



Children's Hearings  
Improvement Partnership

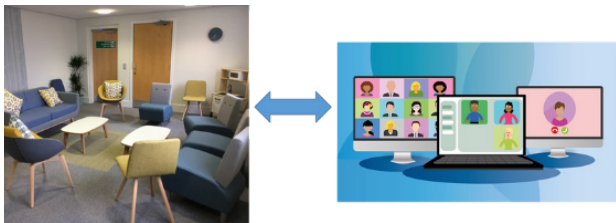
# Fife Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership

**Better Hearings Update  
Summer 2023**

# Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of the Fife Children’s Hearings Improvement Partnership’s Better Hearings update. We hope you enjoy it!

## Facilities at the Hearing Centre - A Child’s Experience



Feedback was recently received from a social worker who accompanied a child to a Hearing. The positive feedback evidences the hard work of the wider Fife CHIP community – social workers and other professionals, SCRA staff and panel members - to improve the experience of children and young people attending Hearings in Fife:

“The woman [the Reporter] seemed nice, and she spoke to me about what I would like...I liked her that came in and helped us with the movie [receptionist], she was funny and normal. She gave me a bag of stuff and had cool slime! Was nice she checked in on us...we could have fallen asleep in there [the sensory room]...I wanted to stay in that room all day, it was awesome...It calmed me down enough to go in the room and say hi to those people [the panel] even though we needed to look silly to do this with our cool shades [two pairs of glasses in box given to the child that were used to ‘hide his worry’].

The child’s social worker continued: “Overall, it was so great to see him relaxed throughout the experience. He can become extremely agitated when waiting and being in strange buildings

which leads to him becoming heightened. Before entering he said he hated the building, it made him scared due to past experiences but throughout and after he spoke so positively about it all. Staff were absolutely amazing, and I can’t thank them enough and the bags of goodies are great. The child agreed he will feel better about attending next time.”

## Launch of Fife CHIP’s Multi-agency Protocol

June 2023 sees the launch of Fife CHIP’s first multi-agency protocol. Single agency protocols have previously existed, but this is the first time that key partner agencies have come together to agree working practices in this way.

The aim of the protocol is to provide a joint framework for the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA); Fife Children and Families Social Work Services; NHS Fife/Fife Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP); and Education Services to effectively manage and deliver services to children and families within the Children’s Hearings System in Fife.

SCRA’s Locality Reporter Manager, Katie Pacholek explains: “Having been involved in the development of previous single agency protocols, I have seen the benefit such a resource can bring. This multi-agency approach unifies our commitment in Fife to improving the experience of children and young people by ensuring our staff are well-informed and working collectively. The protocol looks to be an excellent, practical resource to support work in this sometimes complex area.”

The protocol will be available through single agency intranet/resource sites.

# Corporate Parenting Development Workers (Fife Participation Officers)

Brogan Coll has been joined by Mellissa Harrow. As Corporate Parenting Development Workers within social work's Quality Assurance and Development Team, Brogan and Melissa are continuing their participation work in partnership with SCRA.

Data capture is at an early stage, but children intending to attend their Hearing increased by 5% following contact from the participation workers in May 2023.

To support their work, they have put together a leaflet that explains the participation work for children and young people. The team are considering other creative ways that may help children to feel prepared and comfortable to attend their Hearing.

Their work is also receiving positive feedback from children and young people.

"I had a sibling group who were extremely nervous about their hearing. The eldest was feeling okay about it and did not want to engage but the younger too did."

"I liaised with their Barnardo's worker and arranged for us all to meet at [the Hearing centre] so the girls could get a feel for the building, meet some of the staff that would be there on the day of their hearing and get a chance to chat about any worries or queries they had.

The meeting went really well, the girls particularly enjoyed the sensory room ... and while we were talking they identified being really nervous about entering the Hearing room while all the professionals were in there. We spoke about ways around this and I then liaised



with the children's reporter and reception to ensure the girls got to be the first ones in the room, The professionals were invited in once the girls were seated and comfortable. Since their visit to [the Hearing centre] the girls have gone to every one of their Hearings."

The C&F service are pleased to confirm that these posts are now permanent, ensuring that this important work will continue alongside other corporate parenting focused work.

## A multi-agency Learning Event for Health staff

Fife CHIP worked together to deliver a series of exciting multi-agency learning events for Health staff in June.

In response to findings from a recent Survey Monkey completed within Health Visiting, the Family Nurse Partnership and School Nursing Services, the learning events were planned to meet training needs and develop a deeper understanding of the Children's Hearings System.

The events were co-facilitated by social work, SCRA and Children's Hearings Scotland.

A fantastic opportunity to work collaboratively, share learning and experience and update knowledge in line with the Promise. Further dates are planned for September 2023.

## Training for NQSWs ongoing

The joint SCRA/SW Children's Hearings Training continues to provide protected time for newly qualified staff to hear about process and practice, with a focus on writing concise, well-structured, well-reasoned reports for Hearings.

The content is aimed at newly qualified staff (up to 18 months) but is open to Social Work Assistants and experienced Social Workers who would like to refresh their knowledge.

Attendance continues to be high and the feedback from participants is that the training is 'really interesting' that they 'learned things they did not know' and the 'protected time provides opportunity for reflection and focus'. There is opportunity for questions throughout the session and participants often discuss situations that they are currently managing and benefit from the opportunity to seek alternative perspectives and check processes.

There are ongoing sessions planned for 2023 and are led by Claire Veitch, from SCRA and Susie Fairweather, Senior Practitioner, Children and Families.

## Training for SCRA – spotlight on Health assessment tools

Mandy Kerr from NHS Fife facilitated an information sharing session with Fife Children's Reporters in May 2023. Mandy shared the introduction of the Graded Care Profile (GCP2). This one to one session was an excellent opportunity to raise the profile of health assessment tools that can support the investigations and decision making of Reporters.

## Fife welcomes new panel members

Following a rigorous recruitment and training process, Fife has welcomed 25 new panel members this year. Some reflections on their first Hearing experiences:

**"Thanks in no small part to the effective and detailed pre-service training, and the PM support network that's in place, I believe I survived the experience... observing the calm, experienced and knowledgeable way that the chairs handled the hearings gives me something to aim for."**

**"...I felt really supported and part of the team. Was focused, confident and assured throughout thanks to the training kicking in."**

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