



Children's Hearing Scotland **2022**

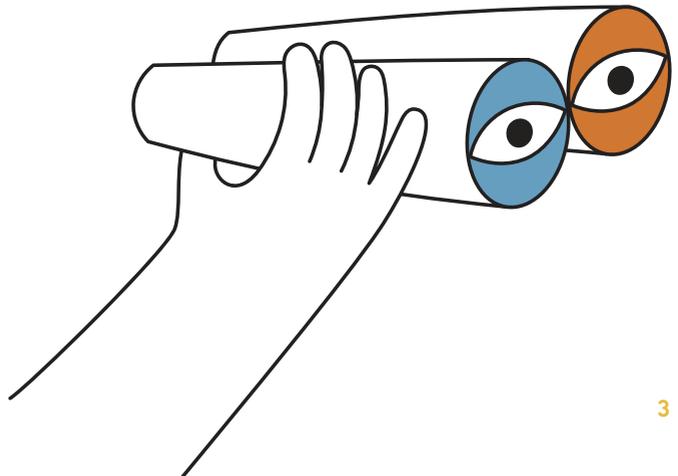
VISION



**SCOTLAND HAS AN AMBITION,
LAID OUT IN THE PROMISE, MADE
AFTER THE INDEPENDENT CARE
REVIEW, TO BE THE BEST PLACE IN
THE WORLD TO GROW UP.**

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY VISION?

When we talk about the CHS Vision, we mean working out what 'the best' looks like, and what we at CHS will do, now and going forward, to make sure this happens.



INTRODUCTION

Everyone has the right to be safe, to be loved, and looked after. Sometimes, for different reasons, people need help to make these things happen. If children and young people aren't able to get what they need, then they and their families need help in working out how to make things better, and making decisions about what to do next.

In Scotland, some of these decisions are made by a unique group of people. These are three specially trained lay tribunal members, commonly known as Panel Members. These Panel Members are drawn from the same communities across Scotland that the children are from.

Our purpose is simple – to listen to each child who comes to a hearing, and to make decisions to achieve the best possible outcome for them, and their family.

Children's Hearings Scotland recruits, trains and supports the people who sit on these panels. We are the only system in the world that works this way. Our purpose is simple – to listen to each child who comes to a hearing, and to make decisions to achieve the best possible outcome for them, and their family.



I'M ELLIOT JACKSON, NATIONAL CONVENER AND CEO OF CHILDREN'S HEARINGS SCOTLAND.

Scotland has an ambition to be the best place in the world to grow up.

CHS is committed to Keeping **The Promise** made by Scotland to its children and their families. Together with you, I will continue to do all that I can to ensure those infants, children and young people who need our help in the hearings system, grow up safe, cherished, nurtured and loved.

At the moment, there are about 10,000 children involved in the hearing system. Each one of those children has individual needs, wants, fears, likes, dislikes and experiences. And they all have something in common – that in some aspect of their life, there is a concern about their care, well-being or protection.

We have 2500 tribunal members, supported by around 500 Area Support Team colleagues, who sit on dozens of hearings across Scotland every day of the week.

In travelling around the country meeting members of the CHS Community, it was clear that **The Promise** means different things to different people. With the work of the Hearings System Working Group underway, I wanted to share some thoughts with you on our vision for a reshaped Children's Hearings System.

THE VISION

When we talk about the CHS Vision, we mean working out what 'the best' looks and feels like, and what we at CHS will do, now and going forward, to make sure we deliver on it.

At its heart, our Vision is about how we can strengthen, improve and truly make a sustainable difference to children's lives.

Our vision for the hearing system is that:

- we will provide, uphold and promote children's rights;*
- provide a child and family friendly care and justice space;*
- and participation is at the heart of the hearing system*

To deliver this Vision for every child and young person at their hearing, now and in the future, we will need to keep challenging ourselves. We know, from a range of different sources and data, that we need to change some things. We also know that society is changing, and what childhood looks like, and the way we approach children's rights, can be different from than before.

