

SCRA Consultation Response FULL VERSION 2021



BAIRNS' HOOSE (SCOTTISH BARNAHUS) STANDARDS SCOPING SURVEY

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this survey.

The Children's Hearing is Scotland's distinct statutory approach, in which concerns about a child's circumstances (whether about the care or treatment of the child by adults or the behaviour of the child) are considered by Children's Reporters and then by panel members in a Children's Hearing, who make a decision about whether there needs to be compulsory professional involvement with the child and family.

In the Children's Hearings System:

- the needs of children or young people are addressed through one holistic and integrated approach which considers all the circumstances of the child and the child's welfare
- the welfare of the child remains at the centre of all decision making and the child's best interests are paramount throughout
- the child's engagement and participation is crucial to good decision making
- the rights of children and families are respected

The role and purpose of SCRA is:

1. Receiving referrals for children/young people who may be at risk.
2. Ensuring that other public agencies carry out enquiries and assessments into children/ young people's circumstances so we can make informed decisions about children/young people referred to us.
3. Making decisions on whether to refer a child/young person to a Children's Hearing if they need compulsory measures of supervision.
4. Drafting the grounds for the Hearing.
5. Arranging for Children's Hearings to take place when we decide that compulsory measures of supervision are warranted and where there is sufficient evidence to prove the grounds.
6. Ensuring fair process takes place within the Hearing, including the rights of those in attendance being met.
7. Having a key role in establishing grounds of referral in court, where these are contested, and in defending decisions of Children's Hearings which are subject to appeal.

Our Vision: Children and young people will be listened to, protected and supported to realise a positive future where they are safe, valued and respected.

Our Mission: We protect and support Scotland's children and young people, by making high quality decisions, upholding their rights and working collaboratively as compassionate, inclusive corporate parents to enable the most positive and personalised experience of the Children's Hearing.

Our Values: Our values are the shared motivations, beliefs and behaviours that underpin all that we do.

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Supportive	We work with kindness to support children, young people and families, our Partners and each other.
Child Centred	Children and young people are at the heart of everything we do.
Respectful	Everyone is respected and treated fairly, inclusively and lawfully.
Accountable	We are responsible for our decisions, our ethics and our learning.

Question 1

Do you agree with the scope of the standards?

- Yes
 No
 Partly

Please explain your answer:

SCRA are pleased that the standards will seek to reflect the European PROMISE2 Standards. We continue to think that co-design of the standards with children is the best approach for Scotland to take but accept that this is logistically and practically a big ask within a focused timeframe. We would ask that as far as is possible the development of the standards continues to be alongside children and that when this is not possible then children are used as arbiters and are able to critique what has been developed.

We are very pleased that there is recognition of the significant benefits that the Barnahus approach can bring to children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has been seriously harmful and have considered the cases of such children to be in scope. There will, of course, be a number of logistical considerations in developing a house that will provide support to both victims and perpetrators of serious harmful behaviour.

As work on the Standards develops, we look forward to seeing more detail in relation to a number of issues: (i) the place within the Bairns' Hoose of support for of family members or carers of children who have been referred (for e.g. how or indeed whether family supports or family based therapies would be sited in the Bairns' Hoose);

(ii) the role of Victim Support;

(iii) the nature of the therapeutic supports which would be provided through the Bairns' Hoose; and

(iv) how the Scottish Child Interview Model will align with the Bairns' Hoose and how the pre-recording of evidence will be up scaled in the ways that need to happen.

The last of these is of particular interest to SCRA given the critical role that evidence obtained through interviews conducted within the Bairns' Hoose will have in legal proceedings, together with the potential role that the Bairns' Hoose will have in hosting further interviews required within those proceedings.

While this may be more to do with service design or policy implementation (and therefore out of scope for the standards) we look forward to hearing more about how a developed Bairns' Hoose network across the country will align with other services. We think that the focus on the Bairns' Hoose as a single point of contact for children across Scotland may need to be developed and that, for example, a child may need to access facilities located in the Bairns' Hoose but may also need to access statutory intervention in a Children's Hearing centre (for example).

The reality of what may happen will need to be clearly explained to children and families so that the standards don't raise unrealistic expectations. It might also be necessary to consider how access to the

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Bairns' Hoose can be best achieved across the country – and it may be that for some remote or Island communities that the child travelling to the Bairns' Hoose is not the best approach and that a way of the Bairns' Hoose travelling to the child could be considered.

One of the key elements of successful development of this approach will be the way the Bairns' Hoose integrates with what is already available in any given locality – whilst also heralding a future way of working in partnership with the children and families who require therapeutic supports. We understand that this approach will be dynamic and there may also be some regional variation – but we think a single 'vision' for the Bairns' Hoose across the country would be useful for professionals and invaluable for children and families in explaining what will happen if they find themselves in need of supports.

Question 2

Do you agree with the proposed standards development group membership?

Yes

No

Partly

Please provide further details:

Membership of the group seems to include representation from all of the stakeholders we would expect to see.

We are particularly pleased that wide engagement is planned with children through a variety of existing networks and think this is a very strong approach (subject to the more recent outlined approaches which we commented on at the start of this response). This type of co-development from the outset is exactly the approach that is required to ensure that the focus of the standards and the Bairns' Hoose itself, wherever it develops, is rights based and child centred.

Question 3

What is needed to support services to meet the proposed standards?

- 1) A clear vision or map of where the Bairns' Hoose sits within the service landscape in Scotland – including how existing services support – or are supported by - the Bairns' Hoose
- 2) Clarity around which standards apply specifically to the work *within* the Bairns' Hoose and which standards apply more widely.
- 3) Clarity about ownership of delivery under the standards..
- 4) Linked to 3), a clear picture of what successful delivery looks like and how achieving success will be evaluated.
- 5) Training and awareness-raising across a wide range of services around:
 - a) what the Bairns' Hoose is

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- b) how the Bairns' Hoose works
- c) how different services and other stakeholders link into the Bairns' Hoose (which may need to be developed at both a national and local level)
- 6) Some wider public awareness-raising of the Bairns' Hoose - what it does, why it does it, what makes the approach effective, and what to expect.

Question 4

How would you like to be involved in the standards? Please tick all that apply

- Being part of the team developing the standards
- Engaging with children and young people to support participation in the standards development process
- Feedback on the draft standards during consultation
- Informed about the project and our progress
- None of the above

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