

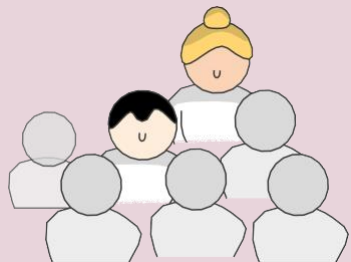
2018 | 19

# ANNUAL IMPACT *report*



The Children's Panel - life changing.

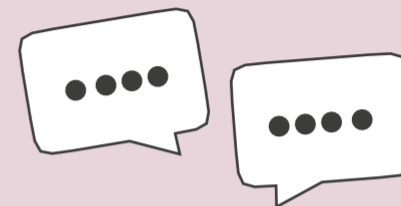
recruiting



training



supporting



Improving outcomes for  
children and young people

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# INTRODUCTION



*“ We proudly work together with other organisations concerned with the welfare of Scotland’s infants, children and young people. ”*

Our vision at Children’s Hearings Scotland is to work towards a Scotland in which all of our children and young people grow up loved, safe, respected, and able to realise their full potential. Our 3,000-strong volunteer community, by making decisions in children’s hearings, and supporting and training those who make those decisions, are united by this vision and their commitment to ensuring the best outcomes for infants, children and young people.



On behalf of the Children’s Hearings Scotland Board, I want to thank them for their contribution. By volunteering with us, they are making a difference both within Scotland and importantly, their local community.

We do not operate in isolation. We proudly work together with other organisations concerned with the welfare of Scotland’s infants, children and young people and we actively seek opportunities to be guided by those with lived experience of children’s hearings. I would therefore also like to thank those who have collaborated with us over the last year.

**Garry Coutts**, Chair, CHS Board

It has been another year of significant progress at Children’s Hearings Scotland and I am proud to present some of the highlights of the hard work of our volunteer community and staff have undertaken in this Impact Report.

Our ability to effectively train and support our volunteer community was an area of substantial development this year, with the launch of our Children’s Hearings Scotland Learning Academy, IT helpdesk, and new dedicated support and development for Area Support Teams. Our digital programme also continued to take major steps forward, with engagement with our volunteer community and stakeholders being a key priority for this strategy.



Panel and Area Support Team members across Scotland have continued to make an amazing contribution to their local communities by listening to the views of children and young people and making decisions that place their safety and welfare at the centre. The effort, commitment and compassion they bring to their roles mean they merit recognition and praise. Thank you to everyone who works so hard to make our community so successful.

**Boyd McAdam**, National Convener and Chief Executive

# WHO WE ARE



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

Our activities focus on recruiting, training and supporting volunteer Panel Members who make decisions in children's hearings, and volunteer Area Support Teams (ASTs) who provide support and direction at a local level.

We have 3,000 volunteers in our community, across six different volunteer roles:

- **Area Convener** – leads ASTs and work with partners at a local level.
- **Depute Area Convener** – supports the Area Convener and manages complaints and concerns.
- **Learning and Development Coordinator** – organises Panel Member learning at a local level.
- **Panel Member** – takes part in children's hearings and makes legal decisions about the care and protection of infants, children and young people.
- **Panel Practice Advisor** – maintains the high quality of our Panel Member practice through observation and feedback.
- **Panel Representative** – a local point of contact for Panel Members, representing their interests with the ASTs. Panel Representatives also allocate Panel Members to children's hearings.

This volunteer community, and the staff who work at CHS (called the National Team), are led by the National Convener and Chief Executive. The National Convener is responsible for the recruitment, training, retention and support of Panel Members.

# OUR VALUES



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

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

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

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

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

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

# 2018-19 IN NUMBERS



430

new Panel Members  
joined our volunteer  
community.

Our volunteer  
community sat on

31,653

children's hearings.

564

infants, children and young  
people in emergency or high  
risk situations were  
supported by children's  
hearings.

13,667

infants, children and young  
people were supported by  
children's hearings.

503

requests for Panel Member  
continuity were authorised,  
making sure children and young  
people's requests for some  
consistency in supporting their  
needs and rights were taken  
into account.

At least

360,000

volunteer hours were given  
by our volunteer community.

# CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS



Every year we recruit new volunteers to join the CHS community. They are appointed for a period of three years, after which they can choose to volunteer for a further term and be reappointed.

In 2018, 1,514 people applied from across the country to be a Panel Member, of which 430 were appointed.

To mark the contribution of our volunteers and the difference they make to the lives of infants, children and young people in their communities, a range of national and local recognition activities and events took place throughout the year.

