



Winter 2021

# Children's Health Scotland

**We're back with  
face-to-face workshops**



Discover more  
about **Kindness for  
Kids** on page 4



Find out about our **Have  
a Phenomenal Christmas  
Giving Campaign** on page 23

Please  
donate  
towards our  
**Christmas  
Appeal  
P23**





# GET INVOLVED WITH SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S HEALTH WEEK 2022

5 - 11 September

#myhealthmyrights

INCLUDING  
SCOTTISH  
CHILDREN'S  
HEALTH AWARDS

## Save the date for Scottish Children's Health Week 2022!

**F**ollowing the success of the previous two Scottish Children's Health Weeks, we will be creating another exciting week for 5 - 11 September 2022!

The theme for next year will be #myhealthmyrights, with great focus on children and young people's right to the best health. Once again, the week will be packed with online events, partnerships with other

organisations and our fabulous activity book with fun for every day of the week. We'll also be hosting the Children's Health Conference on Friday 9 September at the Sheraton Grand Hotel.

### What's Inside:

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- 6** **Health matters in Foster and Kinship care**  
Find out more about the range of Care Experienced Children and Young People Services that we offer for both Kinship and Foster Carers.
- 14** **20th Anniversary Celebration**  
Dagmar Kerr has worked with Children's Health Scotland for 20 years. During this time she has helped thousands of children and young people with health conditions and she very kindly shares her story with us on pages 14 and 15.

### Special Feature:

We're so excited that our Self-Management Service Face-to-Face Programme is back up and running at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh.



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- 22** **Calling all adrenalin junkies**  
We are seeking fundraisers for 2022 that will help raise funds to support our work helping children and young people with health conditions.



# Meet Gill, our new Head of Children's Health and Wellbeing Services

**H**i, my name is Gill Sutherland and I am the new Head of Children's Health and Wellbeing Services. I have a background in psychology as well as being a qualified social worker.

I have recently been working with a charity that supports people with a sensory impairment. Before that I worked with Barnardo's and then NHS Tayside supporting children and young people with additional support needs and their families.

I am excited to be joining Children's Health Scotland at this time. With the added challenges of COVID-19 and the impact it has had and continues to have, there is lots to do. However, I know that I am joining a team with a fantastic range of knowledge and skills, so together we can hopefully continue to make a difference to the health and wellbeing of children across Scotland.



## SMS:CONNECT

**S**M:S:CONNECT has been recognised as a Digital Innovator.

Children's Health Scotland was announced as the winner of the 'Digital Innovator Self-Management Award' for their Self-Management Service programme, SMS: CONNECT, at the 2021 Self-Management Awards, organised by the ALLIANCE. The Digital Innovator Self-Management Award was delivered in partnership with 'Discover Digital', Scotland's first public-facing initiative to discuss how technology can help us live better and healthier. In a year in which all our lives have by necessity adopted a far more digital lens, this award focused on what stood out as real innovation in the use of digital technology. The innovation element could be associated with finding new ways of working digitally, reaching out to new audiences through digital media or the use of new technology for Self-Management.

Commenting on the Award, Helen Forrest, Chief Executive of Children's Health Scotland said: *"The health and wellbeing of children and young people with health conditions lie at the heart of what we do. I am so incredibly proud of everyone at Children's Health Scotland, which includes our amazing children, young people, and volunteers, who have all risen to the challenge presented by COVID to develop and*

*deliver what is now an award-winning Self-Management Programme that will continue long-term. I would also like to say a huge thank you to the trusts, foundations and fundraisers who make our work possible.*

*"To be recognised for this work and our commitment to our children and young people is so incredibly rewarding and I would like to thank the ALLIANCE for this award."*







# Kindness

**M**ichelle Wilson, our Area Officer for Tayside, shares her experience of working with children and young people with health conditions, and how important kindness is in relation to her work.

I began to think about kindness much more during the COVID-19 lockdown period. Everything changed very suddenly and there were so many unknowns. We all felt quite powerless. I live in a small street with only 14 houses and the youngest member of our little street showed us all great kindness by making everyone a lovely rainbow picture. We all proudly displayed them in our windows. It made us all smile when we were out for walks. When we clapped as a nation on a Thursday for frontline workers in our street, we also clapped for the youngest member of our street who had shown us all kindness. This kindness had a ripple effect. We couldn't visit each other but we could let each other know we cared. We posted cards through doors, offered help to each other, baked for each other. It improved our mood and mental wellbeing and our sense of being powerless was lessened with one small act of kindness. Our little street was a happier place.

