29 Legislative Update Dec 2025.pdf (6 pages)

11:25 - 11:40 **12. Recruitment Update**

15 min

paper *Joanne O'Leary*

To update

 12. CHS-2526-30 Recruitment Update.pdf (6 pages)


ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

11:40 - 11:45 **13. Board Standing Orders**

5 min

paper *Lynne Harrison*

To approve

 13a. CHS-2526-31 Board Standing Orders Nov 2025 Front Cover.pdf (2 pages)

 13b. CHS-2526-31 Appendix 1 - Board Standing Orders Nov 2025 DRAFT.pdf (7 pages)

11:45 - 11:50 **14. Board Workplan 2026**

5 min

paper *Katharina Kasper*

To approve

 14a. CHS-2526-32 Board Workplan 2026 Front Cover Report.pdf (2 pages)

 14b. CHS-2526-32 Appendix 1- Board Work Plan 2026 DRAFT.pdf (2 pages)

11:50 - 12:00 **15. AOB**

10 min

verbal *Katharina Kasper*

To approve

12:00 - 12:00 **16. Date of Next Meeting**

0 min

verbal *Katharina Kasper*

To update

**BOARD MEETING
10 DECEMBER 2025
10.00am – 12.00pm, Thistle House/Teams Virtual
AGENDA**

	Timings	Item	Lead	Paper Number	Purpose
1.	10:00	Welcome & Apologies	Chair	Verbal	
2.	10:00	Declarations of Interest	Chair	verbal	To update
3.	10:05	Approval of the Minute from the Meeting on 24 September 2025	Chair	CHS-2526-24	To approve
4.	10:10	Action Log Update	Chair	CHS-2526-25	To update
5.	10:10	Chair Update	Chair	verbal	To update
6.	10:20	Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair Update	SA	verbal	To update
7.	10:30	People and Culture Committee (PaCC) Chair Update	KD	verbal	To update
8.	10:40	National Convener/CEO Update	EJ	CHS-2526-26	To update
ITEMS FOR NOTING					
9.	10:55	Finance Update P7	LH	CHS-2526-27	To note
10.	11:00	Strategic and Business Planning Update	LH	CHS-2526-28	To note
11.	11:10	Legislative Update	CW	CHS-2526-29	To note
12.	11:25	Recruitment Update	JO	CHS-2526-30	To note
ITEMS FOR APPROVAL					
13.	11:40	Board Standing Orders	EJ	CHS-2526-31	To Approve
14.	11:45	Board Workplan 2026	KK	CHS-2526-32	To Approve
15.	11:50	AOB	Chair	verbal	To update
16.	12:00	Date of Next Meeting			
		28 January 2026, 10am – 12pm, Conference Room 2, Thistle House, Edinburgh			

Board Meeting
1st Meeting 2025/26
24 September 2025 at Thistle House, Edinburgh 10:00 – 12:00

DRAFT MINUTE

Present	Katharina Kasper (KK)	Chair
	Sean Austin (SA)	Depute Board Chair/ARC Chair
	Beth-Anne McDowall (BM)	Board Member
	Barbara Neil (BN)	Board Member
	Ronnie Corse (RC)	Board Member NEW
	Robert Dorrian (RD)	Board Member NEW
In Attendance:	Elliot Jackson (EJ)	CEO/National Convener, CHS
	Lynne Harrison (LH)	Director of Business and Finance, CHS
	Carol Wassell (CW)	Director of Positive Outcomes, CHS
	Joanne O’Leary (JO)	Director of People and Culture, CHS
	Bethany Cunningham (BC)	Interim Director of Tribunal Delivery, CHS
	Taiba Ali (TA)	Legislation and Policy Leader, Children’s Hearings Sponsor Team, Scottish Government (via Teams)
	Grazyna Tega (GT)	Children’s Hearing & Sponsorship Policy Officer, Children’s Hearings Sponsor Team, Scottish Government (via Teams)
	Karen Griffin (KG)	Corporate Governance Manager
	Laure Hann (LHann)	Office and Administration Coordinator (Note Taker)
Apologies:	Katie Docherty (KD)	Board Member/PaCC Chair
	Nick Rougvie (NR)	Sponsor Team Lead, Scottish Government

	Item	
1.	Welcome & Apologies	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair welcomed the two new board members, Ronnie Corse, and Robert Dorrian to the meeting. The Chair also welcomed Grazyna Tega, Children’s Hearing & Sponsorship Policy Officer to her first meeting of the CHS Board. Apologies were received from KD and NR. 	
2.	Declaration of Interests	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
3.	Approval of the Minute from the Meeting on 25 June 2025	
	Minute from the meeting on 25 June 2025 was approved as an accurate record.	
4.	Action Log Update	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The update to the action log was noted. SA commented on a previous action raised whereby NR had offered to meet with CHS Board members around the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill (CCCESP), as this was not noted on the action log. EJ advised that we are now beyond the original proposal however would like to retain the offer following stage 1 of the Bill progress. EJ advised that the proposal is for CW to take forward if required. The Board was content with this. 	

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5.	Chair Update	
	<p>The Chair provided a verbal update on the following key points since the last Board meeting in June:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Promise Bill continues to be the focus with the priority to follow legislative updates. • Work has been ongoing to onboard the new Board members and thanked the Sponsor Team on their support with this. The Chair is delighted that these appointments have now been finalised. 	
6.	Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair Update	
	<p>SA provided a verbal update to the Board from the last ARC meeting which took place on 3 September by highlighting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main report presented was the Annual Report and Accounts for 2024/2025. • Internal audit plan is progressing well and on track. • The Compliance Report was presented, including an analysis of data protection incidents being reported, as these have increased over the past quarter. None of these incidents required reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office. Refresher training is planned to complete by the end of the calendar year. Human error was identified as the main cause and there are plans in place for focussed training on this by the end of the financial year. None of these incidents required reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office. <p>The CHS Data Protection Officer and Delivery Manager are working on an Acceptable Use Policy in relation to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). This is a significant growth area, and LH has increased our networks to gain insight on uses and emerging best practice as this is a fast-moving area. A recent breach related to an AI personal assistant joining a local learning meeting automatically in error. This was noticed at the time, and a process is now in place to stop this happening in the future, and no sensitive information was involved.</p> <p>LH commented that CHS would like AI and specifically Copilot to be enabling for staff and the community, however, would like to ensure sufficient guidelines are in place first. SA welcomed this and thanked the National Team for being responsive to this need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update was provided to the Committee on the Business Continuity training exercise and testing plan. This work is transformational for CHS and demonstrates the continued maturity of the organisation on this, along with risk management. • An update on the Quality Strategy, which was presented to the Board a year ago, was provided to the Committee. SA would ask the Board to acknowledge the huge amount of good work has been undertaken. The Committee highlighted some concern on the ambition of the plan and potential impact on other projects; however, the team are monitoring this closely and will amend plans where necessary. • SA commented on the huge amount of change the Feedback and Complaints Team has seen in terms of processes. Complaints and feedback are 	

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	<p>welcomed by CHS as this is important for continued learning and improvements. The team continue to focus on encouraging feedback from children and young people. SA thanked the Practice and Standards Team for the excellent work being done on this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair thanked SA for the update, on behalf of the Board who are looking forward to the presentation of the annual report to gain a better understanding of the data and key messages. 	
7.	People and Culture Committee (PaCC) Chair Update	
	<p>JO provided a verbal update to the Board on behalf of the Chair Katie Docherty from the last PaCC meeting on 28 August and highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A paper was presented to the Committee on Volunteer Commitments which outlined what CHS expectations are from our volunteer community and outlines CHS commitments to our Panel Members. This was produced through collaboration with a group of internal stakeholders across various CHS National Team functions. KK and SA attended the PaCC meeting as CHS Chair and ARC Chair, respectively. The Committee received a paper outlining the latest position in relation to the TUPE transfer process in relation to the Foundations for Learning Programme. This was an opportunity to discuss any challenges faced prior to the transfer date of 1 October and in relation to any risks identified. JO advised that is all progressing well and within timescales previously identified. SA as Chair of ARC was reassured following discussions that the programme and risks are being managed. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked JO for the update. KK was reassured following the meeting that this is being managed well, however noted that this is only the initial phase of the process and there is still a lot of work that will be ongoing. 	
8.	National Convener/CEO Update	
	<p>EJ introduced the paper to the Board for update and highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHS Panel Member recruitment campaign launched on 1 September 2025 and will run until the first week in October. Selection across Scotland will commence in mid-October with final recommendations made in November. Regional CHS inductions will take place by December, with Pre Service commencing in January 2026. The campaign is progressing well, and we are seeing good reach in the regions of focus where numbers need to be boosted. It is hoped that 350 to 400 new Panel Members will be identified and taken forward for preservice training. <p>In parallel, CHS are preparing for the 2026 recruitment campaign. The Stand, which is a creative agency, has been procured to work with us to develop a new creative to support Panel Member recruitment. This is currently at the research stage, and they are working with key stakeholders including our Experts by Experience, Board Members, Each and Every Child to understand the Panel Member role and motivations of our volunteers.</p> <p>A second Panel Member recruitment campaign will be launched early in 2026 in preparation for CCCESP and the increase in hearings brought about</p>	

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by the Children's Care and Justice Act (CCJA) Bill planned for April 2026. The Scottish Government will discuss when the provisions will be activated in October 2025.

SA commented on the huge amount of work that has been done to mitigate the huge capacity risk that exists. The National Team have been successful in reducing this risk and work is ongoing through a plethora of interventions all designed to attract and retain Panel Members and Panel Practice Advisers.

A discussion took place on the readiness of the organisation for the implementation of the CCCESP Bill. The Bill could provide a new model for the volunteers and help to mitigate the capacity issues. If the Bill is not successful, CHS will need to look at alternative options to mitigate the risk. EJ advised that work is currently underway with the Partnership Co-ordinators to motivate inactive Panel Members to come back to active service. KK confirmed that the Scottish Government has recognised this notice period and committed to enable this.

LH confirmed that CHS are also working on joint guidance with the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA) for improved scheduling decisions. Exploring the collation of quality data to feedback to SCRA. Going forward, hearing sessions will include sufficient time for deliberation and decision making which has been a point of concern for Panel Members. RC raised a question around potential digital solutions for post-hearing write up of reports and has some suggestions to help with this. LH agreed to follow this up with RC.

BN highlighted the 32% of Panel Members that came into service from the September 2024 and January 2025 campaigns who were ready to Chair, which was noted under 3.1.1 of the report and asked for clarifications on how this is measured by CHS. EJ highlighted that there had been some objections from Panel Members previously on having to return to training to be able to Chair after the first year which is why the preservice training was extended to seven days (from five days) for these new cohorts. From the numbers we can see some Panel Members do not feel ready to Chair however they are qualified to do so. Additional support is offered to this group on an ongoing basis for confidence.

- The Foundations for Learning Programme is progressing well, and the organisation is ready to welcome our new colleagues on 1 October. This is transformative for CHS and will open avenues to update and reform our training for the panel members.
- Experts by Experience is very much in the operational phase, focusing on activities and impact. Our Experts have activity plans to Meet the Minister on 2 October and the CHS Board in November, as well as presenting at and attending various volunteers and wider sector events throughout 2025 and early 2026.
- The Chair thanked EJ, on behalf of the Board for the update.