Much of the work that we have done, amid the challenges and uncertainty, has been a direct response to the 80 calls to action laid out in the Promise Report. We have seen, alongside those challenges, the depth of our community's commitment to keeping children and young people safe through a global pandemic.

I can't stress this enough – we have a truly unique opportunity to shape and inform a redesigned Children's Hearings System in a way that would make Kilbrandon proud.

SO WHAT DO WE SEE SCOTLAND'S CHILDREN'S HEARINGS SYSTEM LOOKING LIKE IN 2025?

1. A greater investment in Family Support at a local level leading to much earlier intervention for children and their families on the edges of care.
 2. An amplified voice for children, young people, and their families, giving them **agency over their future**.
 3. A strengthened role for panel members, where powers of enforcement and accountability lead directly to better outcomes.
 4. The inclusion of 16/17 year-olds in the Hearings system to keep them out of the adult criminal justice system.
 5. A review of the legislative framework to make things easier for children, young people and their families to navigate; and
 6. Bespoke 'person centred' Hearings where choice about where, when and how remains key for everyone involved.
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CHALLENGES

One of the key CHS values is 'challenging' and the work that has already begun has been just that. We must strive to constantly ask ourselves the difficult questions and offer big, bold and brave solutions.

Some of these questions include:

- How do we ensure that panel members working with children and young people in the most complex of circumstances have the right training and experience to fully engage with their needs?*
- How do we work with our partners and other agencies to ensure that our decisions lead to better outcomes?*
- How do we successfully ensure that children, young people and families consistently feed in their experience of the system so that their voices are heard?*
- How do we support all of the children and families who need us right now, whilst transitioning to a new model?*

HOW THE CHS COMMUNITY CAN SHARE THEIR PERSPECTIVE ON SHAPING THE FUTURE.

To help understand and answer questions like these from an external perspective, we will seek feedback from our partners and stakeholders; we will consider any learning that we can take from other Tribunals in Scotland and beyond; and we will review relevant research reports and data.

There are four ways in which the CHS Community can currently share their perspective on shaping the future. These are:

Firstly, consultation and engagement.

We are currently undertaking our consultation and engagement programme. Look out for various consultations in your inbox. Look out for various local engagement sessions to understand more detail on key themes, and also look out for what we call pulse surveys. This is where we will come out to you quickly to get a view on an issue or a solution.

Secondly, the Hearing System Redesign Groups.

The Hearing System Redesign Groups are focused on; before, during and after the hearing. We have over 20 panel members and staff involved in the work of the hearing system redesign. Look out for updates on their work.

Thirdly, research on key aspects of the system.

The HSWG will likely commission research on key aspects of the system, to help learn from others or to shine a light on key topics that need more detailed consideration;

Finally, Sheriff David Mackie's hosted webinars.

Sheriff David Mackie's hosted webinars. The working group is keen to build upon the first very well-attended webinar. He will share with us his thinking as we progress through the remainder of 2022. Look out for the dates. You can also emails us your thoughts about any of this work on feedback@chs.gov.scot

CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

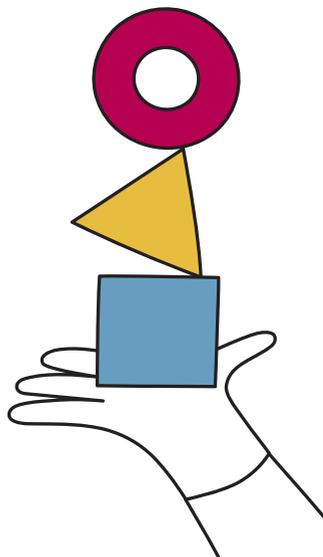
Consultation and engagement with the CHS Community will be an iterative process throughout the next few years. My sense is that the HSWG will set out the recommendations for the 'what', leaving the how for us to 'work' through together.

The Hearings System Working Group will report in 2023 and from there we will transition over the coming months and years through a mix of practice and legislative changes.

