



Transforming Learning to Transform Lives

CHS Learning Strategy 2024-2029

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Foreword

Since joining CHS as the National Learning Manager in January 2024, I have been blown away by the commitment and passion of everyone across the organisation to deliver improved outcomes for Scotland's children. It is a pleasure to join CHS during this exciting period of change and growth, where there is such positive energy and ambition to make a difference.

Learning is about growth and improving our capabilities to improve outcomes for both ourselves and others. As an organisation it is important that we also review and reflect on how we can improve our learning offer to equip and support our people to deliver on these ambitions.

In this strategy you will see bold and positive objectives to re-imagine and reinvigorate learning, and to achieve innovative, engaging, and accessible learning opportunities for all our people. Innovation is important, but so too is impact, therefore all the approaches set out in this strategy will be underpinned by a strong commitment to delivering tangible outcomes.

I believe in the power of learning to drive change and, through the delivery of this strategy, I hope we can support and empower our people to transform the lives of the infants, children, and young people at the heart of CHS.

from our National Learning Manager, Fiona Geddes

Introduction

Over the past eleven years CHS has successfully trained over 4000 Panel Members to serve on Children's Hearings. During that time there has been substantial legislative change, such as the passing of the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#), [Children \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#), the [UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#), and amendments to the [Children's Hearings \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#) in relation to safeguarders, advocacy, and participation rights. There have also been several unique projects, including the creation and delivery of the PDA Children's Hearings in Scotland: Panel Members SCQF level 7 in 2013; establishment of the Learning Academy brand in 2018; an expedited shift to a digital approach during the pandemic; and most recently the organisation's transition to a new regional Tribunal Delivery model. The learning team have been instrumental in supporting these changes throughout.

There are significant changes still to come, driven by work resulting from The Promise, and the Hearings for Children Report, as well as ongoing legislative change such as the [Children \(Care and Justice\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#).

Additionally, CHS is currently undergoing considerable change internally, focused on delivering an enhanced, quality-led and efficiency-driven Children's Hearings System with infants, children and young people front and centre. Therefore, the principles of our Children's Rights & Participation Strategy of respect, inclusion, empowerment of, and accountability to, people with lived experience of the hearings system, will also inform and shape the delivery of our Learning Strategy.

Following a period of internal review, consideration of what children and young people have told us, and consultation with external partners and volunteers, this Learning Strategy has been developed to ensure we are future focused. It is designed to provide a learning function that is not only able to respond to change and is robust enough to endure it, but is proactively driving innovation and transformation, whilst always maintaining high standards of delivery to equip and support our people to deliver in the best interests of Scotland's children.

Learning at CHS

At CHS our vision is for all infants, children, young people, and their families to be safe, loved, and supported to realise their full potential. Through learning we need to ensure that our people are supported and equipped to deliver that vision.

Learning Vision

To deliver transformative learning solutions that support the realisation of potential, of our people, the organisation, the Children's Hearings System, and ultimately the infants, children, and young people at the heart of CHS.

Learning Purpose

To provide a learning offer that equips, supports, and enables our people to make a positive impact on the lives of infants, children, and young people within the hearings system.



Our Approach



We will be:

CREATIVE

to deliver innovative, engaging, and impactful learning experiences

COLLABORATIVE

to achieve high quality and authentic learning that reflects the realities of practice

PROACTIVE

to drive, influence, and support continual improvement and positive outcomes

ADAPTIVE

to individual and organisational needs

OUTCOMES CENTRED

our primary focus will always be on delivering tangible outcomes that make a positive difference to the children and young people at the heart of CHS.

Strategic Aims

Over the course of the next 5 years, we will work towards delivering a learning offer that is valuable and valued by our people, the wider sector, and Scotland.

Our strategic aims, set out below, are aligned with our organisational strategic themes: delivering positive outcomes, valuing our people, and driving transformation.

Learning Strategic Aims	CHS Strategic Theme(s)
Set our people up for success, ensuring they are both equipped and supported to fulfil their potential.	Valuing our People
Deliver tangible outcomes: transferring learning into practice and supporting continual development, to achieve the best possible outcomes for infants, children, and young people.	Delivering Positive Outcomes
Provide an excellent learner experience that is engaging, rewarding, accessible, and impactful.	Driving Transformation Valuing our People
Collaborate to maximise the knowledge, skills, and experience of our people, the wider sector, and those with lived experience to elevate our learning offer and in turn our organisational expertise and ability to deliver positive outcomes.	Valuing our People Driving Transformation Delivering Positive Outcomes
Embed and support a culture of reflective practice to support continual improvement and growth.	Valuing our People Delivering Positive Outcomes
Be agile and adaptive to both learner and organisational needs.	Valuing our People Driving Transformation
Align with CHS vision and purpose to deliver consistent standards of practice to support equitable outcomes across the country for infants, children, and young people.	Driving Transformation Delivering Positive Outcomes

Driving Transformation

Over the course of the next five years our work will focus on four key areas: learning design, quality assurance, leveraging technology, and sustainable infrastructure.