ITEMS FOR NOTING

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9.	Finance Reporting	
9.1	Q2 Financial Update (P4 and P5)	
	<p>LH introduced the report to the Board for noting and highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHS published Grant-in-aid is £4.5m against a total budget requirement of £11.5m. CHS received a letter of comfort and Scottish Government committed to meet the budget pressures. • The Autumn Budget Review (ABR) is in progress and £47m will be awarded to CHS due to Board pressures. A further £3m will be required by Spring Budget Review (SBR). CHS continues to work closely with the Scottish Government to meet these pressures. • An overspend is not expected, however CHS are continuing to manage budgets closely. • NR The Sponsor Team is grateful to CHS for information sharing and close working relationships. • Due to the UK budget being later than normal, this may have an impact on the funding that can be accessed; however, consideration of a multi-year budget funding is being explored. • KK thanked LH for the Board update and commented on the continuing financial pressures around Grant-in-Aid and this only being a third of the annual budget CHS require. KK however acknowledged that CHS pressures are addressed with the Scottish Government on a regular basis to help manage this. • SA welcomed the exploration of a multi-year budget and highlighted the importance of this given the likelihood of the new legislation being implemented. 	
9.2	Financial 5 Year Plan	
	<p>LH introduced the report to the Board for approval and highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan is reflective of a time of change with assumptions having to be made and in line with the current financial memorandum. A 4% inflation rate is also assumed which has been applied across the board. This will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and will be amended where required. This plan also considers Learning being brought in house and the savings that this will bring. Further savings will be made if the bill passes with the implementation of remunerated chairs. • The Public Service Reform asks for Aa year-on-year reduction of 0.5% Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and an average 20% over 5 years of Corporate Costs across the Civil Service are being targeted. CHS has considered this within forecast requirements to 2030/31 and have incorporated a 0.5% year on year FTE saving and identified potential savings of £703k over 5 years. It should be noted this is based on current assumptions as identified in the report and provision of adequate financial support to enable safe implementation of CCESP is committed to CHS. • This will be challenging to CHS however are working with the Scottish Government on the Public Sector Reform, recognising there is a need for this as legislation changes. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Financial Memorandum does not cover all the costs that might be necessary to transform the system, so we are working closely with Scottish Government to deepen this understanding. • No new risks have been identified. • A question was raised by BN around the remunerated Enhanced Chairs and the new campaign and what happens if existing Panel Members would like to apply. EJ advised that there is a need to look at the issues that may arise from the potential implementation of the wider Bill provisions that included remunerated Enhanced Chairs and further in-depth Board discussion will be required at a future time to explore a potential new tribunal model. • The Chair of the Board thanked LH for the five-year plan. • SA commented that the potential transition to having remunerated Enhanced Chairs is a significant change programme, however CHS has demonstrated huge success in this over the past few years. This gives confidence that CHS will deliver this, however this will mean a huge cultural change. • No further questions were raised, and the Board approved the report. 	
10.	End of Service and Reappointments Report 2024-2025	
	<p>BC introduced the report to the Board for noting and highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven hundred reappointments across Scotland with most of them through a structured discussion with a Practice Panel Advisors and Partnership Coordinators. 230 Panel Members ended their service mostly due to personal circumstances. This is a reduction on previous years. • Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered for analysis with details highlighted under point 3.2 of the report. • The themes are highlighted in section 3.4 of the report with volunteers continuing to express frustration with technology. Improvements are underway with acknowledgement of CSAS functionality improvements and the rollout of Windows laptops offering better performance and usability. Work with SCRA on hearing room technology upgrades is also progressing. • RC asked if feedback from Panel Members is received at reappointment, at exit feedback or on an ongoing basis. BC advised that feedback comes through all these avenues and subsequent improvement actions feature in local and National plan. CHS are seeing an openness for feedback which is good. • EJ commented on the communications fatigue that some Panel Members are expressing that they are experiencing. This comes from daily activity such as texts asking for rota changes and updates from the National Team on practice issues or reminder emails to complete training. This for example is best done at a local level through the Clerks to reduce this and discussions are ongoing to look at improvements to how we communicate with our community. • KK thanked BC for the update and acknowledge the difficulties with retainment as opposed to recruitment. • No further questions were raised. 	
11.	Quarter 2 Performance Report	

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	<p>LH introduced the report to the Board for noting and highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three milestones were due for completion during quarter two; one was complete and two were amended and details are outlined under point 3.1 of the report. • The Board congratulated the team on reaching the completion of milestone 4.1 which was the implementation and operationalisation of the Experts by Experience Group. • LH advised that the reasons highlighted under point 3.3.1 of the report in relation to the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for “% invoices not in dispute paid within 10 working days” remaining at 76% during Q2 of 2025/26 (target set at 95%). The Board acknowledged that this is not always within CHS control. • The Chair would like to see the details of the reasons why invoices may not have been paid within ten working days to gain a better understanding of the situation. • RC highlighted the ISO27001 timeline and asked if this is achievable. LH advised that an external consultant has been appointed to lead on this, and a gap analysis is being undertaken by an awarding body. Current times will be adjusted where required if any issues are identified. • KG advised that we will be allowed minor issues that can be addressed during the following year. • No further questions were raised. 	
12.	Quarter 2 Data Summary Report	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LH introduced the report to the Board for noting. • The Chair thanked LH and the team for the update and is reassured by the work that is ongoing to review and monitor the capacity risk. • No questions were raised. 	
ITEMS FOR APPROVAL		
13.	Feedback Loop Report	
	<p>EJ introduced the report to the Board for approval with the following points highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Report shows that over the 2024/25 financial year; there have been only two breaches of implementation duties. This is an extremely low number, considering the number of orders in place over Scotland. One issue that contributes to this is that certain criteria must be met to engage the breach process, and there were two instances in this in this reporting period. • It was noted that this is the lowest number of reports in recent years raises the question of whether this is a true reflection of all breaches of implementation duties that occur across Scotland or whether they represent, for example, only the most serious or repeated breaches. Statutory reporting of breaches is an essential part of the National Convener’s legislative ‘toolkit’ to protect the rights of children. Guidance has recently been produced and released to the panel community to raise awareness of this function and how effective it can be to address Local Authorities not carrying out the measures included in Compulsory Supervision Orders (CSO). • A discussion took place around this, and it was highlighted that despite National Convener accountability for this, there is no data available for 	

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	<p>analysis. When we become aware of a breach, it is often too late as it comes in at the yearly review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CWSA suggested noted that awareness raising with Panel Members could be done is underway to emphasise that they can report a breach of a CSO as they may not be aware they have the authority to do this. • The Board asked for the wording under point 3.1 to be changed from “only 2 breaches...” to say, “only 2 breaches reported to the National Convener”. • The Chair thanked EJ for the update, and the Board approved the report however would like to explore this further later to gain a better understanding on how and when we can support panel members to raise a breach. 	
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND UPDATE		
14.	Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill Update	
	<p>CW introduced the paper to the Board for update and discussion with the following points highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report presented, includes CHS’ response to the ‘call for views’ on the CCCESP Bill and the SPICe Briefing SB25-34 published on 25 August 2025. • Stephen Bermingham, CHS Senior Practice and Standards Manager, represented CHS at the Committee debate to give evidence in September. This was a good session, however not as in-depth as hoped as the remuneration of the Chairs was not debated. • CW noted that Sherriff Mackie raised in the first session of Stage 1 that the legislation does not go far enough. Sherriff Mackie and The Promise view the CCCESP Bill as the first step forward however will require further legislation address the entity of the issues raised by The Promise. • Advocacy was one of the main points questioned at the Committee however the Financial Memorandum was not raised. CHS hopes that this will be debated in private after each committee. There was general support for the legislation Bill however the next Education, Children and Young People Committee meeting in October will take evidence from Local Authorities and Social Work Scotland which may raise further concerns. • EJ commented that partner agencies welcome the legislation, however there is some concern about the role of enhanced Chairs undertaking procedural hearings without the two other Panel Members. Advocacy and After-Care have been the main points of discussion with the Committee, due to the complexities and challenges around this. • The Board commented on the potential for the election to bring changes and potentially delays to the Bill with a ‘plan B’ being required in the event the Bill does not progress to help the outcomes for children and young people. • A brief discussion took place on the process of the Bill and lack of clarity to cover The Promise 2030. • The Chair thanked the Policy Team for the update. 	
15.	AOB	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KK highlighted that it was BM last Board meeting as a CHS Board member. KK also thanked BM for agreeing to the extension of her tenure from June to the end of September until the new Board members were appointed. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KK thanked BM for all the fantastic work she has undertaken as part of the Board and as a member of the PaCC. BM has been a highly active member and a fantastic ambassador for CHS over the years with her presence being very meaningful and an important part of the organisation. 	
16.	Date of Future Meetings	
	10 December 2025, 10.00am – 12pm, Conference Room 2, Thistle House/Microsoft Teams.	

CHS Board Meeting Action Log



Ongoing	0
Overdue	0
Delayed	0
Complete	0
Not Started	0
Closed	0
TOTAL	0

Action No	Paper Ref (not for SLT)	Action Title	Action Details	Date Added	Due Date	Owner	Lead	Update	Status	Completion Date	Additional Comments
9											
10											
11											
12											
13											
14											

Agenda Item 8. CHS-2526-26

Meeting:	CHS Board
Meeting Date:	10 December 2025
Title:	National Convener/Chief Executive Board Update
Responsible Executive:	Elliot Jackson, NC/CEO
Report Author:	Elliot Jackson, NC/CEO

1.	Purpose of Report
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 September 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.
2.	Recommendations
2.1	The Board are asked to note the paper and update provided by the CHS National Convener/CEO.
3.	Key Points for Discussion
3.1	Redesign Board and Non-Legislative Workstreams
3.1.1	<p>The Children's Hearings Redesign Board is responsible for providing oversight for delivering change to the Children's Hearings. The board is co-chaired by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the CHS National Convenor is a core member of the Board. Supporting the implementation of the change, the Scottish Government Chair Planning & Implementation Group of which CHS is a core member.</p> <p>The Redesign Board have established a change programme focused on non-legislative change. There are eight identified projects of work, four of which have been initiated and four of which are in the pipeline for 2026. These projects are all highly collaborative and include stakeholders from across Children's Hearings including, but not limited to SCRA, Social Work Scotland, CELCIS, Advocacy providers, Police Scotland and connections to people with lived experience through the CHS Experts by Experience Group and Our Hearings Our Voice (OHOV).</p> <p>The projects underway are focused on Planning and Preparing for Hearings, Referrals to the Reporter, Data and Information and Creating a Positive Culture in the Hearing System. All the projects have identified leadership and are in a discovery phase of understanding the problem, seeking different perspectives from project members and exploring change ideas that when implemented will achieve the project outcome. The Planning and Implementation Group report on</p>

