Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership

Fife Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership

Spring 2026

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

Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of the Fife Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) newsletter.

Have you seen? Have you heard?

"Seeing Beyond the Surface - what young people with care experience wish all adults knew."
Guide - Our Hearings, Our Voice

Produced by the young board members from Our Hearings, Our Voice, this interactive guide takes us through six key themes:

- Children's relationships with key adults
- Support
- Language
- Seeing children's potential without judgement
- Children's stories and personal information
- Children's participation and voice

For anyone working or volunteering in the sector it's well worth a read and a listen.

As part of the Fife ChIP we will be holding a development session on Thursday 4th June where we will learn more about the guide and how we listen and work together to make things better for Fife's infants, children, young people and families.

Young people's voices – A view from Barnardo's Right and Advocacy Team

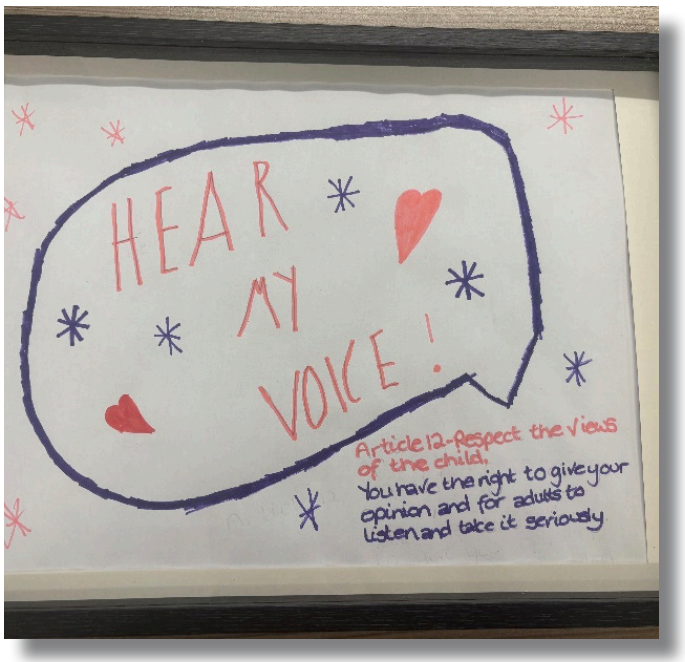
Young people are engaged in discussion (where appropriate) with their Rights and Advocacy worker every 12 weeks using an outcome assessment tool focussing on the four outcomes.

- You feel you are aware and you have a better understanding of your rights.
- You feel supported in planning and decision making at your meetings.
- You feel supported to learn to speak with someone about what you want to talk about (advocacy). As you feel listened to, it is hoped that you will feel more confident to talk to other people involved in your life.
- You feel more confident and able to share your views and have your views listened to.

During 2025 the Barnardo's team have supported 118 young people and we have highlighted some quotes from them:

"You feel supported in planning and decision making at your meetings. You are also supported to have a better understanding of decisions that have been made."

"You feel more confident and able to share your views and have your views listened to."



Experts by Experience - Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS)

In our last newsletter we introduced a group of young people, aged 14 to 25, from across Scotland with lived experience of Hearings and who are supported by the participation team at Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS).

The group have produced a short video called "Am I as invisible to Panel Members as I think?" which provided the journey of a young person through a Hearing. It is well worth a listen and a watch.

Other news from CHS

Have you seen the new Practice guide to respond to very small children? This guide has been written by CHS in conjunction with the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection (CElCIS) and NHS Infant Mental Health Teams across Scotland.

- Practice guide launched to support very young children

"It's crucial that we strive to make infants visible and heard within their Hearings, even if they aren't present in the Hearing room. Only that way can we ensure we are making good decisions that truly prioritise their needs." David Mackay Practice & Policy Team manager CHS.

Youth Intervention Service meet with panel members

In February this year, Sean McIntosh, team manager for the Youth Intervention Service, presented to 60 panel members on the work of the Youth Intervention Service. During the session, panel members took the opportunity to share some powerful positive feedback with Sean, both for the work of the Youth Intervention Service and for his presentation:

- I was recently lucky enough to see firsthand on a panel the difference YIS can make;
- This team sounds like a really positive step forward by Fife Council to benefit and work towards understanding and changing children's behaviour to give them the best chance possible;
- I've been on four panels where the child was open to YIS instead of the 'traditional' SW approach. And in all cases it was very clear that the YIS approach works. The results were genuinely transformational for the child and their family;
- What a breath of fresh air to hear this, Sean is so passionate - great talk, look forward to reading his team's reports;
- Thanks Sean, a fascinating presentation - appreciate the presentation and enthusiasm Sean has for young people and improving their lives;
- Just an observation from me after being on a recent panel with YIS. You say relationships are key - this was very evident when observing you chatting with the other attendees
- The children and young people need a champion like Sean and YIS.
- This has been really interesting. The team's compassion and commitment have shone through. I have had experience of the teams' approach through a Hearing and the difference it made to that young person was noticeable after only a short period of time. You and your team are doing transformative work with young people who are facing serious difficulties in their lives and helping them to grow beyond that. Thank you.
- Thank you very much for your time tonight Sean. The difference that you and your service are

making to children and young people is extremely valuable and the young people are lucky to have such a caring and understanding service.

