

Reporting on our Business Plan 2017/18

Throughout the year, our focus has been on delivering our core outcomes, as outlined in our Business Plan 2017/18:

- A progressive, user focused service
- High quality decisions
- Effective collaboration

Outcome 1 - A progressive, user focused service

34 of 42 actions were completed within the year. This outcome was our primary focus, and included work on agreeing and planning for implementation of the Better Hearings standards, contributing to updating the Blueprint for the Children's Hearings System by introducing a focus on qualitative elements of service delivery, and on improving the experience of children and young people on their journey through the system.

Outcome 2 - High quality decisions

12 of 13 actions were completed within the year. The emphasis was on quality assurance of our decision making using a series of case sampling exercises to focus on consistency of approach and compliance with Practice Direction. Any recurring areas for improvement were addressed through agreed national approaches, with learning points of a more local nature addressed at Locality level.

Outcome 3 - Effective collaboration

16 of 26 actions were completed within the year. The actions where we were most successful involved working with the Scottish Government and other partners to drive a whole series of improvements to the Children's Hearings System. Areas not completed were partly due to external factors (such as collaborative research projects not wholly under our control) and the difficulties in developing effective joint strategic planning arrangements with key partners. These were carried forward into 2018/19.

A Progressive, User Focused Service

What We Said	What We Did	What We'll Do Next
We will explore the implications of the Better Hearings Action Plan for Localities and commence phased implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have worked with partners through the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) to explore the implications of delivering the Better Hearings standards We have worked with partners in every part of the country to conduct baseline assessments and develop action plans for implementation of the standards 	We will implement Better Hearings action plans, assess progress, determine next steps and continue to monitor and evaluate successes and areas for further improvement
We will play an active role in developing a revised Blueprint for the Hearings System	We have worked with partners to develop an updated set of standards, piloted these standards in two areas (Edinburgh and Falkirk) and agreed adjustments to standards based on findings	We will implement the updated standards once final agreement with all partners is reached, and work closely with partners in every part of the country to implement these fully and consistently
We will enhance the ways in which we interact with children, young people and their families, in person, in our outward communications and in ensuring that we encourage questions and respond promptly	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created a Corporate Parenting website Promoted children and young people's rights through training with partners and foster carers Reviewed and improved some of our information leaflets and flyers, and prepared new ones to cover gaps Prepared draft standards for communicating with young people Led a multi-agency group to create a young people's board for the Hearings System 	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with young people to design a communications charter Introduce easy read letters Display information in all our Hearing Centres making it clear what extra support we offer and how to ask for them Review how children and young people have their say in a Pre-Hearing Panel Ensure our complaints procedure is clear and easy to use
We will enhance the physical environment at Hearing Centres to make them more suited to the needs of all users	We have revamped five Hearing Rooms across Scotland with input from Hearings-experienced young people	We will work with service users and partners to evaluate our approach to making our Hearing rooms more child and young people friendly, then take next steps to further improve
We will help to familiarise children, young people and families with the environment in which the Hearing will take place	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to promote Pre-Hearing visits for children and young people Improved the information and visuals on our website about our Hearing Centres Hosted 'Doors Open Day' in one of our Hearing Centres 	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a short film showing a Pre-Hearing visit so that children and young people understand what to expect when coming to their Hearing Make pictures of Hearing Centres on our website more interactive by using a 360 degree camera for a better perspective

High Quality Decisions

What We Said	What We Did	What We'll Do Next
<p>We will identify key areas of practice for case sampling, with lessons learned linked to reflective practice being used to drive improvements in decision making</p>	<p>We carried out four case sampling exercises on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of drafting grounds for referral • Preparation for proof proceedings in court • Decision making and drafting grounds for domestic abuse referrals • Compliance with Practice Direction on non-disclosure procedures <p>We developed and implemented national and local improvement plans in respect of each of the above</p>	<p>We will carry out a similar approach with a further four case sampling exercises on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting of grounds • Role of the Reporter at Hearings • Comparative analysis between established and drafted grounds • Observation of the Reporter in court proceedings
<p>We will provide professional development opportunities and practice based learning, through our Practice Strategy, to address identified staff development needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We operated a comprehensive Practice training programme covering identified priority needs • Localities linked these training opportunities to staff members' Personal Development Plans and put in place Locality Learning and Development Programmes 	<p>We will operate a similar approach, with training designed to address identified staff development needs</p>
<p>We will make improvements to the arrangements in place for planning, undertaking and managing court activity</p>	<p>We concluded an in depth review of our current arrangements, identified a number of key areas for improvement, and established a network to co-ordinate implementation of these improvements</p>	<p>We will continue to test and implement improvements to our court arrangements on a phased basis</p>
<p>We will work with partners to influence the timeliness and quality of their reports, and to ensure that the views of children and young people are adequately captured and can inform decisions</p>	<p>Working with partners through CHIP, we have addressed quality and timeliness of reports by adopting a qualitative approach, with new standards agreed for the nature and content of reports and revised timescales to accommodate this</p>	<p>We will continue to work with CHIP to agree implementation timescales, then work with partners in every part of the country to manage adoption of the new standards</p>

Effective Collaboration

What We Said	What We Did	What We'll Do Next
<p>We will work with partners to align key Corporate Parenting strategies to promote the best experience for children and families and deliver the Better Hearings standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through CHIP, we worked with partners to develop the Better Hearings standards and agree understanding of how these can best be implemented. This provided the basis for each of us to develop Corporate Parenting strategies that were in alignment • We worked with Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS), our key partner in the Children's Hearings System, to develop a joint Corporate Parenting website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continue to work with partners in every part of the country to manage delivery of the Better Hearings standards • We continue to work with CHS to jointly develop how best to meet our roles as Corporate Parents
<p>We will seek opportunities for joint initiatives with partners that could lead to service improvements, better outcomes or gaining efficiencies</p>	<p>We worked with partners, nationally through CHIP (especially CHS, our key partner in the Hearings System) and locally with key partner agencies</p>	<p>We will lead on the two new CHIP sub groups - Better Hearings and Policy, Action and Scanning</p>
<p>We will actively engage with the Scottish Government on a range of legislative and policy issues</p>	<p>We actively engaged with the Scottish Government on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of proposed new legislation including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ raising the age of criminal responsibility ▪ domestic abuse ▪ physical chastisement of children • policy reviews including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ child protection improvement programme ▪ care review • response to the Supreme Court Case judgement in the named person case • further policy issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ trafficking ▪ children's criminal records ▪ advocacy ▪ protection for child and vulnerable witnesses ▪ ending violence against women and children 	<p>We continue to engage with the Scottish Government on these and other emerging issues, and plan and manage the practical impact of such legislative and policy issues as they come to fruition</p>
<p>We will support the work of the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are active members of the CHIP, contributing to all workstreams, leading on GIRFEC and contributing research findings for wider consideration and action • We appointed a Development Worker for Our Hearings Our Voice – an initiative to establish a Young People's Board to help improve the Children's Hearings System 	<p>We continue to contribute to the work of CHIP, leading where appropriate, and implementing improvements as these are developed</p>