Until then, we need to focus on the here and now. Infants, children and young people across Scotland need our help, support and protection, today, tomorrow and the next day. It doesn't stop. We will work tirelessly with the CHS Community in an open and collaborative way to support and empower you to continue to make the best decisions for children, young people and their families.

In closing, one thing that has remained constant over the history of the hearing system is the dedication and commitment of our volunteers, who come from diverse backgrounds but have one thing in common: to make a difference. We all share a desire to make Scotland the best place for children and young people to grow up.

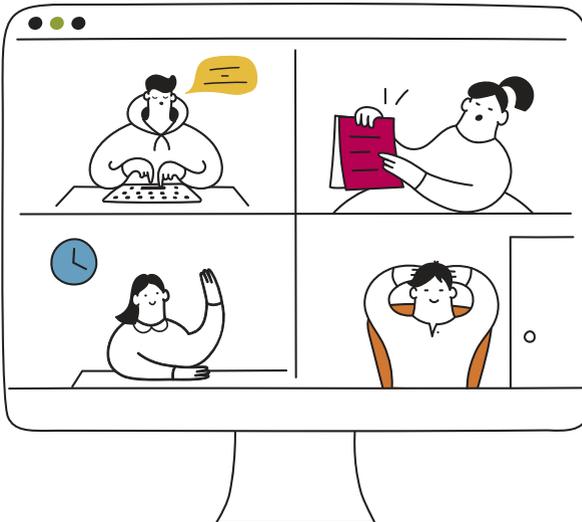
We want to hear from you, and you can find out all the ways you can get involved, on our website - www.chscotland.gov.uk/thevision



CREATIVE

By moving hearings online, working together, and adapting to virtual and digital systems, our volunteers embodied the CHS value of being creative.

As we transition over the coming months and years, we'll be working with the existing volunteers in an open, collaborative, creative way to build a sustainable model for tribunal members so that we do **all** that we can to support and empower volunteers to continue providing the best outcomes for children and young people. We still need to meet the needs of children and young people who need us now.



The changes will take time to finalise, legislate for and to make happen.

Across Scotland, infants, children and young people need our help, support and protection, today, tomorrow and the next day. It doesn't stop. Our ask

is that whilst we take time to shape the Children's Hearing System of the future in the image of Kilbrandon principles, we continue to work together to make Scotland truly the best place to grow up in.

In five years from now, when attending a hearing, I will feel comfortable and welcome entering the room because I already know who the panel members are. I have seen a photo of them and I know what they do to keep themselves busy i.e. hobbies.

I will be given a chance to say what I want to happen in my life. The panel members will be interested and listen to what positive experiences I have had and what I've achieved since my last panel.

LEWIS, OUR HEARINGS, OUR VOICE

I'M KATHARINA KASPER, THE CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN'S HEARINGS SCOTLAND BOARD.

I have been in role since April 2022 and I've had the opportunity to meet and engage with our volunteer community, CHS staff and our partner agencies who are the three pillars on which CHS is built.

I'm truly humbled by the passion and dedication of CHS volunteer community, including panel members, area conveners, area support teams, practice panel advisors, training facilitators and many others. These volunteers who so generously donate their time, energy and skills do not do it for personal gain, but because they want to help and make a difference to the lives of the most vulnerable members of our society.

For many of the amazing people who volunteer with CHS, it is truly a vocation which is reflected in the length of their service in an ever changing world. This commitment is genuinely remarkable. Kilbrandon's vision of a shared community responsibility for infants, children and young people is and will always remain at the core of the CHS system. Behind the scenes, CHS staff worked tirelessly to enable this community involvement to happen on a daily basis through the children's hearings.

We share an unparalleled desire to honour the volunteers' commitment and ensure that the volunteers are equipped with everything they need to make their contribution all that it can be. CHS does not operate in a vacuum. It is a complex system of public bodies and other agencies that need to work effectively together to improve the outcomes for infants, children and young people, of which CHS forms an important part.

Data and our experience tells us that society's challenges have evolved, and so the CHS system needs to evolve in order to make it sustainable and right for the years to come. We know from a variety of sources where

and how the current system could be improved to deliver the best possible outcomes for Scotland's infants, children and young people.