13 November is World Kindness Day and each year the day celebrates good deeds and acts of kindness. Studies have found that being kind is linked to increased feelings of happiness, wellbeing, and life satisfaction for people of all ages. In 2020, a YouGov survey found that



**“62% of Scottish adults feel a positive impact on their mental health when receiving kindness, and 64% agree that being kind to others has a positive impact on their own mental health.”**

62% of Scottish adults feel a positive impact on their mental health when receiving kindness, and 64% agree that being kind to others has a positive impact on their own mental health. It's a win-win!

In fact, the NHS recommends kindness in their 5 Steps to Improving your Mental Health and

Wellbeing, where number 4 is “Give to Others”. It's not hard to see why doctors recommend acts of kindness and giving to improve your physical and mental wellbeing when research shows it can:

- create positive feelings and a sense of reward
- give you a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- reduce blood pressure, anxiety and help to cope with pain
- help you connect with other people

The greatest thing about kindness is that a little goes a long way! It could be small acts of kindness towards other people, or larger ones like volunteering in your local community.

My week can be really varied. I can be involved in health-related play



# for Kids!

with a very young child, then arts and crafts with a young person exploring their emotions, and in the afternoon, I might be with a teenager discussing self-care strategies to promote good mental wellbeing. In all these interactions, we always bring kindness into what we do.

- Being kind to ourselves is important too. Taking time to enjoy a bath with some lovely bubbles, listening to music that

you love and watching that TV show that makes us laugh are all really beneficial. Try telling yourself that you are good at what you are doing instead of being mean to yourself over things you feel you can't do. Remember to feel proud of what you do each day and who you are.

- Being kind to others is also really helpful. Simple things like a smile at someone else in the corridor

or playground or saying thank you can make a huge difference. You could also do something nice without being asked, like setting the table, doing the washing up, or tidying away toys. One of the most popular things that the young people I work with do is make a hot drink for someone in their family. Another popular act of kindness is playing with a younger sibling before they ask.

- It's not only being kind to others that is good for our physical and mental wellbeing. Remembering when we have been kind or others have been kind to us that gives us all the same benefits. A lovely idea that I found was to use post it notes and write what you did that was kind with the date. You can stick them on a wall or in a book. It's great to look back at and inspires you to continue to be kind to yourself and others.
- You could also use an old jar and put in lots of random acts of kindness for you to do, both for yourself and for others. Pull one out each day, each week, whenever you need some inspiration. When you have completed one idea, save it to look back on at a later date. You could fill a week or a month in your calendar with some ideas for kindness and tick each thing off as you go.

The more you build kindness into your day the easier it becomes until it is a really positive habit with lots of positive affects on your health and wellbeing.





# Health matters for people in Foster and Kinship care

**We know that the health and wellbeing of many children and young people in Foster or Kinship care may not be as good as that of their peers. Adverse childhood events experienced in their early lives have left many with emotional health and wellbeing needs which require specific help. For example, we have found that many of these children and young people do not know their healthcare rights, have attachment issues and have experienced trauma and loss. They may also have moved frequently which means their medical history and health background may not be known to their carers. Our health-related workshops and other resources support carers with managing the health issues of the children in their care.**

## **Our Care Experienced Children and Young People Services**

offer a range of activities for both Kinship and Foster Carers including workshops, mini/taster sessions and one-to-one support.

## **Workshops**

We offer a range of workshops free of charge based on topics often requested by carers themselves. These workshops are offered through local authority social work departments, third sector organisations (e.g., Kinship Care Advice Service Scotland (KCASS) or the Fostering Network) or can be requested through support groups. The topics covered in our interactive four-hour workshops include:

- **Managing the Healthcare Needs and Rights of Children in Care**

Learn about a child's wellbeing, Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC), and their healthcare rights under UNCRC. This is also an opportunity for carers' needs to be made known.

- **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing**

A two-part workshop looking at the impact of insecure attachment, trauma and neglect on a child's brain development, and behaviours. Importantly, we discuss how carers can best support their children.

- **Consent and Confidentiality**

A legally challenging area where carers' rights and those of the child are not always fully understood.

- **Play Techniques**

Help children cope with medical, dental, or hospital treatment through imaginary play, DVDs, games, stories, and role play.

- **Getting it Right for Care-experienced Disabled Children**

And those with complex healthcare needs.

- **Loss and Change**

Covers supports to help with grief from bereavement as well as from different types of loss and change. Care experienced children and

young people may have lost their birth families (e.g., contact with siblings) and sense of identity when they come into care.