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	<p>the delivery of the projects to the Redesign Board and although at early stages, the projects are due to share project plans in early 2026 that will set out the activity they propose to achieve the outcomes.</p> <p>In October, the Planning and Implementation Group held a workshop that brought the project leads from the four active projects together to support the alignment and cross project working. The group also spent time considering risks and issues in the project space and will be dedicating time to considering how we measure progress against the outcomes of each project and the vision of the Redesign Board.</p> <p>The Redesign Board are scheduled to meet in November where they will agree an overarching vision for the change in Children's Hearings.</p>
3.2	<p>New Practice Guidance Resource: Responding to the needs of infants, babies and very young children</p>
3.2.1	<p>CHS has been working with the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection (CELCIS) and NHS Infant Mental Health Teams across Scotland to develop a new practice guidance resource for Panel Members focusing on 'Responding to the needs of infants, babies and very young children'. The resource covers key areas for Panel Members to consider for hearings involving children aged 0-3 years, supporting Panel Members to understand the unique experiences, vulnerabilities and needs of infants and babies in the Children's Hearings System.</p> <p>The resource will be launched in the week commencing 24 November 2025 and it will be highlighted at the Townhall webinar on 4 December 2025 where there will be a focus on early years development and Panel Member decision-making. The Practice and Policy Team will be developing additional resources for the Panel Community over the months ahead, working in partnership with experts in the field of infant mental health, child development and family support.</p>
3.3	<p>Chair Greeting the Child</p>
3.3.1	<p>The Chair Greeting the Child was introduced across Scotland between May and November 2025. The change in practice was driven by young people in Moray who wanted to meet their Chair before their hearing and prevent them from walking into the hearing room to be met by three seated strangers.</p> <p>Previously, the child, family and professionals would be brought into the hearing room by the Reporter and would only interact with the Chair during the formal children's hearing. The Chair Greeting the Child project shifted this experience to create a 'soft start' through an introduction between the Chair and the child before the hearing. Now, the Chair greets the child in the waiting room, explains who they are, what their role is and brings the child and family into the hearing room, holding the door open and encouraging the child to choose where to sit and with whomever they wish.</p>

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As this is a change driven by children to support children, Panel Members were asked to only undertake this new practice for face-to-face hearings where a child is present. There were also concerns around potential legal challenge were the Chair to have contact with a child in the presence of some relevant persons while others are in a separate waiting room therefore the greeting will also not happen in those limited circumstances.

Following the re-opening of Bell Street hearing centre, Glasgow was the final area to go live in November. Now all children attending hearings across Scotland can be welcomed by the Chair before their hearing.

Since September, an evaluation of the project has been underway with feedback from Advocacy and Social Work partners being overwhelmingly positive:

- 16 out of 18 Advocacy Providers reported they had “seen positives” from the Chair Greeting the Child (89%). The two remaining responses had not seen this in practice yet.
- 11 out of 17 Advocacy Providers (65%) felt the Chair Greeting the Child has made the start of children’s hearings more child friendly. 5 respondents were Unsure with only one responding No.
- 23 out of 36 Social Workers reported they had “seen positives” from the Chair Greeting the Child (61%). A further 16 had not seen this in practice yet and two respondents had not seen any positives.
- 23 out of 32 Social Workers (72%) felt the Chair Greeting the Child has made the start of children’s hearings more child friendly. 9 respondents were Unsure with none responding No.

Partners shared many examples of where this new practice has benefitted the children they support:

- *“It was good for the young person to see the panel chair before the hearing started. They were very friendly, and it helped put the young person at ease. After the hearing they shared that they liked the chair.”*
- *“Young person said it helps making them feel more at ease to go into the Hearing room”*
- *“The child has felt that the chair is more of just a “normal person” rather than someone more intimidating who just makes decisions”*

Evidence from the evaluation shows that, where appropriate to do so, Panel Members are greeting the child and feel confident doing so. Local embedding will continue, led by the Partnership Coordinators, and will focus on ensuring best practice takes place, following concerns raised by SCRA of Panel Members not waiting for the Reporter to do this or entering conversation in waiting areas.

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3.4	ISO 27001 Update
3.4.1	<p>We have now begun the journey to ISO 27001 accreditation. ISO 27001 is an internationally recognised standard that specifies the organisational requirements for Information Security Management Systems. Its approach supports risk and asset management and data accessibility and integrity.</p> <p>We have undertaken a gap analysis supported by BSI Group, a UK national standards body, who will also be undertaking our accreditation assessment and certification evaluation.</p> <p>We have procured Sapphire, a dedicated ISO27001 consultancy to support the accreditation process and we are working closely with them to build out the framework and associated policies and procedures. Under the standard there are also 93 controls that require to be complied with, these controls cover organisational, people, physical and technological controls.</p> <p>Stage 1 assessment took place on 5th Nov 25. CHS have passed stage 1 assessment. 7 minor improvements required, and no major improvements identified. This is an excellent outcome and is due to the considerable effort across our IG, Digital and Governance teams to get us to this point. Final, Stage 2 assessment is scheduled for early May 26.</p>
3.5	Our Hearings Our Voice (OHOV) Conference
3.5.1	<p>Over the summer our Experts worked with OHOV to co-produce sections of their interactive, online practice guide 'Seeing Beyond the Surface: what children and young people wish all adults knew'. This became the starting point for a larger piece of work our Experts carried out with Panel Members on children's participation rights during hearings. Two of our Experts presented the findings of this work to 120 delegates at the OHOV Rise Up event in October. They also showcased their 'Am I as invisible to Panel Members as I think?' reversible thinking poem. This poem is included in the OHOV guide and will be incorporated into panel member pre-service training and wider learning modules at CHS.</p>
3.6	Experts by Experience Meeting with Minister Update
3.6.1	<p>Our Experts and CHS staff along with members of Our Hearings Our Voice (OHOV), met with Natalie Don-Innes MSP, Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise. They were given a tour of the Parliament by staff of the office of Angus Robertson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, and then watched First Minister's Questions. This meeting provided an opportunity for our Experts to build relationships and influence decision makers. One of the Jenga questions put to the Minister by the Experts was 'in a year's time what do you see the Children's Panel being like, and what needs to change?' The young people followed this up by reiterating to the Minister that it's important that any changes made to the hearings system are</p>

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	guided by the voices and expertise of those who have lived experience of the system. This is only the start for our Experts who are developing their confidence and influence to help shape improvements in a redesigned Children's Hearings System.
3.7	Improving the support for Learning to the CHS Community
3.7.1	<p>While the feedback from Panel Members on learning is always positive, Panel Members have told us that the structure and time commitment for mandatory and non-mandatory learning can be difficult to manage. As we prepare for the changes ahead, we're exploring ways to transform learning for Panel Members so that you have everything you need to support children and families.</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolving our approach to learning to make it more flexible and accessible. This means offering high quality learning in formats and at times that work for our diverse Panel community. • Making learning more adaptable so that we can adjust the content in response to any future changes to the hearings system. <p>We fully appreciate the value of in-person training, and it will always have an important role in our training programme but combining this with a more digitally enabled approach will allow us to transform the way training is designed and delivered, ensuring Panel Members have everything they need to support children and families.</p> <p>We are currently exploring the best approach for delivering improvements and as part of this work we are proposing to reshape the Learning Team so that we have the right structure to support Panel Members and staff. We will update you on this work next year.</p>
4.	Alignment to CHS Strategic Outlook
4.1	<p>This work is aligned to the CHS Strategic Outcome 2024-2027:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 1 - Delivering Positive Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1 - Develop a 5-year learning strategy to maximise learning impact across CHS. • Objective 2 - Quality will be the cornerstone of our hearings system. • 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. • Theme 2 - Driving Transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1 - Work with partners and stakeholders to lead and influence change. • Objective 2 - We will become a data-informed and data-driven organisation.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 3 - We will make effective use of technology, capitalising on its potential for enhancing performance and delivering efficiency. Theme 3 - Valuing Our People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Objective 2 - The organisational design remains agile, adaptable, and responsive to support ongoing organisational transformation. Objective 3 - To become a more inclusive and diverse organisation and create a culture where everyone feels valued, included, and engaged. Objective 4 - to develop our people capabilities.
5.	Key Risks
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.
6.	Risk Register
6.1	As above.
7.	Impact on Inequality/Rights
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.
8.	Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)
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.
9.	Resource Implications
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.
10.	Appendices
	None

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Meeting:	CHS Board
Meeting Date:	10 December 2025
Title:	Finance Update Report P7 2025-26
Responsible Executive:	Lynne Harrison, Interim Director of Business and Finance/Depute CEO
Report Author:	Klaus Berchtenbreiter, Finance Manager

1.	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to ask the Board to note the report and the stated financial position for P7 2025/26. An update on Scottish Government (SG) budget planning for 2026/27 is also provided
1.2	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead in advance of the meeting.
2.	Recommendations
2.1	The Board is asked to note the report.
3.	Key Points for Discussion
3.1	25/26 P7 update
3.1.1	CHS has been awarded budget as 'flat cash' for revenue, £4.576k and an increase to our capital budget which is now £803k (this includes cash and non-cash elements). This results in CHS having a funding gap on revenue of £6,798k, but capital will be fully funded.
3.1.2	SG is committed to fully support CHS to meet the funding gap but has requested CHS to actively engage to find savings to help close the gap via an open and honest dialogue during the Autumn Budget Review (ABR) and Spring Budget Review (SBR) process. At ABR, CHS has been awarded £4,035k reducing the existing pressures to £2,681k against the latest available forecast per the end of P5.
3.1.3	Scottish Government have advised that due to the changes in UK budget timelines SBR figures will be required by the end of November 2025.
3.1.4	CHS is still running behind the spending curve. The Year to Date (YTD) spend for P7 rests at £5,293k, but is in line with previous year's spending patterns as much of our spend is weighted to the second half of the financial year. For the forecast, we are expecting to reach near full appointment levels towards the agreed CHS establishment structure by the end of the fiscal year. CHS Learning Academy staff have now successfully transferred over to CHS.

