

Better Hearings

Progress report for young people



The Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership - working together, sharing ideas and co-ordinating our efforts to improve services for children and young people.



Children's Hearings
Improvement Partnership

Better Hearings – what we have done so far...

In 2015 all organisations in the Children's Hearings System became Corporate Parents.

Corporate Parents have responsibilities for how to interact, work and treat the children and young people that they are in contact with – and how they have to work together to provide the best services.

The experience of coming to Children's Hearings was an area that all organisations agreed needed to be better, so the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) and Social Work Scotland carried out research, analysed the findings and developed a set of standards for everyone to work to.

The standards set out what you should expect to happen before, during and after each Children's Hearing to make the experience of coming to Hearings the best it can be.

All local areas assessed themselves against the standards and developed action plans for how they were going to improve.

This report gives you a summary of some of the work that has been going on to help us get to 'Better Hearings.' The full report can be found [here](#).



Planning your Hearing – We will help prepare you for your Hearing and give you the right information and support in plenty of time:

- Three local areas developed guidance for professionals to help them to better support you when you are preparing for your Hearing. The guidance reminds them about all of the things that you need to know, what choices you have, and what your rights are.

- Training was provided for education staff (teachers and guidance teachers) about the Hearings System and about the support that you need to prepare for coming to a Hearing.

- Coming to a Hearings Centre for a Pre-Hearing Visit was something that we continued to promote with families, with agencies supporting families and on SCRA's website with a new short film.

- Changes were made to the form used to capture your views before a Pre-Hearing Panel – this was following feedback from young people.



Reports and information for your Hearing - We will make sure that the information for your Hearing is clear, relevant and contains your views:

- Work to sample the quality of local authority reports has been started in one area, and many other teams have committed to review theirs to help improve the reports that you get for your Hearing.
- One of the important things being looked at is the way in which you are able to get your views into the report.
- In one local area, everyone that gets a social work report is being asked for feedback to help make the improvement.
- A co-designed Communications Charter was developed that sets out what you should expect from communications from SCRA.
- There was a trial of 'easy read' letters in one of the SCRA Hearing Centres – these were developed to help parents/carers understand things more clearly – learning from that will help what happens next.



Safety and Privacy - We will do all we can to promote your safety and privacy at your Hearing Centre:

- Five more co-designed Hearing rooms were re-modelled in the year to make them more child/young person friendly.
- A research project looking at privacy and confidentiality in the Hearings System is underway and the findings will be reported later in 2019/20.
- A new privacy information leaflet for young people - written by one of SCRA's Modern Apprentices, was published.
- New information has been added to SCRA's website about 'your information and how we protect it and keep it safe'
- A cartoon animation about 'privacy and your information' was created and is on SCRA's website.



Managing the Hearing and decision making:

- **Everyone in your Hearing will work hard to make it run as smoothly as possible**
- **We will make sure that our decisions are clear and in your best interests**

- Young people with experience of Children's Hearings have been training Panel Members in Midlothian, Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, Central and West Lothian.

- Multi-agency training took place in five local authority areas – to help the adults better understand each other's roles and how, together, they can better support you.

- Training of Panel Members by Advocacy Workers took place to help them better understand participation and engagement.

- We surveyed how many children and young people come to their own Hearings in Fife, Dundee, Perth and Angus to give us a starting point to look at how we could improve.

- Top tips for Panel Members were co-developed and covered a range of areas including language, jargon, putting rights language first etc.

- There were trials of having only two Hearings per session rather than three to see if this would cut down on how long you had to wait - following feedback.

- Children and young people have been training Panel Members on some of the issues that are important to them in their lives to support the panel members in their decision making.



Helping you give your views - We will support you to have your views heard:

- A number of focus groups have been held with young people, and the feedback from these groups has been fed into new guidance and has led to us trying out some of the suggestions.

- We have been testing the use of technology in Hearings following feedback from the focus groups to see if it can help you to get your voice heard.

- We have been testing some participation tools within Hearings in Falkirk, West Lothian, Stirling, East Renfrewshire and testing in a few other areas is now being planned.



Hearings decisions and Your rights –

- **We will make sure that our decisions are clear and in your best interests**
 - **We will support you to understand what decisions have been made at your Hearing and what this means for you**
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- Focus groups with children and young people were held to hear about what we could do in Hearings to make them feel more supportive and easier to take part in to help us to improve
 - Children and young people that have been through the Hearings System gave us feedback on how it felt to improve the way that we do things.
 - SCRA improved and re-launched the 'Your Rights' flyer and poster to support young people to know and exercise their rights.
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- SCRA launched an online cartoon animation about 'Your Rights' - it's important that you know them'.