We also celebrated Volunteers' Week, which runs from 1 to 7 June every year, by launching a set of films that explain the amazing work our volunteers do! This campaign helped boost the number of people registering their interest in becoming a volunteer with CHS.

Over  
200  
Panel Members were reappointed in 2018 for a further three years.



# FOCUS ON PANEL PRACTICE ADVISORS



Our 190 Panel Practice Advisors (PPAs) are a key part of making sure children's hearings are high quality and deliver the best they can for infants, children and young people. They carry out observations of children's hearings and give feedback to Panel Members about what was good and what can be improved.

Building on work from last year, we have been busy developing the PPA role and revising the training that PPAs receive.

- In the last year, our new PPA forum, which brings together PPAs from across Scotland to share ideas, met four times.
- Developments have seen both PPAs and Panel Members attending pre-service training, the introduction of a PPA Quality Assurance course and more bespoke PPA training opportunities being delivered by the Children's Hearings Scotland Learning Academy.
- A reference group involving PPAs worked to update national policy to support quality improvement and redesign our observation templates. The CHS digital programme will see a new observation and feedback report being delivered, which will allow the collection of key quality improvement and support information; thereby ensuring that observations can thematically comment on both training effectiveness and practice delivery.

79%

of Panel Members now agree that observation and feedback helps them improve their practice in children's hearings. In 2017, only 67% agreed.





# WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY



## **Why they volunteer...**

*"It gives me a sense of pride knowing that, through my involvement as a Panel Member, I'm doing something of real value for the children and young people in my local community."*

Community Survey Respondent, 2019

## **On local support...**

*"I think we have a great local team in place and I know where to go if I need support."*

Community Survey Respondent, 2019

## **On training...**

*"The training is good, I have developed skills and my confidence has improved greatly by volunteering with CHS."*

Community Survey Respondent, 2019

## **About observations...**

*"All of the feedback that I have received to date has been extremely positive and reassuring."*

Community Survey Respondent, 2019

## **The volunteering experience...**

*"I honestly believe that the current CHS set up is providing me with the 'tools' and information that I require, to carry out my duties and responsibilities as a Panel Member, at this time. This, in turn, enhances my experience as a volunteer."*

Community Survey Respondent, 2019.

# FOCUS ON THE LEARNING ACADEMY



Having the right skills, knowledge and values is a key part of both making effective decisions for infants, children and young people, and supporting the Panel Members who make those decisions. That's why in January 2019 we launched our new Children's Hearings Scotland Learning Academy (Learning Academy).

Operated in partnership with West Lothian College, the Learning Academy provides a range of online and face to face learning and development opportunities that ensure our Panel and AST members are well-trained and skilled to undertake their roles.

The Learning Academy launched with 10 face-to-face and 12 online learning courses.

We worked with Who Cares? Scotland to involve the contributions of care and hearings experienced children and young people in our pre-service training for new Panel Members.

*“One of our key values is to ensure that all children and young people are at the very heart of everything we do. Not only does the Learning Academy offer a range of training that will enhance Panel Member practice in children's hearings, but it offers real opportunity for collaboration.”*

**Boyd McAdam,**  
National Convener and Chief Executive



# WHY I VOLUNTEER – HANNAH'S STORY



*Twenty two year old Hannah is a fourth year law student and has been a Panel Member since May 2019. When she's not studying for her degree, Hannah works part time for a chemical manufacturing company and volunteers as a Panel Member.*

*On why she got involved, Hannah said, "I decided to volunteer for the Children's Panel because I really enjoyed a Family Law module I studied at university and thought it would be a great way to get relevant experience in the area. I also thought it would be something that I would enjoy and be able to fit in with my work and university schedule."*

*Hannah believes the strength in the Children's Hearing System lies in its focus of keeping the child or young person at the heart of every discussion and decision.*

*She adds, "It can be so rewarding to know you are actively making an effort to try and improve circumstances in a young person's life, and how these efforts follow through and you are able to see a real improvement in a child's circumstances because of measures put in place by the Panel."*

95%

*of new Panel Members believe that the training they received has equipped them to carry out their role.*

*Hannah was surprised just how much being a Panel Member gave her and helped her grow. She said "The Children's Panel has had a massive impact on me – far bigger than I ever thought it would. Not only have I met some of the kindest people ever, I've also gained a fountain of knowledge in so many different areas."*

# COLLABORATION IN OUR COMMUNITY



Every year, we bring together different groups from within our volunteer community to share ideas, discuss developments, strengthen networks, and give access to support.