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	Overall, as per the table in 3.2.6 we were forecasting for a slight underspend £91k. However, due to recent decisions regarding recruitment identified in 3.2.3 in 2026 this will be revised upwards for P8.																																																																											
3.2	Breakdown																																																																											
3.2.1	Cost on property and operating costs are running behind this reporting timeline, as mostly invoiced quarterly but are expected to be within the set budgets.																																																																											
3.2.2	ICT cost follows the same spending pattern as in previous years, with slow spending at the beginning of the year, but a tight cost monitoring is in place indicating a slight overspend on the agreed budget.																																																																											
3.2.3	For volunteer recruitment the budget includes costs for 2 campaigns this year with refreshed creatives to further fine tune these efforts. Late November we were informed of a confirmed implementation date for Care & Justice Act of early 2027. This has enabled a review of capacity forecasting and planning and enabled us to move to a single Panel Member recruitment in September 2027, removing the need for recruitment in January 2026. This enables one off cost saving to be surfaced in year which will be reflected in P8.																																																																											
3.2.4	Panel and Area Support Team (AST) Expenses have been slow to come in during the first quarter of the current fiscal year. We are actively engaging with the clerks to send their claims in more frequently and earlier than they have been to allow us to establish a better forecast earlier this year.																																																																											
3.2.5	<table><tr><th></th><th>Actual YTD Period 7</th><th>2025/26 Annual Budget</th><th>2025/26 Budget forecast</th><th>variance to forecast</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>£000</th><th>£000</th><th>£000</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>Staff</td><td>3,287</td><td>6,230</td><td>6,192</td><td>-38</td></tr><tr><td>+ Board</td><td>11</td><td>69</td><td>69</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>+ Training, travel and subsistence</td><td>142</td><td>125</td><td>200</td><td>75</td></tr><tr><td>+ Property</td><td>23</td><td>145</td><td>146</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>+ Other Operating Costs</td><td>19</td><td>265</td><td>263</td><td>-2</td></tr><tr><td>+ ICT Costs</td><td>358</td><td>1,079</td><td>1,100</td><td>64</td></tr><tr><td>+ Corporate Costs</td><td>182</td><td>28</td><td>198</td><td>257</td></tr><tr><td>+ Panel and AST Expenses</td><td>119</td><td>540</td><td>420</td><td>-135</td></tr><tr><td>+ Panel and AST Training</td><td>867</td><td>1,444</td><td>1,342</td><td>-227</td></tr><tr><td>+ Support for hearings</td><td>73</td><td>412</td><td>412</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>+ Volunteer recruitment</td><td>186</td><td>665</td><td>664</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>+ AST Devolved Funding</td><td>15</td><td>372</td><td>287</td><td>-85</td></tr><tr><td>= Total</td><td>5,293</td><td>11,374</td><td>11,293</td><td>-91</td></tr></table>		Actual YTD Period 7	2025/26 Annual Budget	2025/26 Budget forecast	variance to forecast		£000	£000	£000		Staff	3,287	6,230	6,192	-38	+ Board	11	69	69	0	+ Training, travel and subsistence	142	125	200	75	+ Property	23	145	146	0	+ Other Operating Costs	19	265	263	-2	+ ICT Costs	358	1,079	1,100	64	+ Corporate Costs	182	28	198	257	+ Panel and AST Expenses	119	540	420	-135	+ Panel and AST Training	867	1,444	1,342	-227	+ Support for hearings	73	412	412	0	+ Volunteer recruitment	186	665	664	0	+ AST Devolved Funding	15	372	287	-85	= Total	5,293	11,374	11,293	-91
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= Total	5,293	11,374	11,293	-91																																																																								
3.3	Spring Budget review (SBR)																																																																											
3.3.1	Has been brought forward to the beginning of November and the above figures have been used and communicate din principal to the Sponsor Team, a formal reply has not yet been received.																																																																											

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3.4	Budget planning 2026/27
3.4.1	<p>UK Budget timings have been delayed which we have been advised will have an impact on SG Budget timings and decisions. We have been advised that GIA letters are unlikely to be issued before end March and therefore not in time for CHS Board timelines.</p> <p>This may impact aspirations for multi year budget settlements. SG have continued their commitment to endeavour to more accurately reflect CHS funding requirements through published Grant in Aid (GIA) in future settlements.</p> <p>As in previous years, to enable Board assurance and budget approval, we will seek a Letter of Comfort reflecting SG commitments to CHS. We are also working with Sponsor Team to enable Andrew Watson, Director of Children and Families Unit to attend the March Board.</p>
3.5	SG introduced Accountable Officer (AO) Spend Controls Sept 2025
3.5.1	<p>In relation to expenditure that is new or outside existing budgets and delivery plans, repurposes underspends, or is novel and/or contentious:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the AO Central Spend Control process must be followed, with no minimum threshold applied This applies to spend with an impact in 2025-26 and/or future years, and for all categories of spend. <p>This is for awareness of significant other spend only, but it has been confirmed by the Sponsor Team that this does not directly impact CHS, but we will continue our rigour and budget control to ensure best value across all expenditure.</p>
4.	Key Risks
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.
5.	Risk Register
5.1	Already exists as a risk on the risk register. No Update to risk register required.
6.	Impact on Inequality/Rights
6.1	No impact assessment required.
7.	Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)
7.1	Financial position has been discussed with Director of Business and Finance and after sign-off reported to SG.
8.	Resource Implications
8.1	No known resource implications.

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9.	Appendices
	None.

Agenda Item 10. CHS-2526-28

Meeting:	CHS Board
Meeting Date:	10 December 2025
Title:	Strategic and Business Planning Update
Responsible Executive:	Elliot Jackson, Chief Executive
Report Author:	Lynne Harrison, Depute Chief Executive

1.	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this paper is to update the Board on Business and Budget Planning for 2026/27 and Strategic planning for 2027/28 onwards.
2.	Recommendations
2.1	That the Board approves the approach for Strategic and Business planning.
3.	CHS Business and Budget Plan 2026/27
3.1	CHS is required to produce an annual Business Plan, that describes the “key” activities and milestones for the year ahead, as derived from the Strategic Plan. For CHS “key” usually covers activities that have clear contribution to the delivery of strategy, activities that are directly related to the National Convener’s core duties, and activities that are significant in terms of the resources required to deliver them and/or their organisational impact. CHS and the National Convener also use this plan to fulfil their duty to produce a Corporate Parenting plan. A budget aligned to the Business plan is also required to ensure CHS has the resources required to deliver on its statutory functions and commitments.
3.2	<p>2026/27 is the final business planning year of the current CHS strategic plan 2024 - 27. The proposed plan for 2026/27 is that the report follows the same broad format as the previous year’s – with objectives and milestones contributing to the three strategic themes forming the main content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering Positive Outcomes • Valuing Our People • Driving Transformation <p>A Business Plan and Budget will be submitted to the Board in March 2026 for approval.</p>
4	CHS Strategic Plan 2027 onwards
4.1	<p>CHS is required to publish a new strategic plan in April 2027, and work will take place during 2026/27 to develop this plan.</p> <p>Following discussions and advice from the Board during October strategic development sessions and given the likely uncertainty of the status of the Children’s (Care, Care Experienced Services and Planning) Scotland Bill (CCCESP) at the start of 2026/27 and the significant impact the outcome will</p>

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	<p>have on CHS strategic plans, it is proposed that strategic planning commences once this has been determined.</p> <p>It is proposed the plan will be developed with a horizon of 3 – 5 years taking us from 2027 until 2032, 5 Business and Corporate Parenting planning cycles. Appropriate annual review will allow for flexibility should this be required during the proposed strategic planning cycle.</p> <p>Planning will include engagement with internal and external stakeholders. An approach for planning will be bought forward early 2026/27 once CCCESP outcomes are understood.</p>
5	Alignment to CHS Strategic Outlook
5.1	<p>This work is aligned to the CHS Strategic Outcome 2024-2027:</p> <p>Theme 1 - Delivering Positive Outcomes</p> <p>Theme 2 – Valuing Our People</p> <p>Theme 3 – Driving Transformation</p>
6.	Key Risks
6.1	No risks identified at this stage
7.	Risk Register
7.1	There is no requirement for anything to be added to the Risk Register at this stage.
8.	Impact on Inequality/Rights
8.1	No impact assessment is required at this stage. Appropriate assessments will take place in line with development of the relevant plans.
9.	Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services
9.1	There is a duty on the National Convener to provide a copy of the Report to Panel Members. In previous years, this has been done by publishing on the CHS website.
9.	Resource Implications
9.1	These will be identified alongside planning.
10.	Appendices
10.1	None

Agenda Item 11. CHS-2526-29

Meeting:	CHS Board
Meeting Date:	10 December 2025
Title:	Legislative Update
Responsible Executive:	Elliot Jackson, Chief Executive
Report Author:	Stephen Bermingham, Policy and Practice Senior Manager

1.	Purpose of Report
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Board on key legislative developments that impact on the children's hearings system. • Provide assurance to the Board that CHS is actively engaged in influencing legislation that impacts on the operational delivery of the children's hearings system. <p>A detailed summary of all the legislative areas that impact on the hearing system, is captured in CHS' influencing strategy. This report covers four key emerging policy areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill 2025 2. Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 3. The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 4. Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019
1.2	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead in advance of the meeting and undertake desk research (referenced in this paper) into the four key legislative areas covered in this report.
2.	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Board is asked to note the areas covered in this report and the activity undertaken by CHS to engage and influence national policy impacting on children's hearings.</p> <p>This report was presented to SLT at their meeting on 2 December.</p>
3.	Key Policy Areas
3.1	Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) (CCESP Bill)
3.1.1	CHS Board was provided with a detailed briefing at the last meeting on the 24 September 2024 that covered the background to the Bill, the key components of the Bill, the financial memorandum, and supporting information in relation to the proposed redesign of the children's hearings system. This report is an update to that briefing.

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Since the last report, CHS has provided in-person evidence at Education, Children and Young People's Committee evidence session on 17 September 2025. This was shared with the CHS community as a news release. The full evidence session can be accessed here: [CHS gives evidence to Scottish Parliament on hearings legislation](#).

To support the practice and policy components of the Bill, Sarah Bird – Practice and Policy Advisor, has secured a professional placement with the Scottish Government sponsor team until March 2026. Sarah is helping to develop proposals, guidance and policy to help shape the children's hearings redesign section of the Bill as it progresses through parliament.

At the final evidence session on 5 November 2025, the Education, Children and Young People's Committee heard evidence from Scottish Government officials and the Minister for Children, Young People and the Promise. In preparation for this evidence session, CHS prepared a detailed briefing for the Minister on the Enhanced Role of the Chair of the Children's Panel and how we operationalise this in practice. This briefing was referenced during the evidence session and, as a follow up, CHS provided the briefing to the Committee Members with an offer from the National Convener to meet with any members to discuss the briefing.

The briefing sets out in detail the rationale, functions, planning and operational implications of the enhanced role of the new chair. The full briefing has been shared with the Board and will be published as part of the formal Stage 1 report. Of note, the briefing articulates the following:

1. The benefit of an enhanced chair being able to take procedural decisions alone, freeing up time for three-person hearings to make substantive decisions.
2. How the chair will work collaboratively on an equal footing with the Reporter in the planning of children's hearings, to improve outcomes for children.
3. The recruitment process, skills, training and competencies required of the new role.
4. The interplay between the remunerated chair and the volunteer Panel Members, in particular the mitigations to ensure equity of decision making and how they will be integrated into one CHS culture.
5. The interplay with the Children's Reporter and how the enhanced chair role will help reduce drift and delay.