- **Adolescence Matters**

A time of change often leading to challenging behaviours; this workshop helps carers understand what's going on inside a teen's head and how to support them.

We have delivered our workshops virtually (Zoom or Teams) during the pandemic and just recently starting back face-to-face (where you are).

## **Benefits of virtual training:**

- saves on travel time.
- reaches people all over Scotland (for example a carer who attended from the North of Scotland appreciated not having to stay away overnight).
- virtual workshops include the use of a digital platform which contains all the workshop material (extra resources, discussion board etc) which carers can access at any time.

**“When you come to the workshops, you feel you are listened to and believed and it's great to meet other people who are going through similar experiences to you.”**

KINSHIP CARER



# children and young d Kinship Care

## Benefits of face-to-face workshops:

- More personal as the workshops are in your area and at a time to suit you.
- Provides the opportunity for more in-depth discussions.
- Easier for people who are less confident with IT or who may have felt excluded during the pandemic.
- Immediate access to a range of information booklets at the workshops. We can post them out for virtual ones on health-related matters and requested mental health and wellbeing resources.
- Carers can connect with others in the similar positions as themselves.
- They are experts through experience and often provide peer support and advice to each other in how to deal with particular issues.

## Mini/Taster Sessions

Mini Sessions are shorter versions of our training workshops e.g., two-hour taster sessions which fit into a support group meeting time. They can include bespoke topics by request (i.e. taster session on trauma for KCASS).

## One-to-one support

We offer a listening ear and support



to carers particularly around health matters and care experience. We will always go the extra mile to find answers as we often know others who can help you as well. This allows us to signpost carers to people or organisations who can help. We have access to advisors and services for specialist advice on health-related topics for children and young people and their families or carers.

## Foster and Kinship Care

There are significant differences between Foster and Kinship care groups in terms of their legal status, the legal orders, support (financial) from the local authority and training opportunities. The fundamental difference, of course, is that Kinship Carers look after children from within their own family and there

**“The training exceeded my expectations. I had dealt with my own children as teenagers, and also teenagers that I have accommodated but this course highlighted the need to always put yourself in their shoes and see it from their perspective.”**

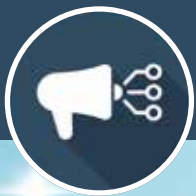
FOSTER CARER

may be tension or sensitivities in the relationship with the birth family. For these reasons, we always provide separate training or workshops.

**If you or your organisation would like to arrange a workshop or talk about how our service can help you, please contact: [anne.wilson@childrenshealthscotland.org](mailto:anne.wilson@childrenshealthscotland.org) or [sarah.nelson@childrenshealthscotland.org](mailto:sarah.nelson@childrenshealthscotland.org)**







# COP26: how the health of children and young people affected by climate change

**C**hildren and young people have the right to the best possible health and COP26, the 2021 United Nations climate change conference, provided an ideal platform to discuss this right in relation to climate change.

The 26th Annual Conference of the Parties (COP26) took place in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November and saw many world leaders and important figures discuss the urgency of getting

climate change under control. Rising temperatures and decreased air quality affect children and young people by increasing asthma attacks and allergies, heart and lung disease, worsening pregnancy outcomes, creating food insecurity, increasing mental health problems, developmental delays, and changes in their genetic makeup.

*"The health and wellbeing of children and young people lie at the heart of what we do,"* said Helen Forrest, Chief Executive of Children's

Health Scotland. *"Climate change undoubtedly has an impact on health and wellbeing and therefore the right of children and young people to the best possible health (UNCRC 24).*

*Ahead of COP26 we heard the voices of children and young people calling out for change (UNCRC 12) and fully support their efforts to work together to protect our planet and people and ensure a greener, more resilient future for us all."*

## **Why are children and young people across the world taking a stand against climate change?**

There is a significant amount of research which finds that children and young people are negatively affected by global warming for a range of reasons, which leads to many young people feeling determined to make their voices heard. A survey of 10,000 young people found that 95% are worried by climate change, with a quarter of those sampled feeling "extremely worried".

Climate Anxiety is a term which describes the fear and worry that people experience surrounding the current climate situation; 45% of the





# Health and wellbeing of young people are changing due to climate change

Young people surveyed said their feelings about climate change had negative effects on their daily lives.

Stress can be especially harmful to young people whose growing brains make them particularly vulnerable to long term developmental consequences. Furthermore, this study was conducted across 10 countries and found that those who felt most worried were also those most at risk, such as Portugal where wildfires caused by global warming are severe. Young people feel that governments are not doing enough to reduce climate change, which is incredibly worrying for young people as they will suffer the most from climate change in the future.