## Area Convener Liaison Group

This group met five times in 2018/19, including a two day development session which was attended by young people with lived experience, the Independent Care Review, and Maree Todd MSP Minister for Children and Young People.

## Learning & Development Coordinator Forum

This is a new forum which met for the first time in October 2018 and focuses on how best to deliver local learning and development.

## Retention and Recruitment Reference Group

This advisory group met three times in 2018/19 and brings together people from across our volunteer community to steer, support and monitor the quality of procedures for recruitment and reappointment, and our strategies for volunteer retention.

## Clerks Network Group

Clerks are local authority employees who provide a range of administrative and support functions to our Area Conveners and volunteers locally. The Clerks Network Group met four times in 2018/19.

## Digital Programme Reference Group

This group, drawn from our volunteer community, provides views on the delivery of our digital strategy.

## PPA Forum

New this year, this forum met four times. It brings together PPAs from across the country and share ideas and improvements for quality assurance.

# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP



CHS is just one of many organisations involved in the Children's Hearings System. We work closely with partners, projects and groups at both a national and local level to improve children's hearings and to consider how the wider system can best support the wellbeing of infants, children and young people.

## Our Hearings Our Voice (OHOV)

OHOV is a board of children and young people who scrutinise the Children's Hearings System, identifying and recommending improvements. We support this work through our membership of the OHOV Operational Group.

## Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP)

CHIP brings together organisations to share knowledge and improve the Children's Hearings System. One such improvement, Panel Member Profiles, which provide children, young people and their families with an image and information about Panel Members, began roll out this year after successful pilots in 2017.

## Youth Justice Improvement Board

a board that aims to promote a culture of improvement across national youth justice systems. It focuses on data, measuring outcomes and how all aspects of youth justice can better work together.

# MOVING TOWARDS OUR DIGITAL FUTURE



CHS and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) are working together to create new digital systems that will improve the process of children's hearings, allow more volunteer functions to be carried out online and enable both organisations to understand data from the Children's Hearings System like never before.

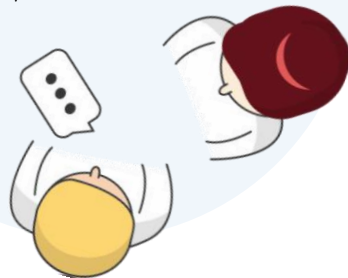
2018/19 has been a year of substantial engagement, both in terms of the development of these digital systems, and the preparations that need to take place before the new systems are launched in 2020. In the last year we:

- Produced a promotional film for our volunteer community profiling our digital plans.
- Grew our Digital Consultation Bank to 200 members. This bank tests and provides feedback on IT systems that will be used by our volunteer community.
- Launched a new helpdesk to support our volunteer community with IT queries, issues and questions. This new helpdesk ensures volunteers have IT support at evenings and weekends.

Volunteers from all roles within our community have engaged with us, helping to develop and test new online services for launch in 2020. These include: expenses, observations, volunteer support and management, training and events and complaints and concerns.

409

queries were made to our new IT helpdesk by the volunteer community in its first 11 months.



# DEVELOPING CHS



CHS is committed to improving and developing all that it does to ensure that children’s hearings, our volunteering experience, and our organisation are as good as they can be.

To...

We...

help children, young people and their families feel more comfortable going in to hearings.

started to roll out Panel Member Profiles which provide a little information on who their Panel Members are before a children’s hearing.

ensure that everyone in our volunteer community knows how to handle personal information safely and securely.

rolled out online General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) training and introduced it in to pre-service training.

promote and celebrate the roles undertaken by our volunteers.

expanded our social media presence to include Facebook and Instagram.

support our Area Conveners to carry out their role.

initiated a programme of 1:1 support for Area Conveners with the CHS Senior Management Team, and introduced an annual volunteer leadership weekend to enable development and peer to peer networking.

demonstrate our commitment to recruiting inclusively and accessibly.

signed up to the Disability Confident Committed scheme.

enable timely decision making in children’s hearings.

introduced quicker, streamlined procedures for Panel Member continuity.

support our volunteer community to be skilled and knowledgeable.

introduced and delivered a range of new learning opportunities including courses on Neglect, ACEs, Quality Assurance, Management and Leadership.

# THANK YOU



“It is people – unified by a shared focus on making things better for our young people – that really matter. By working together with imagination, courage and skill, the CHS people will improve the experiences and results for children and families.”

- Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Children and Young People





# 3,000

volunteers giving their time to support infants, children and young people in local communities across Scotland.



child centered



fair



respectful



creative



challenging



open



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