The Committee is now considering the evidence they have heard and will produce a final Stage 1 report ahead of a debate and a vote on the general principles of the Bill on 16 January 2026. If the Bill passes, it will progress to Stage 2, where further amendments will be considered. CHS Practice and Policy colleagues will continue to work closely with the Scottish Government sponsor

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	team and other stakeholders to support the progression of the Bill in this Parliamentary term. Further and regular updates will be provided to CHS Board.
3.2	Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024
3.2.1	<p>CHS was supportive and actively engaged in shaping and influencing the Care and Justice Bill as it passed through parliament. Since the legislation received Royal Assent in June 2024, CHS has engaged with the panel community and with and national partners to ensure the provisions in the Act are understandable and deliverable within CHS. This has been a cross-functional endeavour as the impact of the Act, particularly Part 1 - raising the age of referral to 18 - has operational implications for all CHS.</p> <p>CHS has adjusted our operational infrastructure and increased capacity to respond to the requirements of an anticipated circa. 10% increase in children's hearings because of the provisions in the Act. We have planned our recruitment processes accordingly and developed a high-quality learning programme and practice resources to ensure the Panel community is equipped to respond to the changes the Act introduces.</p> <p>Some of the changes in the Act have already been enacted, notably the ending of placement of under 18's in Youth Offenders Institutions in 2024. Further details of on the implementation of the Act can be accessed in the first operational annual review presented to Parliament: <u>Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 - operation review: first annual report 2024-2025 - gov.scot</u></p> <p>The timescales for Part 1 have shifted, and CHS has been seeking clarity on the decision for the 'go live' date. On 16 November 2025, the Scottish Government informed us that for Part 1 of the Act (raising the maximum age of referral to the Principal Reporter), the Minister for Children, Young People and the Promise has taken the decision that commencement should begin in early 2027, rather than April 2026 as initially scheduled. This change reflects the feedback from delivery partners about the benefit in this timescale in the context of wider reforms and system capacity. This is significantly later that we had planned for but reflects concerns in relation to the system readiness of local authorities, in particular.</p> <p>Whilst we had planned for an earlier go live date, we will now take time to consider how the new commencement date will impact our capacity, recruitment and roll-out of our mandatory training. We will continue to keep the CHS community updated of developments, engage with national partners, and we have established an internal working group to oversee the effectively delivery of this work. Having done much of the groundwork CHS is well prepared to implement the requirements of the Act and will provide further updates to the CHS Board.</p>
3.3	UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024

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3.3.1	<p>The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 came into force in July 2024, making Scotland the first nation in the UK to write the UNCRC into domestic law. The legislation means all public authorities, including CHS, will have to fully embed children's rights into their policies and practice and children can legally challenge when their rights are breached. Whilst the Act has not had a significant impact on Panel Member practice, it is symbolically important and has paved the way for other legislation such as the Care and Justice Act to ensure compliance with the UNCRC. The Act has also been accompanied by additional reporting requirements – further details can be accessed here Supporting documents - UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 - part 3: statutory guidance - gov.scot</p> <p>The next CHS statutory report required under Part 3 of the UNCRC Incorporation Act 2024 is due in 2026. The report - which highlights actions CHS has undertaken to progress children's rights as well as our future plans – must be reported on every three years. Planning has started for this report including initial engagement with the Practice and Standards function and members of our Experts by Experience. The Practice and Standards function is aligning the Children's Participation and Children's Rights strategy with the statutory reporting requirements. The next report will cover the reporting period April 2023 – March 2026. This report will be presented to CHS Board for approval in June 2026. CHS is well placed to meet the requirements of the Act, and we are increasingly being recognised as sector leaders in our children's rights work – notably in relation to how we involve children and young people in our work – illustrated in the latest Impact Report.</p>
3.4	Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019
3.4.1	<p>The Age of Criminal Responsibility Act requires the Scottish Ministers to carry out a review within 3 years of the commencement of section 1 of the Act (from 17 December 2021). An advisory group was established to support Ministers with the review period which concluded on 16 December 2024. CHS were active members of the Advisory Group, that provided Scottish Ministers with a report detailing the findings of the review and recommendations for any future age of criminal responsibility.</p> <p>The Advisory Group examined the impact of raising the age from 10 to 12 in 2021, through the lens of data and evidence, community confidence, victim impact, operational implications, and risk management. The overall assessment was that the increase in the age of minimum age of criminal responsibility had limited impact and the collective recommendation of the Advisory Group was to further increase the age of criminal responsibility to 14 or above, in line with most progressive European countries. The full review can be access here: Age of Criminal Responsibility Advisory Group - gov.scot</p> <p>Scottish Ministers are considering the findings of the review and are required to report to the Scottish Parliament on any future recommendations for the age of</p>

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	criminal responsibility in Scotland by 16 December 2025. As members of the advisory group, we will get early review of the report and will report any significant recommendations to CHS Board. Any changes will not happen until the next parliamentary term at the earliest.
4	Alignment to CHS Strategic Outlook
4.1	<p>This work is aligned to the CHS Strategic Outcome 2024-2027:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 1 - Delivering Positive Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Theme 2 - Driving Transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1 - Work with partners and stakeholders to lead and influence change. • Theme 3 - Valuing Our People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 2 - The organisational design remains agile, adaptable and responsive to support ongoing organisational transformation. • Objective 4 - to develop our people capabilities.
5.	Key Risks
5.1	Resourcing and capacity risks flagged up and mitigated against in relation to the CCESP Bill and Care and Justice Act. Uncertainty about the implementation date for the Care and Justice Act has been unsettling for CHS and some of our panel community, and we will communicate the revised Part 1 enactment date in a planned way. There is a risk that the CCESP Bill does not progress through Parliament, however, we are confident that we have done everything possible in the areas that directly pertain to CHS to support the smooth progression of the Bill to support the redesign the children's hearings system.
6.	Risk Register
6.1	Key risks already captured in risk register.
7.	Impact on Inequality/Rights
7.1	No new impact assessments required. A full suite of impact assessments have been undertaken and scrutinised for each of the key policy areas covered in this report.
8.	Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services
8.1	No requirement for engagement and consultation directly in relation to this paper. A wide range of informing, engaging and consultation has been undertaken in relation to the CCESP Bill and Care and Justice Act. This includes town hall events, press releases, training, targeted consultations, social media activity and strategic communication planning.

Agenda Item 11. CHS-2526-29

9.	Resource Implications
9.1	There are significant new resources that have been confirmed for CHS in the financial memorandum for the CCESP Bill and Care and Justice Act.
10.	Appendices
10.1	None

Agenda Item 12. CHS-2526-30

Meeting:	CHS Board
Meeting Date:	10 December 2025
Title:	Volunteer Recruitment
Responsible Executive:	Joanne O'Leary, Director of People & Culture
Report Author:	Catherine Goodfellow, Recruitment and Retention Manager

1.	Purpose of Report
1.1.	The purpose of this report is to provide an overview on the Autumn 2025 and 2026 Panel Member Recruitment campaigns.
1.2.	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead after this update has been shared at the SLT meeting.
2.	Recommendations
2.1.	The Board is asked to note this update
3.	Key Points for Review
3.1.	2025 Autumn Campaign and Recruitment Activities
3.1.1	The Autumn held in 16 local authority areas, covering eight regions: results, progress update and future actions.
3.1.2	Applications: on close of the campaign, 580 applications were received (including 15 deferred from previous campaigns). Information on applicants is attached in Appendix 1.
3.1.3	Improvement ideas implemented: workshops and feedback earlier this spring and summer generated ideas to reduce the demands on local teams during the selection process.
3.1.4	For this campaign, an online series of National Information Sessions (including Learning and Practice & Policy colleagues) were held throughout the summer and continued during the campaign itself rather than holding local in person sessions. This resulted in greater consistency, opportunity to emphasise the commitment and expectation of this volunteer role and respond directly to queries. Over 600 registered with 400 individuals attending.
3.1.5	The National Team undertook the screening of applications during the manual process of uploading applications onto CSAS (from the online jot forms application used for applicants).

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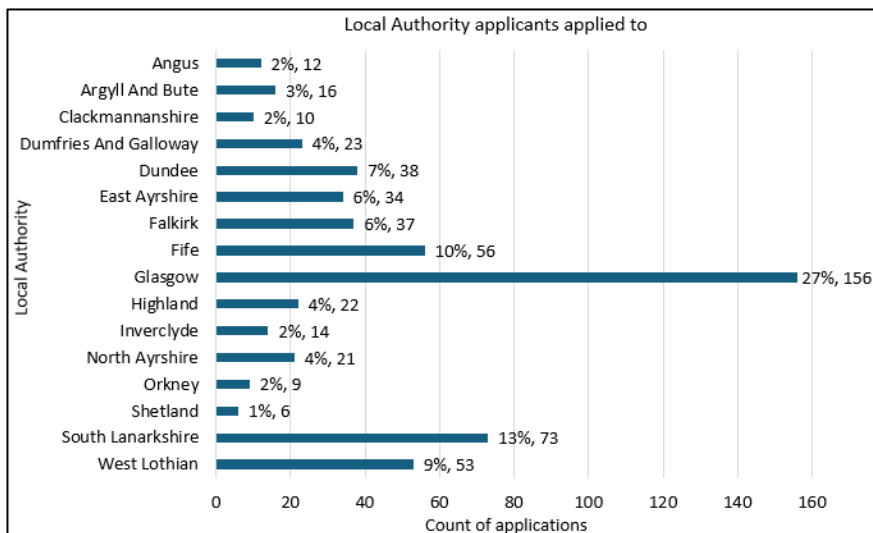
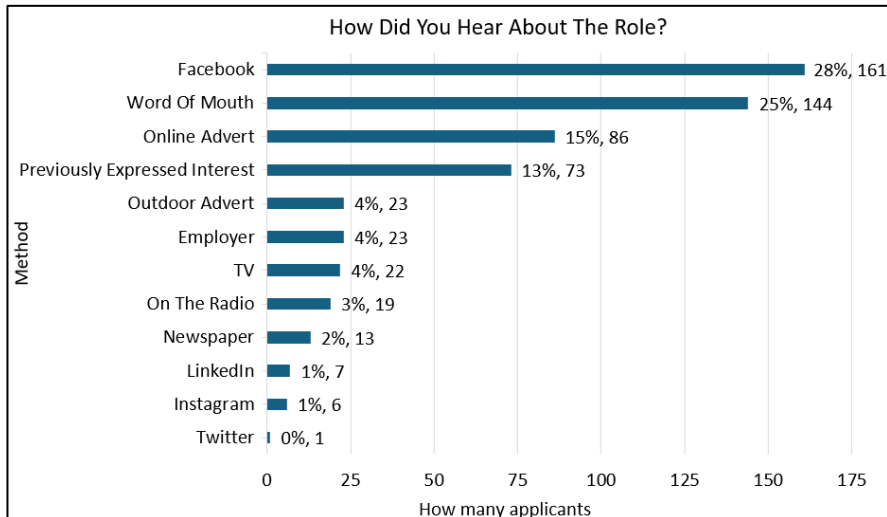
3.1.6	Shortlisting in many areas selecting applicants for interview was conducted by staff - and by one person only (unless a second assessment was required for applications who were borderline).
3.1.7	Experts by Experience and Our Hearings Our Voice: reviewed interview questions during the summer months and have filmed the short scenario shared with candidates. Candidates present their views in response to: <i>Homelessness impacts on the wellbeing of children and families</i> . This builds on the previous work with Participation and the first time the Experts by Experience have been involved in selection.
3.1.8	Support from other national or regional teams in the interviewing process to allow for greater capacity.
3.1.9	In person Induction Sessions will be held at the end of November, early December to support building a regional relationship and to facilitate the receipt of digital devices in person with available support.
3.2	Next Steps
3.2.1	271 candidates were recommended for pre-service starting January 2026. Several candidates did not pursue the opportunity for interview after shortlisting, most often citing time commitment of the role.
3.2.2	In tandem, careful design and planning for the induction session, particularly the distribution of laptop devices is underway as this will be the first time ever digital devices have been delivered in person to trainees. Feedback to date has been positive
3.3	Recruitment Planning 2036
3.3.1	<p>Following notification of the implementation date for the Children's Care and Justice (Scotland) Act (CCJA) as early 2027, we have taken the decision to move to a single recruitment campaign next year which will take place in September 26.</p> <p>Over the last few years panel member recruitment has been increasingly challenging and with the implementation of the Care and Justice Act on the horizon we set up a capacity programme to help us better understand our capacity needs and the steps needed to ensure we were on track if the Act came into force in early 2026. One of the outcomes of the capacity programme was a decision to move to two recruitment campaigns a year and this has been successful in boosting capacity and enabled us to be on track to meet requirements of the CCJA. The recent confirmation of implementation date enables a confirmed timeline for when we are likely to see an increase in children coming into the hearings system. With this new information we have reforecast and reviewed the data to understand what it means for us in terms of tribunal and organisational capacity.</p>