As well as psychological effects of climate change, there are many physical side effects that can be seen now, such as increased temperature and humidity leading to more cardiovascular and infectious disease problems. In the areas most affected by climate change, such as warmer areas, places by the sea, or less economically developed countries, there are higher rates of heat waves, forest fires and floods. These environmental events can cause damage to homes and cause problems for crop fields, which leads many communities to not have



sufficient shelter and food (UNCRC 27 and 36). As a result of climate change, half of the world's children are at risk of not having their basic human rights met. The damage caused to everyday life puts not only children and young people under

an unhealthy amount of stress, but also pregnant mothers, whose stress will transfer hormonally to their unborn babies. Climate change is not only negatively affecting our current young people, but it will also affect the next generation yet to be born.

## How can we help children and young people with their climate anxiety?

It's important to soothe children's fears by taking some of the weight off their shoulders and reassuring them that climate change is not their fault. You can also talk about solutions to climate change and let the child know that there is still hope to fix climate change. The outcome of COP26 suggests that world leaders

recognise the urgency to halt global warming, but are still hesitant to make the necessary changes. Hopefully, next year the voice of young people will be heard (UNCRC 12) and the outcome of COP27 will leave children and young people everywhere feeling optimistic about the future of our planet.



# WHOOHOO

## We're back with face-to-face workshops

**W**e're so excited that our Self-Management Service Face-to-Face Programme is back up and running at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh.

The Self-Management Face-to-Face Service is a Programme of face-to-face workshops and is available for children and young people living in, or able to travel to, the Lothians. Two SMS Programmes are available, one for children aged 9 to 12 and one for young people aged 13 to 17 years. It has been delivered by Children's Health Scotland since 2009, for children and young people living in Edinburgh and the Lothians with long-term health conditions. In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this face-to-face programme was adapted to be delivered online with the help of children and young people and their families and carers. We named this service SMS:CONNECT and we are thrilled that the service was recently an announced winner of the Digital Innovator Self-Management Award at the 2021 Self-Management Awards organised by the ALLIANCE.

### What is self-management?

Self-Management means improving the relationship that you have with your health and wellbeing and building your confidence and self-esteem. Our programmes support you to access information and develop skills to cope with your health condition and meet other young people living with health conditions. Self-Management does not focus on managing a specific health condition but empowers young people to manage their own health and wellbeing.

During our Self-Management Service Programmes (SMSP) we aim to: build confidence, self-esteem, communication skills, and coping strategies, so that children and young people feel better able to



**“I've gained more confidence around new people and talking about my condition.”**

manage their physical health and mental wellbeing. Listening, and responding, to feedback from the children and young people who take part has been key to ensuring that our SMSP remain engaging – meeting the needs of all those that we support.

### What happens during the Programme?

Living with a long-term health condition can be overwhelming and isolating. During our SMSP, you will meet other young people who understand how it feels to cope with a health condition. Workshops have an informal atmosphere with a mixture of activities and games to help you get to know other young people on the Programme and have fun! We listen to children and young people, and we adapt our services to meet their needs and concerns. It is normal to feel nervous about attending something new. Our friendly team will support you through our programmes.







## What happens after the Programme?



Once you have finished the six-week Programme, you will be invited to join our SMS:CONNECT Hub – an online community space where you can keep in touch with us and the young people you met on your Programme if you would like to!

## Why should I attend?



The SMS Programmes can help you build:

- Confidence
- Self-esteem
- Coping and relaxation skills
- Communication skills
- Friendships and connections
- Access to social activities
- Opportunities for volunteering and peer mentoring

## Where and when?

We will meet in Edinburgh once a week for six-weeks. Groups will have between six and ten people your age, and two coaches will work with each group.



Our final session is always a fun social activity chosen by you! This can be an indoor activity such as bowling or crazy golf, or an outdoor activity like climbing or a beach BBQ!

Don't live in the Lothians? Try SMS:CONNECT - our online Self-Management Service for children and young people living with long-term health conditions. To find out more information, contact the SMS team.