These insights include findings from the Independent Care Review, the work of the Promise and calls to action from Our Hearings, Our Voice, and are also based on the feedback and engagement with our 3000 plus strong volunteer community. This means we know what we need to improve. We also understand that the change needs to be transformational because anything less than that will not deliver the ambition that we have for CHS.

These volunteers who so generously donate their time, energy and skills do not do it for personal gain, but because they want to help and make a difference to the lives of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Scotland's infants, children and young people deserve the best possible version of the Children's Hearing System. As we are embarking on this transformational change, we are starting from a position of strength. We have demonstrated over the past two years how resilient and adaptable we are.

We also know that it can be challenging to maintain the quality and stability of the day-to-day operations whilst fundamentally changing the underlying structures and processes, so your resilience, commitment and dedication will be

more important than ever. This change will not happen overnight. We need time to get it right. Work is already underway through the Hearing System Working Group and other initiatives which are progressing through CHS, and we need to continue to move at pace. We are in a good place because we have our partners with us at the table, and at the drawing board.

We have one chance to get it right for Scotland's infants, children and young people to keep the promise and to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up.



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- *The CHS of the future will be more resilient and sustainable through listening to its volunteer community.*

 - *The system will be better equipped to provide a consistent, high quality service for children and their families who need it.*

 - *The service people receive from CHS will be outcome focused, reliable and consistent in quality.*
- *Whatever the circumstances and wherever in Scotland the family lives, the new structure will be able to better support the panel members of the future to make the best decisions with that family, and make community involvement more sustainable.*

 - *Having the right support framework in place will better serve our existing dedicated volunteers and enable a more diverse range of future volunteers.*

A children's hearing will be as inclusive and as fair as possible ensuring the voice of infants, children and young people are at the heart of the process every step of the way. Hearings are fully co-produced. That means they run in partnership with children's Hearings Scotland, Local Authorities, SCRA with young people fully involved in all the decisions.

LIAM, CHS PARTICIPATION GROUP

I'M GAVIN SIMPSON, CHILDREN'S HEARINGS SCOTLAND, VOLUNTEER.

My name is Gavin Simpson, and I've been volunteering with Children's Hearings Scotland now for 12 years, and I've worked in a few different roles.

I know that I've developed a passion to play my part in working to improve outcomes for those children and families that need help, and I've seen that same passion from my colleagues right across the organisation, looking out for children and families at the very heart of our communities.

We've heard how the next five years are going to be hugely demanding for us as an organisation. It will be important for us to take our panel member communities with us – how will we do that?

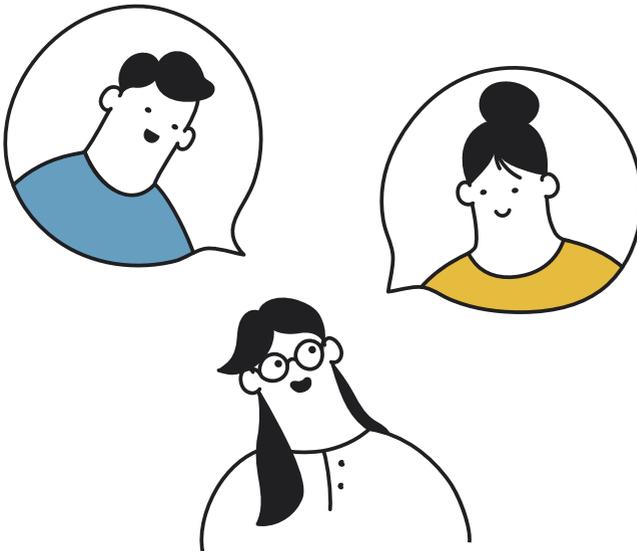
It will be important for us to share information widely, being open and candid, adding local relevance and context. We will want to eliminate surprises and prepare the ground with you explaining the transition.