Agenda Item 12. CHS-2526-30

	<p>The data tells us that the delay to the Care and Justice Act, combined with the success of recent recruitment campaigns means that a single recruitment campaign in 2026 will be enough to prepare us for implementation by the end of March 2027. We considered different options of recruiting in January or September. After discussion with all stakeholders, it was agreed that a January campaign could result in short term overcapacity in some areas, reducing opportunities for our 2025 intake of panel members to gain the necessary experience in the hearing room. A September campaign reduces this risk and enables Panel Members to be recruited, trained and on-boarded in line with the implementation of CCJA timelines. As a result, we will be running a single campaign in September 2026.</p> <p>The revised approach will free up organisational capacity in the early part of 2026 and enable preparation for the implementation of the Act and possible future reforms.</p>
4.	Key Risks
4.1	In line with strategic and operational risks already listed.
5.	Risk Register
5.1	There is no requirement for anything to be added to the Risk Register at this stage.
6.	Impact on Inequality/Rights
6.1	Impact assessment not required.
7.	Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)
7.1	There is no requirement for engagement and consultation in relation to this paper.
8.	Resource Implications
8.1	Additional resource was allocated to support the administration and co-ordination of manually uploading applications.
9.	Appendices
9.1	Statistics from applications.

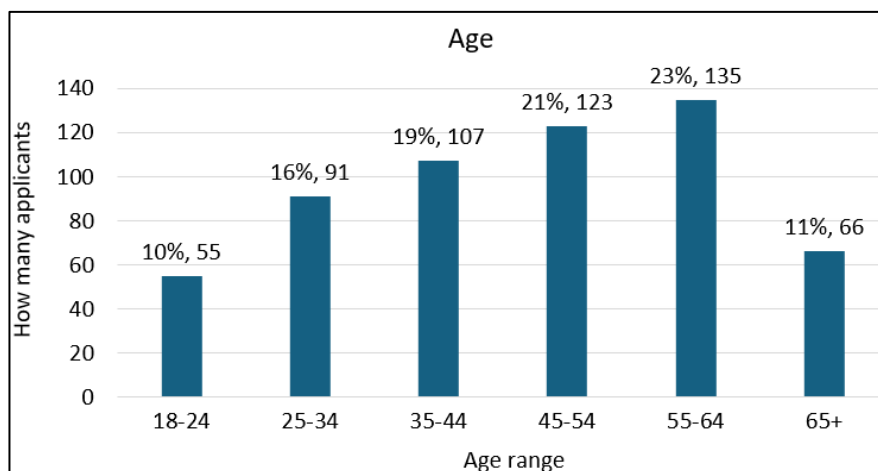
Agenda Item 12. CHS-2526-30

Appendix 1 - Senior Leadership Update

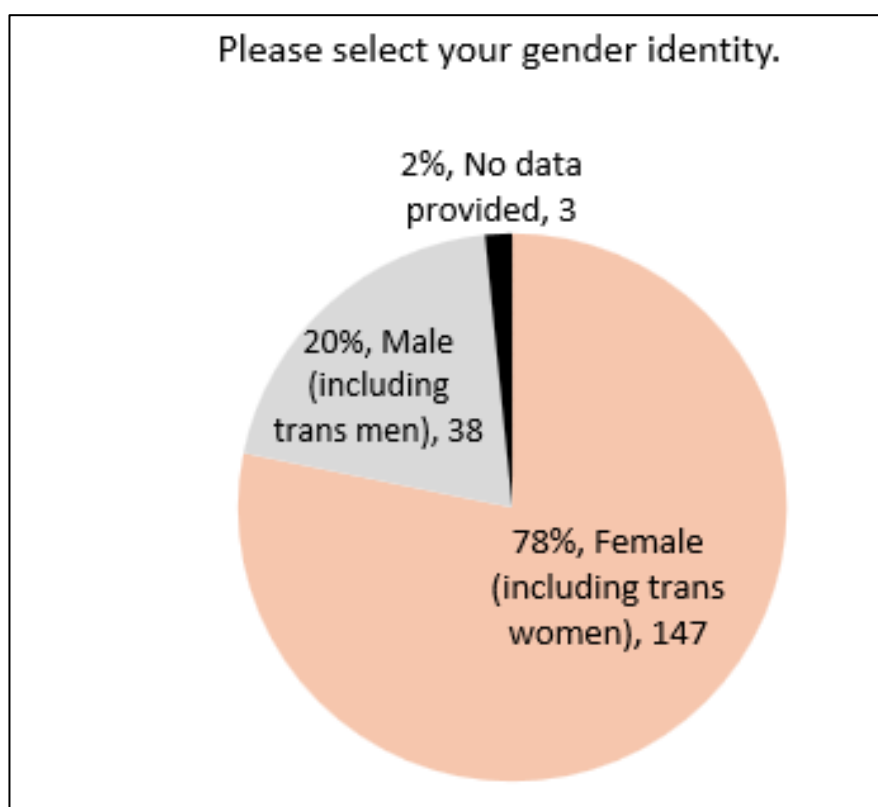
1	<h2>Data analysis</h2> <p>Data has been extracted from both the application and the equalities monitoring forms. This is the second campaign that has used SmartSurvey to collect equalities data separately from the application itself. In the previous 5 campaigns, a mean of 43% applicants provided their equalities data, whereas this campaign has seen a noticeable decrease with a 33% completion rate. For comparison, 41% completed the survey in the last campaign.</p>																																																			
2	<h2>Analysis</h2> <p>Applications received:</p>  <table><caption>Local Authority applicants applied to</caption><thead><tr><th>Local Authority</th><th>Percentage</th><th>Count</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Angus</td><td>2%</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>Argyll And Bute</td><td>3%</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>Clackmannanshire</td><td>2%</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Dumfries And Galloway</td><td>4%</td><td>23</td></tr><tr><td>Dundee</td><td>7%</td><td>38</td></tr><tr><td>East Ayrshire</td><td>6%</td><td>34</td></tr><tr><td>Falkirk</td><td>6%</td><td>37</td></tr><tr><td>Fife</td><td>10%</td><td>56</td></tr><tr><td>Glasgow</td><td>27%</td><td>156</td></tr><tr><td>Highland</td><td>4%</td><td>22</td></tr><tr><td>Inverclyde</td><td>2%</td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>North Ayrshire</td><td>4%</td><td>21</td></tr><tr><td>Orkney</td><td>2%</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>Shetland</td><td>1%</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>South Lanarkshire</td><td>13%</td><td>73</td></tr><tr><td>West Lothian</td><td>9%</td><td>53</td></tr></tbody></table>	Local Authority	Percentage	Count	Angus	2%	12	Argyll And Bute	3%	16	Clackmannanshire	2%	10	Dumfries And Galloway	4%	23	Dundee	7%	38	East Ayrshire	6%	34	Falkirk	6%	37	Fife	10%	56	Glasgow	27%	156	Highland	4%	22	Inverclyde	2%	14	North Ayrshire	4%	21	Orkney	2%	9	Shetland	1%	6	South Lanarkshire	13%	73	West Lothian	9%	53
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3	<h2>How applicants heard about the campaign:</h2>  <table><caption>How Did You Hear About The Role?</caption><thead><tr><th>Method</th><th>Percentage</th><th>Count</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Facebook</td><td>28%</td><td>161</td></tr><tr><td>Word Of Mouth</td><td>25%</td><td>144</td></tr><tr><td>Online Advert</td><td>15%</td><td>86</td></tr><tr><td>Previously Expressed Interest</td><td>13%</td><td>73</td></tr><tr><td>Outdoor Advert</td><td>4%</td><td>23</td></tr><tr><td>Employer</td><td>4%</td><td>23</td></tr><tr><td>TV</td><td>4%</td><td>22</td></tr><tr><td>On The Radio</td><td>3%</td><td>19</td></tr><tr><td>Newspaper</td><td>2%</td><td>13</td></tr><tr><td>LinkedIn</td><td>1%</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>Instagram</td><td>1%</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>Twitter</td><td>0%</td><td>1</td></tr></tbody></table>	Method	Percentage	Count	Facebook	28%	161	Word Of Mouth	25%	144	Online Advert	15%	86	Previously Expressed Interest	13%	73	Outdoor Advert	4%	23	Employer	4%	23	TV	4%	22	On The Radio	3%	19	Newspaper	2%	13	LinkedIn	1%	7	Instagram	1%	6	Twitter	0%	1												
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Agenda Item 12. CHS-2526-30