■ Fantastic insight into the YIS team, had a panel recently and we discharged a child who had been working with YIS it was a great feeling to see the progress they had achieved with your support ... well done to you all.

Improvement to the surroundings of Albany House

If you have attended a Children's Hearing recently at Albany House you will have no doubt noticed that there is a programme of demolition work underway nearby. The demolition works at Acorn Court, Albany Gate, the former hotel and the old restaurant around Albany House will transform the area. The works are due to be completed by June 2026.

In the meantime, SCRA are taking all necessary steps to ensure that Hearings can continue with as little disruption as possible. The Hearing schedule in April and May has been amended slightly to reduce the volume of face to face Hearings and increase the number of virtual Hearings. In addition, arrangements have been made to prepare a temporary Hearing room space within the Hearing Centre, upstairs and on the other side of the building in case the noise levels within our normal Hearing room mean that Hearings would be disrupted by the demolition ongoing outside.

Following a local newspaper article some time ago that reported on asbestos within part of the buildings that are being demolished, we are aware that there was some concern about whether asbestos is still present in the buildings that are in the process of being demolished. As a result, we requested further information from the project team involved.

They have assured us that any asbestos within the building was removed in the correct way as per the regulations that they are bound by.

We will continue to keep partners updated on the progress of the work and whether any changes are required as a result. We are very much looking forward to the summer, when we should be able to enjoy improved surroundings!

New look Hearing Improvement Packs

This spring, SCRA are rolling out new look Hearing Information Packs (HIPs) which will be coming to Fife at the end of March.

The HIPs will now include a chronology which will include the reasons and decisions for previous Hearings. This will pull the key details about Hearing decisions together instead of sending out full record of proceedings as we have previously. This will enable us to shorten HIPs and make them more child friendly. The HIPs will also include new child friendly naming convention to support children to understand what documents are included in the HIPs.

Children First

The Safeguarders Panel Team at Children First are hosting online webinars throughout the year to discuss everything you might want to know about the role of Safeguarders in the Children's Hearing System and the role of the Safeguarders Panel Team. Use this link to see the dates and register for one of our events.

If you have any questions about these events, or have any difficulty booking a place, please contact safeguarderspanel@childrenfirst.org.uk.

CHIP Working Groups

Fife CHIP meets on a quarterly basis and dates are scheduled throughout 2026. In between times we have established six working groups, which are noted below with a brief summary on each.

- Multi-agency learning event group. As a group we host our annual learning event which brings together volunteer panel members and a range of staff from Social Work, SCRA, Health, Police and 3rd sector staff. Our last event in 2025 had a focus on Domestic Abuse and was well attended and well received. We are working on the event for 2026 and more details will follow.

- Report Working group. This group is working together to examine ways in which the reports submitted to panel members are effective and efficient and working to support partners to submit reports on time for Hearings. It is always good to reflect on how we can improve. As noted above a national programme of change around the new look Hearing Information Packs will have a positive impact for our infants, children and young people.

- Voice Working Group. It is absolutely crucial we hear the voices of our infants, children and young people. However we understand that often their voice is being asked for in numerous ways and at different times. Wouldn't it be great if we had a shared process to gather and listen to these voices? That's the purpose of this group.

- Newsletter Working group. Key tasks are to produce a Fife Chip newsletter biannually full of news and updates on what matters to the Fife Chip.

- Grounds Hearing Group. We have established on the last Friday of every month a drop-in session at the Hearings Centre, staffed by the Barnardo's team, for children and young people to attend and ask any questions about their forthcoming hearing.

- Data Working Group. Data is important and data helps us understand how we can improve our Hearings, how to make them better. This is the focus of this group what data would be useful for us to understand. It might be the attendance of children and young people at Hearings or where

And to end a bit of Youth Culture.

A young person working with Barnardo's informed us that Kpop demon hunters is very popular with young people just now! Well that is news to me, so we thought we would do a Google search and found some lyrics that describes how young people can feel at times.

Golden

Waited so long to break these walls down
To wake up and feel like me
Put these patterns all in the past now
And finally live like the girl they all see

No more hidin', I'll be shinin'
Like I'm born to be
'Cause we are hunters, voices strong
And I know I believe

We're goin' up, up, up, it's our moment
You know together we're glowin'
Gonna be, gonna be golden
Oh, up, up, up with our voices
Gonna be, gonna be golden

Please let us know of any feedback about this or any edition of the Fife CHIP newsletter.

Produced by
FIfe Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership
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