I've developed a passion to play my part in working to improve outcomes for those children and families that need help, and I've seen that same passion from my colleagues right across the organisation...

We will be visible, we will be present, and we will be available to take your questions because we want to bring direction and we want to signpost changes that are coming before they happen. We want to make the big picture really relevant, bringing local and national together, being the bridge between what is going on in the national team and what is happening in the local areas, and we will work with you. Looking ahead and being honest about what's coming with the redesign and the modernisation of the wider care system of which Children's Hearing Scotland is just one, but one hugely important part of this work.

We are beginning to understand the size of the change journey. We face a change which will need all of us in these next five years. Our panel members of the future will:

- *have a deeper understanding of new and emerging legislation*
- *experience a greater level of specialist training and development*
- *be empowered knowing that the decisions party members take are the right ones*
- *And know, too, that these decisions will be fully implemented.*



Panel members and the wider panel community have a strong track record of delivering change. We know that we have the right people in our community, and this is really all about supporting our people better. We can embrace with confidence what will be asked of us. We want the very best for the children, young people and families and we will need each and every one of our panel members together.

We have a huge and exciting new system to deliver as we prepare for the redesign and the scale of the modernisation change coming. A change of this size can feel daunting, but taking time to re-imagine how the future could look is very important. To do this efficiently and properly, we need to be bold, we need to be confident, and we need to be brief. The redesign and modernisation will require us to look in-depth at what we do and how we do it, and in doing so, we must retain every ounce of good that we have in the system, retaining every granule of what we know works. We must harness the panel know-how that we have in spades, and our communities, whether these skills are from experienced or newly trained panel members.

As these changes take place, we must continue to be open minded because we do not have the answers. There isn't a detailed roadmap, only the important direction of starting principles. We've just launched the biggest listening and participation program in our history, and this is supported by an expert independent partner, and they will ensure that we listen like never before.

We're set to listen deeper, listen wider, and listen with no holds barred. Because this is about designing a new organisation, a whole new care system. This is absolutely building on what we do know and all about preparing for a better future for children young people and their families, and the panel members who support them.

I believe a children's hearing in the future will look disability friendly, with ramps, aids and sensory toys for people who are neuro-divergent. There will be children's advice boards for young people who want to make a change and for young people suffering with mental health issues. There will be a large 'OHOV' display with tips for young people and opportunities to get involved in projects. There will be many more young people friendly opportunities of support and advice that meet the needs of young people all across Scotland.

DAME MARSHA, OUR HEARINGS, OUR VOICE



THE VISION OF SOME OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

A children's hearing will be child-centred. It will be a safe space for children and young people to share their thoughts and experiences without any feelings of worry or nervousness. Children and young people will be able to express their ideas and emotions within the hearing in any way they want without fear of being judged. Everyone in the hearing will be at the same level and talking in a way that everyone understands, especially the young person. Children's hearings will be held in rooms with paintings and plants or anything else that will help set the child or young person's mind at ease.

HELENE,
CHS PARTICIPATION GROUP

I think in five years I would like the hearing system to be around the child who they are discussing the future of... and they have a day around that child because if they don't, then there is no point in a hearing system.

LIAM, OUR HEARINGS,
OUR VOICE

My vision of a children's hearing in five years would be... beanbags in the hearing room, it would be very colourful and we can sit wherever we like. There will be posters telling us about the options we have, and complicated language that is difficult to understand, won't be used. There will be lots of eye catching things around the room so that if you don't like looking people in the eye then you can look at other things. That helps you to distract yourself if you need to take your head off what's happening for a minute.

ABBIE, OUR HEARINGS,
OUR VOICE

5 years from now, children's hearings will be child centred with a safe comfortable zone, for our young people to open up and have their voices heard. The language used with in the hearing and reports will be as of what a child can understand, none of these big fancy words! My vision for our young people who find themselves in front of the panel? That, instead of feeling scared and upset, but they will feel empowered and included in choices about their life.

BEV,
CHS PARTICIPATION GROUP

CHILDREN'S HEARINGS SCOTLAND

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