4 Age range of applicants:

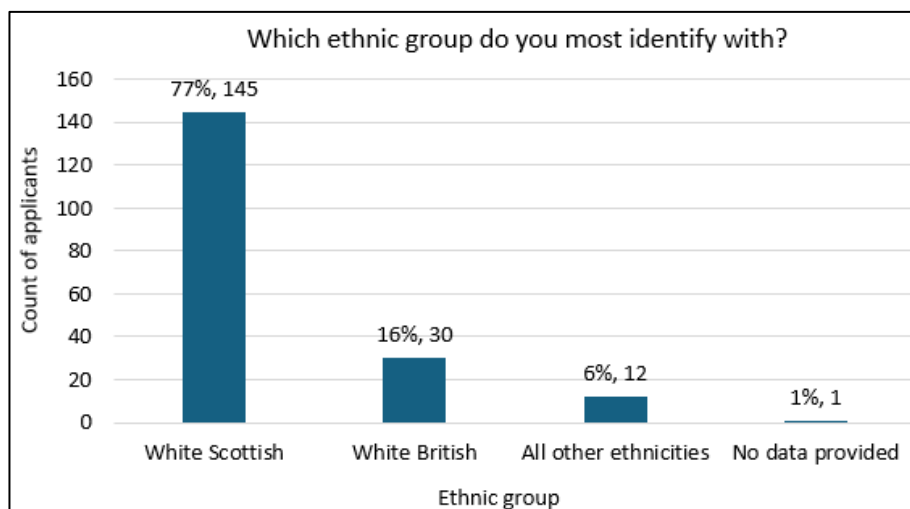


5 Gender breakdown:

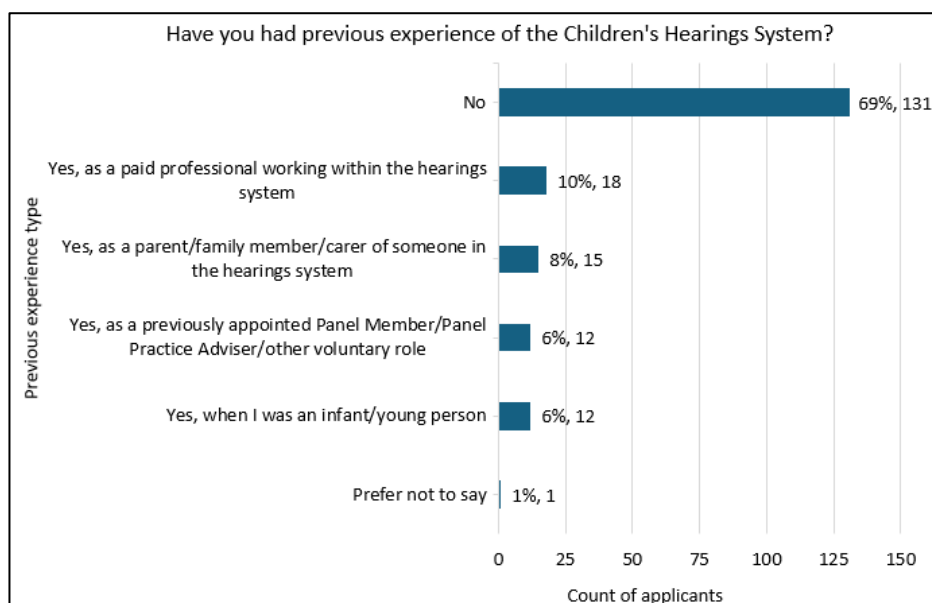


Agenda Item 12. CHS-2526-30

6 Ethnicity:



7 Previous experience of the Children's Hearings system?



Agenda Item 13a. CHS-2526-31

Meeting:	CHS Board
Meeting Date:	10 December 2025
Title:	Board Standing Orders 2025
Responsible Executive:	Elliot Jackson, National Convener/CEO
Report Author:	Frieda Cadogan, Governance Officer

1.	Purpose of Report
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to ask the Board to approve the Board Standing Orders 2025.</p> <p>It is an annual requirement to review and update, where necessary, the Board Standing Orders, as part of our Board governance statutory requirements.</p>
1.2	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead in advance of the meeting.
2.	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Board last reviewed and approved the Board Standing Orders at the November 2024 meeting.</p> <p>The Board Standing Orders is due for review on an annual basis. This is in line with statutory Board governance requirements.</p> <p>The recommendation is for the Board to approve the document, prior to presentation at the Board on 10 December for final approval.</p> <p>Once approved, the document is published on the CHS Website here.</p> <p>The document was presented and endorsed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at their meeting on 2 December.</p>
3.	Key Points for Discussion
3.1	There have been no changes to the Standing Orders since the last review in November 2025.
3.2	The Standing Orders will be reviewed next in November 2026.
4.	Alignment to CHS Strategic Outlook
4.1	This work is aligned to the CHS Strategic Outcome 2024-2027.
5.	Key Risks
5.1	No risks identified.
6.	Risk Register
6.1	There is no requirement for anything to be added to the Risk Register at this stage.

Agenda Item 13a. CHS-2526-31

7.	Impact on Inequality/Rights
7.1	N/A
8.	Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)
8.1	There is no requirement for engagement and consultation in relation to this paper.
9.	Resource Implications
9.1	There is no specific resource implication associated with this paper.
10.	Appendices
	Appendix 1 – CHS Board Standing Orders

CHILDREN'S HEARINGS SCOTLAND BOARD STANDING ORDERS

1. General

- 1.1 The Board has made the following arrangements for the discharge of its functions. These arrangements are to be referred to as the Standing Orders of the Board.
- 1.2 These Standing Orders take effect until further notice and supersede all prior Standing Orders.
- 1.3 The Standing Orders apply to the Board and its standing committees and unless the Board specifies to the contrary, to any other committees, or sub-committees which may be set up by the Board from time to time but do not apply to working parties or groups.
- 1.4 Standing Orders may be suspended at any meeting of the Board at which the majority of the members present are in favour. Unless expressly agreed otherwise by these members, such suspension will have effect only for the item of business immediately following, and Standing Orders come into force again immediately afterwards. A meeting in which standing orders are suspended must be quorate.

2. The Role of the Board and Responsibilities of Members

- 2.1 The Board – The principal role of the CHS Board is to add value to the organisation through the exercise of strong leadership and control, including:
 - Setting the organisations strategic direction.
 - Establishing and upholding the organisation's governance and accountability framework, including its values and standards of behaviour.
 - Ensuring delivery of the organisations aims and objectives through effective challenge and scrutiny of the CHS' performance across all areas of activity.
- 2.2 The Chair is responsible for the effective operation of the Board, chairing Board meetings when present, and ensuring that all Board business is conducted in accordance with these Standing Orders. The Chair works with the Chief Executive/National Convener and, supported by the Corporate Governance Manager, ensures that key and appropriate issues are discussed by the Board in a timely manner with all the necessary information and advice being made available to the Board to inform the debate and ultimate resolutions.
- 2.3 The Vice Chair deputises for the Chair in their absence for any reason and will do so, until either the existing Chair resumes their duties, or a new Chair is appointed. In fulfilling this part of the role, the Vice Chair, when conducting the functions of the Chair has all functions and authority of the Chair. If the Chair and Vice Chair are both absent, the members present at the meeting may appoint from among themselves a member to function as a Chair for the purpose of chairing that meeting.

2.4 Board members are collectively responsible for:

- Ensuring that CHS complies with legislation.
- Ensuring that the purposes of CHS's vision, purpose and values remain appropriate.
- Agreeing the over-arching strategy for achieving the vision and purpose.
- Approving policy, priorities and key performance measures and evaluating the organisation's performance against those measures on a regular basis.
- Ensuring that systems are in place so that the organisation operates within the financial resources available to it.
- Satisfying themselves that financial control systems, including regular reviews of performance against budget, are in place.
- Satisfying themselves that systems to ensure the welfare (including health and safety), appraisal and good management of staff are in place and are observed.
- Assessing the risks associated with activities and practices, ensuring that the risks are acceptable; and ensuring that appropriate processes, including an annual risk review, are in place to manage risk.
- Supporting the Senior Leadership Team and holding them to account through the CEO/ NC.
- Individually and collectively representing CHS as appropriate and as agreed with the CEO/ NC and the Chair.

3. Board Meetings

- 3.1 The Board decides the dates, times and places of its meetings and meets formally at least four times a year.
- 3.2 Board meetings are held in public except where the Board decides to hold all or part of a meeting in private. Reasons may include but are not limited to:
- Discussing confidential material in connection with a third party.
 - Commercially sensitive discussions.
 - Facilitating the achievement of consensus and preventing media focus on preliminary conclusions which may not feature in the final policies/reports.
 - Matters relating to individual staff.
 - Private discussions with Ministers including confidential advice from or to Ministers via their officials.
 - Areas where CHS would not be required legally to disclose information.
- 3.3 The Board of CHS may wish to convene joint meetings with the Board(s) from one or several organisation(s) as appropriate. At joint meetings, CHS Board should be individually quorate, that is at least half of the currently serving members of the Board must be present. The Chairs of the Boards involved should agree who chairs the joint meeting.

- 3.4 Meetings of the Board can be held through electronic mode which includes, but is not limited to, video conferencing or audio visual/telephone means.

4. Notice of Meetings

- 4.1 The Executive Assistant and Governance Officer notify members of all Board meetings and issues the agenda, minutes, and papers seven calendar days before the meeting.
- 4.2 Members may propose items for the agenda to the Chair and should send those to the Executive Assistant and Governance Officer no later than twenty calendar days before the meeting.
- 4.3 If sufficient notice is not given for an item of business to be included on the agenda, it may be dealt with at the meeting if the Chair rules that there are reasons why it is urgent and gives those reasons. If the Chair rules that the matter is not urgent, it may be included as an item for the next meeting, unless it is withdrawn or dealt with in some other way before then.
- 4.4 Late papers may be discussed at meetings with the permission of the Chair. If papers cannot be issued due to lack of available time, they may be tabled at the meeting.
- 4.5 Lack of service of the notice to any member does not affect the validity of a meeting.

5. Special Meetings of the Board to deal with Exceptional or Urgent Business

- 5.1 The Executive Assistant and Governance Officer arrange for a meeting of the Board to be called if:
- required by the Chair.
 - a request by the CEO/NC and approved by the Chair.
 - a request signed by one third of the Board members is made in writing to the Governance Lead for that purpose. At least three calendar days' notice should be given of any special meeting and of the business proposed for that meeting. No business is to be transacted beyond that specified in the request which called for that special meeting.

6. Quorum

- 6.1 At least half of the currently serving members of the Board must be present to allow the Board to hold a formal meeting. If less than half of the Board members attend a Board meeting, the Board can discuss any items of business but cannot make formal decisions or vote on those items.
- 6.2 The quorum of any Board/committee is determined by the Board as part of agreeing the Board/committee remit.

- 6.3 A member may be present at a Board meeting, count towards the quorum and participate fully by means of video conference or telephone conference call.

7. Sub judice

- 7.1 A Board member may not refer in a public Board meeting to any matter in which legal proceedings are active (as defined in section 2 of the [Contempt of Court Act 1981](#)). If a member raises an issue which, in the view of the Chair is, or may be, sub judice the Chair should require the member to cease discussion of the issue.

8. Conflict of Interest

- 8.1 All Board and committee agendas include a standing item at the start of the meeting inviting Board Members to declare any:
- a) financial interests.
 - b) non-financial interests.
 - c) **interests, financial or non-financial, of other persons.**
- 8.2 If a member declares a financial interest, the member must abstain from participating in the discussion of the relevant item until it is concluded. If a non-financial interest is declared, the member must decide whether to participate in the discussion and decision.
- 8.3 The Board has established a register of members' interests and maintains a regular review of it.
- 8.4 The Register of Interests is published on the CHS website.

9. Adjournment of Meeting

- 9.1 A meeting of the Board or of a committee of the Board may be adjourned by the Chair to any other hour, day, or place. Unless the time and place are specified in the motion for adjournment, the adjournment continues until the next scheduled meeting.

10. Voting

- 10.1 A meeting may decide unanimously or by a majority of the members present. In the latter case, a vote of the members may be taken orally, in writing or by a show of hands at the Chair's discretion. The Chair has a casting vote.
- 10.2 When a decision is agreed to by a majority of the members, the minutes record a unanimous decision. A member dissenting from a majority decision may ask for their dissent to be recorded in the minutes.
- 10.3 A member not present at a meeting at which a decision is taken from which he

or she dissents may raise his or her concerns with the Chair. Such a decision is normally implemented. However, it is within the discretion of the Chair to defer that the matter appears as an item on the next agenda of the Board or committee or arise through the minutes.

11. Ruling

- 11.1 The ruling of the Chair on the conduct of the meeting and the application of Standing Orders are final.