Learning Design

Outstanding learning design is the key component to any successful learning offer, to achieve improved outcomes for both the individual and the organisation. Consequently, excellent learning design will be at the heart of our approach over the next five years.

Learner needs and behaviours have evolved over the course of the past eleven years, and, as a result, so have approaches to learning design. Therefore, a key deliverable of this strategy will be reviewing, refining, and elevating our current learning programme to achieve a curriculum that delivers **high quality**, **compelling**, and **applicable** content through **accessible** and **efficient** learner pathways.

To achieve this we will:

- adopt a holistic approach to learning design, integrating knowledge, skills, and experience to strengthen learning outcomes
- ensure learners are active participants in the learning process and are empowered to construct their own knowledge and understanding through exploration and experimentation
- increase focus on the integration of skills practice across our learning programme, providing learners with the opportunity to tackle complex scenarios, reflective of the performance required in real settings, in a safe and supportive environment
- give children and young people a voice in the training room as well as the hearing room, to support the creation of authentic and compelling content
- create learning environments where people feel valued and empowered to be independent problem solvers and decision makers, who can make a positive impact
- build a dynamic and engaging learning offer that incorporates a broad variety of learning solutions to increase accessibility and provide great learning



experiences

- make in-person sessions matter: create valuable and memorable learning experiences where learners can connect with learning through story, participation, observation, and discussion
- partner with subject matter experts to deliver cutting edge content based on the most up-to-date research and evidence
- make learning accessible:
 - translate complex legislation, policy, and practice guidance into accessible and tangible ways of working
 - respect diversity and individual needs, to build an inclusive learning offer that is equitable and flexible, allowing each learner to effectively manage their learning journey
 - design streamlined learning solutions tailored to individual and organisational needs, focused on getting the right learning to the right person at the right time through the most effective means

"Create a mock children's hearing where adults don't really pay attention to the kids. Show them what's wrong first and then show them how we would want to be treated"

Dylan, OHOV Board Member

Quality Assurance

Setting and maintaining high standards of delivery and achievement of learning outcomes is essential to enable CHS to achieve its primary focus, to provide high quality hearings and positive outcomes for all infants, children, and young people within the hearings system.

CHS is operating in an increasingly complex legislative environment. Furthermore, the Hearings for Children Report identifies increased expectations on Panel Members moving forward. Therefore, an enhanced, robust, and more rigorous approach to quality assurance is required to ensure our people are adequately equipped to meet these expectations.

A key focus of the Learning Strategy will be putting in place quality assurance measures to evidence the effectiveness and impact of the learning offer, as well as provide ongoing support for our people to continue to develop their expertise and meet the evolving needs of the Children's Hearings System.

To achieve this we will:

- partner with the CHS Quality Assurance Manager to develop and implement a quality assurance framework that is aligned with organisational performance measures
- improve our assessment design, ensuring assessment measures accurately align with the learning purpose and complexities of real-life hearings, and progress from recall and recognition to construction and application
- conduct regular learning needs analysis, leveraging data to identify and align learning and development needs with organisational performance gaps, and ensure that CHS has sufficient capability to sustain current and future performance
- review the certification of our learning offer and explore opportunities to increase value-add
- nurture a culture of growth and continual improvement;
 - embed reflective practice throughout the learning programme
 - incorporate multiple feedback loops over the course of the learning to ensure learners understand how they are progressing and develop clarity about performance expectation
 - develop learning pathways to support long term development and continual improvement
 - leverage the rich expertise and skillset of our people to support peer-to-peer learning
 - upskill our people to support and sustain a culture of ongoing learning and development

- identify opportunities to implement performance support solutions
- leverage our new organisational structure, partnering with regional teams to re-imagine local learning, ensuring alignment with organisational goals and needs, and consistency of practice and approach across the nation
- engage with Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) organisations to support multi-agency alignment

"In my opinion self-evaluation and self-reflection is an area that has been overlooked in terms of training and skills development, yet it is at the heart of quality improvement and development."
Panel Member Learning Survey, 2024

Leveraging Technology

Technology has become an integrative part of everyday life. Over the past eleven years there have been increased levels of innovation and digital engagement within organisations and across society. Technological advancement has always moved at pace, and now, with this increased appetite for innovation at the fore, we must evolve alongside this.

As a national organisation, distance learning is a fundamental requirement, so that we can reach and engage our people regardless of their location and provide flexible learning solutions that fit around a variety of schedules. Therefore, it's vital that we engage the most appropriate software and digital systems to deliver the right content to the right people at the right time.