12. Admission of the Public to Board Meetings

- 12.1 Board meetings are open to be observed by members of the public. The dates of such meetings will be advertised on the CHS website.
- 12.2 All meetings which allow public access are held virtually or in venues that are accessible to people with disabilities.
- 12.3 Any members of the public attending these meetings may, upon request, receive a copy of the papers for that meeting.
- 12.4 A member of the public who disrupts the business of the meeting may be required to leave the meeting after due warning has been given by the Chair. Re-admission to that, or other, public meetings held by the Board is at the discretion of the Chair.

13. Minutes

- 13.1 The names of members present at a meeting of the Board or of a committee of the Board is recorded in the minutes.
- 13.2 The minutes record all the items of business considered at Board meetings, the results of any decisions taken and of any divisions and elections which took place.
- 13.3 When the Board holds all or part of a meeting in private, minutes record the items of business taken and any decisions reached during the private items. The papers considered and the details of the Board discussions remain confidential.
- 13.4 Minutes are drawn up and circulated within ten working days to the Chair for approval and shared with the rest of the Board for comment. Minutes are submitted to the next Board meeting for approval. The minutes are published within the following Board papers pack 5 working days before the next Board meeting.
- 13.5 Minutes and other public papers may be circulated to such non-members of the Board on such conditions as the Board may determine. In addition, papers are available under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act and in accordance with the CHS publication scheme.

- 13.6 Board paper packs are published on the CHS website 5 days prior to a Board meeting which include the previous minutes and all papers for consideration and/or approval by the Board.

14. Committees

- 14.1 The Board may appoint committees to exercise functions on its behalf. Such committees may also appoint sub-committees.
- 14.2 Where functions are being conducted by committees or sub-committees, their members act on behalf of the Board.
- 14.3 Where a question arises about whether it is competent for a committee/sub-committee of the Board to consider a particular matter – that is, whether the matter is within the committee'/sub-committee's Terms of Reference, it is for the Board, after consultation with CHS Senior Leadership Team as appropriate, to decide.
- 14.4 The Board appoints the Chair of committees and, after recommendation from a committee, its Vice Chair.
- 14.5 In the absence of the Chair at a committee meeting, his/her Vice Chairs the meeting.
- 14.6 Committees and sub-committees may co-opt members with relevant expertise and knowledge who are not members of the Board. Co-opted members should not make up more than half the membership of committees and sub-committees.
- 14.7 Co-opted members of committees and sub-committees who are not members of the Board may claim certain travelling and other allowances but are not remunerated.
- 14.8 Committees and sub-committees may choose to appoint substitutes drawn from the membership of the Board. The Chair of the Board cannot be a substitute of the People and Culture committee.
- 14.9 Approved minutes of committees and sub-committees' meetings are submitted to the Board for noting as soon as practical.
- 14.10 The Board has set up the following Standing committees:
- Audit and Risk Committee
 - People and Culture Committee
- 14.11 The numbers and names of the Standing committees, their membership and the matters remitted to them may be varied by the Board from time to time.

15. Working Parties or Groups

- 15.1 Working parties or groups may be set up from time to time by the Board.
- 15.2 Working parties or groups need not contain Board members. Where the conclusions of any working party or group require the authority of the Board or a committee before they can be implemented, the working party or group submits a report to the Board or the relevant committee setting forth its recommendations. Working parties or groups should have a Chair, maintain minutes of proceedings and report no less frequently than quarterly to the Board or appropriate standing committee. These reports may be in writing or verbal.
- 16. Exceptional circumstances where Board business may be dealt with by Correspondence**
- 16.1 Where there is urgent business of the Board and it is not practicable to convene a special meeting, the Chair may under exceptional circumstances deal with the matter(s) by correspondence.
- 16.2 In these exceptional circumstances, relevant papers, and recommendations are circulated by email or by post. Every effort should be made to contact Board members, accepting that this may not be possible. The normal rules and procedures apply to special meetings of the Board and decisions are agreed to by a majority of members. The actions/decisions arising from such exceptional circumstances are reported to the subsequent Board meeting.
- 17. Collective Responsibility and Confidentiality**
- 17.1 The Board and committees operate based on collective responsibility for decisions. Members are therefore expected, if questioned on a matter where the Board or a committee has taken a view, to support the position reached.
- 17.2 If members are questioned on matters that fall within the remit of CHS but on which a Board or committee view has not been taken, they may give a personal view but should stress that it does not necessarily reflect the view of CHS. Before doing so, they are advised to consult with the Chair.
- 17.3 All members must maintain confidentiality as detailed in the CHS Code of Conduct and any guidance to that code provided.
- 17.4 All members must fulfil their responsibilities as set out in their terms and conditions of appointment. Any issues in relation to non-performance are addressed as part of the appraisal process for Board members.
- 18. Review of the Standing Orders**
- 18.1 The Board reviews its Standing Orders annually.

Agenda Item 14a. CHS-2526-32

Meeting:	CHS Board
Meeting Date:	10 December 2025
Title:	Draft Board Work Plan 2026
Responsible Executive:	Elliot Jackson, National Convener/CEO
Report Author:	Frieda Cadogan, Governance Officer

1.	Purpose of Report
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to ask the Board to approve the Board Work Plan for 2026.</p> <p>It is an annual requirement to review and update, where necessary, the Board Work Plan, in-line with CHS planning and governance requirements.</p>
1.2	Any member wishing additional information should contact the Executive Lead in advance of the meeting.
2.	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Board last reviewed and approved the Board Work Plan at the beginning of 2025.</p> <p>The Board Work Plan is due for review on an annual basis. This is in line with planning and governance requirements.</p> <p>The recommendation is for the Board to approve the draft work plan.</p> <p>This has been presented and endorsed by SLT at their meeting on 2 December.</p> <p>The document may be subject to minor updates/changes throughout 2026 depending on emerging business throughout the year as outlined in point 3.4 below.</p>
3.	Key Points for Discussion
3.1	There have been no significant changes to the Board Work Plan since the last review at the end of 2024/beginning of 2025.
3.2	As part of ongoing improvements to governance processes and procedures, a new template has been devised for the Board and Committee Work Plans.
3.3	<p>The Board Work Plan has been reviewed alongside the Committee Work Plans and an SLT Work Plan is also being created to align to these.</p> <p>This should give a clearer outline of which statutory items are due at which Board and Committee and in turn, which is due to be presented at each SLT meeting.</p> <p>This should provide colleagues throughout CHS with a clearer plan of which reports are due and when, which should ease with the planning process, both for the governance team and for individual directorates.</p>

Agenda Item 14a. CHS-2526-32

3.4	The Governance Manager, Interim Director of Business and Finance and Governance Office will meet prior to the end of December to further refine this where necessary, however any updates should be minor.
3.5	The Board Work Plan will be reviewed next in November 2026.
4.	Alignment to CHS Strategic Outlook
4.1	This work is aligned to the CHS Strategic Outcome 2024-2027.
5.	Key Risks
5.1	No risks identified.
6.	Risk Register
6.1	There is no requirement for anything to be added to the Risk Register at this stage.
7.	Impact on Inequality/Rights
7.1	N/A
8.	Duty to Inform, Engage and Consult People who use our Services (Internal and External)
8.1	There is no requirement for engagement and consultation in relation to this paper.
9.	Resource Implications
9.1	There is no specific resource implication associated with this paper.
10.	Appendices
	Appendix 1 – CHS Board Work Plan 2026

**Children's Hearings Scotland
Board Work Plan 2026**

1.	28 January 2026	
1.1	ARC Chair Update – verbal	Update
1.2	PaCC Chair Update – verbal	Update
1.3	National Convener/CEO Update Report	Update
1.4	Finance Report	Noting
1.6	Q3 Data Summary Report	Noting
1.7	Q3 Performance Report	Noting
1.8	Biodiversity Report Jan 24-Dec 26 – Jan 2027 following publication Dec 2026	Noting
1.9	Annual Fraud Report and Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy – from ARC	Noting
1.10	Draft Business and Corporate Parenting Plan 2026/27 DRAFT Update	Update
1.11	Draft Budget 2026/27 Update	Update
1.12	PaCC Annual Workplan	Approval
1.13	ARC Annual Workplan	Approval
2.	25 March 2026	
2.1	ARC Chair Update – verbal	Update
2.2	PaCC Chair Update – verbal	Update
2.3	National Convener/CEO Update Report	Update
2.4	Finance Report	Noting
2.5	Q4 Performance Report	Noting
2.6	Q4 Data Summary Report	Noting
2.7	Pay Discussion 3 Year Award 2025-2028 – Next due 2028	Noting
2.8	Gender Pay Gap Report (PaCC) – prior to publication Next due March 2026	Noting
2.9	Gender on Public Boards	Noting
2.10	Budget Approval 2026/27	Approval
2.11	Business Plan and Corporate Parenting Plan 2026/27	Approval
2.12	Review of Financial Regulations	Approval
2.13	Accounting Policies (ARC)	Approval
2.14	ARC Terms of Reference	Approval
2.15	PaCC Terms of Reference	Approval
2.16	Equalities Mainstreaming Outcome Report 2023-2025	Approval
3.	May Strategic Session	
3.1	An opportunity for the Board to focus on development and strategic themes	
4.	17 June 2026	
4.1	ARC Chair Update – verbal	Update
4.2	PaCC Chair Update – verbal	Update
4.3	National Convener/CEO Update Report	Update
4.4	Finance Report	Noting
	• Capital Spending 2026/27	Approval
4.5	Q1 Performance Report	Noting
4.6	Q1 Data Summary Report	Noting
4.7	Children's Participation and Rights Strategy: Annual Review	Noting
4.8	Recruitment Update (June 2023)	Noting
4.9	ARC Annual Report	Approval

4.10	PaCC Annual Report	Approval
4.11	Equalities Outcomes – Every 4 Years Next Due TBC	Approval
4.12	Annual Accounts Performance Report and Governance Statement (FreM) 2025	Approval
5.	23 September 2026	
5.1	ARC Chair Update – verbal	Update
5.2	PaCC Chair Update – verbal	Update
5.3	National Convener/CEO Update Report	Update
5.4	Finance Report	Noting
5.5	5 Year Financial Plan	Approval
5.6	Q2 Performance Report	Noting
5.7	Q2 Data Summary Report	Noting
5.8	Review of SG Framework – when required by SG	Noting
5.9	Corporate Calendar 2027	Noting
5.10	CHSLA Prospectus – Timing TBC	Noting
5.11	Annual Report and Accounts (ARC) – PRIVATE BOARD	Approval
5.12	Impact Report – PRIVATE BOARD – publish October	Approval
5.13	Feedback Loop	Approval
5.14	Feedback and Complaints Annual Report	Approval
6.	12/13 November – Strategic Session	
6.1	An opportunity for the Board to focus on development and strategic themes	
6.2	Board Review of own effectiveness - TBC	
7.	2 December 2026	
7.1	ARC Chair Update – verbal	Update
7.2	PaCC Chair Update – verbal	Update
7.3	National Convener/CEO Update Report	Update
7.4	Finance Report	Noting
7.5	Public Services Reform Act Statement	Noting
7.6	Board Standing Orders	Approval
7.7	Board Work Plan – year ahead	Approval
7.8	Childrens Rights and Inclusion Strategy (every 3 years – Last 2024)	Approval
7.9	UNCRC Report Planning	Approval