Learning technology provides great opportunities for the delivery of enhanced learner experience, accessibility, quality assurance, and efficiencies. It is our ambition to leverage these resources to provide innovative, market leading learning solutions for our people, that meet both their needs and the needs of the organisation.



To achieve this we will:

- work with our colleagues in Digital Services to leverage the full functionality of our current Learning Management System (LMS) to improve learner experience and engagement; reduce time intensive administrative activities; and facilitate more effective, data-driven decision making and reporting
- review and assess alternative LMS/LXP providers with a view to future implementation

- invest in market leading digital learning design and software
- utilise engagement applications and tools to support implementation of an interactive and engaging virtual learning classroom environment
- support our people to effectively and confidently engage with learning technology and digital platforms
- explore the use of adaptive learning technology to support a personalised learning experience that is adapted to the individual as they progress through their learning pathways, providing time efficiencies, and detailed insight on learner needs to enable the delivery of targeted learning interventions at an individual or cohort level
- monitor the application and effectiveness of AI learning technology solutions with a view to future engagement to support digital experiential learning and performance support

"The LA E-learning portal... needs to be "friendly", simple and easy to navigate with integrated functionality to set up tailored learning pathways for Panel Members."

Panel Member Learning Survey, 2024

Sustainable Infrastructure



CHS is a unique organisation, delivering a unique service, at a unique moment in time. We are currently operating within a period of significant transformational change, in an evolving landscape that requires us to be agile and responsive to the changing requirements of the hearings system.

Just as our learning offer needs to be flexible to meet the evolving needs of our people and the organisation, so does our infrastructure. Therefore, a considerable focus of this strategy will be on optimising our resources to maximise impact, and creating an infrastructure that can provide the required flexibility to adapt to evolving organisational needs and wider transformation.

Outsourcing our learning programme to a single service provider has served us well. We now find ourselves operating in a different context. CHS has undergone significant growth and restructure over the past year and with increased resources and internal expertise, we recommend bringing learning in-house. This integration will provide many advantages. Closer proximity to learning design and delivery will afford us increased flexibility as well as greater ability to:

- influence performance and deliverables
- build direct relationships with our people
- achieve consistency and organisational alignment
- leverage the unique expertise of our people to build bespoke learning solutions that align with organisational objectives
- provide development pathways for our people
- transmit and sustain organisational culture
- deliver operational and resource efficiencies.

Most importantly, the integration of learning into CHS will allow us to directly fulfil key elements of our core purpose, to train and support Panel Members, alongside the ongoing development of our national team.

Creating a sustainable and agile learning function that stands the test of time is dependent upon its foundations. Therefore, re-establishing our foundations will be a key area of focus.

To achieve this, we will:

- design and build a learning function that can be flexible to the changing needs of the hearings system and any eventualities
- invest in a highly skilled and effective learning team
- engage our people and explore how we can most effectively harness their pre-existing skillsets, expertise, and tacit knowledge of the Children's Hearings System, to provide rewarding opportunities outside of the hearing room, where they can make valuable contributions
- partner with the People & Culture Team to align resources, leverage our internal expertise to maximise our potential, and work towards delivering one total learning solution for CHS

Implementation

Alignment with wider organisational change and departmental business plans will be vital to this strategy's success. Consequently, it will be delivered through our change architecture and is supported by a strategic implementation plan, providing detailed breakdowns of activities and milestones across all phases of implementation to ensure progress is monitored, measured, and quality assured.

Learning itself is not linear but a dynamic and iterative process, likewise, we will adopt a phased approach to the delivery of this strategy. This will allow us to deliver incremental improvements as well as providing us with the ability to pivot and respond to change quickly. Each stage will incorporate a period of careful planning before implementation, followed by a period of evaluation and adjustment, to ensure we are focused on continual improvement and the sustained delivery of high quality, impactful solutions.

Impact

To measure our effectiveness and impact, this strategy will be subject to formal reviews in years 1, 3 and 5. Key performance indicators will include:

- successful integration of our learning provision in-house
- positive engagement and increased uptake of learning by our people
- successful implementation and engagement with new digital solutions
- learning effectiveness; evidenced impact of learning on the delivery of improved hearings and positive outcomes in alignment with our quality strategy

These measures form part of an evaluation framework and are detailed more fully at each stage of the strategy's implementation plan.

Conclusion

This is the first step on our journey, our ambition for learning does not end here. The work we do over the next five years will provide us with revitalised and durable foundations to support ongoing development and improvement. In 2029, we will have an enhanced and valuable learning offer that delivers tangible outcomes to support the realisation of the potential of our people, the organisation, the Children's Hearings System, and ultimately the infants, children, and young people at the heart of CHS.





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