## Interested?



To find out more please contact the friendly SMS team:

- By email: [sms@childrenshealthscotland.org](mailto:sms@childrenshealthscotland.org)
- By phone: **Gill Sutherland on 07483 230078**
- You can also complete our online form or download a referral form:  
[www.childrenshealthscotland.org/service/lothian-self-management/](http://www.childrenshealthscotland.org/service/lothian-self-management/)





# A Year of the SMS:HUB



**T**he SMS:HUB is a monthly online session for children and young people who have taken part in SMS:CONNECT or SMS:F2F. The sessions aim to reinforce skills and coping strategies learnt in the SMS Programmes, as well as providing essential peer support and opportunities to build and maintain friendships. The SMS Team has worked hard to put together a brilliant programme of sessions over the last year, with 43 children and young people currently enrolled in the SMS:HUB across our 9-12 and 13-17 age groups. The SMS:HUB has provided a valuable opportunity for Children's Health Scotland to partner with other third-sector organisations to deliver sessions and workshops, allowing participants to gain valuable knowledge and access to other support services that might be helpful to them.



## February



To welcome everyone to our first SMS: HUB, and in light of many children and young people returning to education after lockdown, we delivered a session about the importance of achieving balance in our lives, and why this is particularly important for those living with health conditions. Many young people struggle to manage schoolwork, hospital appointments, and maintain positive relationships, and this was never more challenging than throughout lockdown. This session provided participants with a valuable opportunity to share personal experiences, play fun games and catch up with friends – everyone particularly enjoyed the return of the Scavenger Hunt!

## April



Genetic Alliance UK is an organisation made up of over 200 individuals and organisations providing support to those living with rare, genetic, and undiagnosed conditions; much of their work is focused on providing support to adults living with rare conditions. In light of the UK Government's publication of the Rare Diseases Framework, and The Scottish Government's Action Plan announcement to meet this framework, we worked with Natalie Frankish to run focus groups to find out more about what it's like to live with a health condition in Scotland.

## March



This month we were joined by Amy Joss from Relax Kids, who delivered a brilliant session tailored to each age group with lots of relaxation strategies, including breathing techniques and visualisations. Amy has been a huge part of SMS, originally delivering SMS: F2F, and working with the team to develop SMS: CONNECT.

## May



For our May SMS: HUB sessions we collaborated with The Teapot Trust, for an expressive (and messy!) art therapy workshop. The Teapot Trust is a charity that provides mental health support through art therapy, for children, young people and families living with chronic conditions. The team at the Teapot Trust were brilliant to work with; they organised art packs to be sent out to our SMS: HUB participants that included sketchbooks, watercolours, pens, and pencils. For the sessions, we were joined by art therapist Megan, who took the groups through some creative exercises and encouraged the young people to share their art with the group, opening some valuable discussions about the importance of expressing yourself in positive ways.







## June



Children's Health Scotland has worked with Hearts & Minds a lot over the last year, and who can blame us when they are so much fun?! For our June SMS: HUB sessions we were joined by the Clowndoctors, who delivered a 'Clown School' workshop for our 9-12 group. This involved lots of silly faces, silly noises, and silly costumes, and certainly left everyone with a smile on their face! For the 13-17 group, the Clowndoctors encouraged the young people to share their personal experiences with healthcare through a comedic lens – a brilliant way of coping with what can be challenging times in a young person's life.

## August



The LUNA Project (Learning to Understand Needs and Abilities) joined us for our August SMS: HUB - an amazing charity run by young people for young people. They do fantastic work empowering others to talk about their chronic illnesses, disabilities, and long-term health conditions, with an emphasis on the importance of friendship and social support. We were super happy to have them for our SMS: HUB and they delivered some really engaging sessions on friendship.

*"We had so much fun coming into the August HUB sessions to talk about friendship. As young people with chronic illnesses ourselves we know how much of a challenge friendships can be, but we also know how wonderful they can be, and what a crucial part of support they are. We thought and shared on all things friendship - our worries, our top tips, our advice, and thought together about what makes us good friends. Some of the conversations we had, particularly with some of the older group, have really stayed with us and changed how we think about friendships and boundaries- so I guess we just hope you got as much from the sessions as we did!" - Ally at Luna Project*

## November



An aim of the SMS: HUB is to reinforce skills and coping strategies learnt in the SMS Programmes. For our November SMS: HUB, we decided to hold a booster session for our 9-12 group on self-esteem, confidence building and positivity. We got crafty making some star badges and magnets, focusing on slowing down, practising mindfulness, and discussing taking each day as it comes. For our 13-17 group, we were transported to The Globe Theatre in 1606 for a live video escape room – 1 hour before the curtain, Shakespeare's secret script had gone missing! We had to work together as a team to find the script before King James found out, phew!

## July



A key focus of the SMS: HUB is to provide opportunities for young people to have fun and socialise. This month we ran an online escape room, transporting everyone to the Wild West to try to work out Who Shot the Sheriff? Whilst it certainly took longer than the advertised 1 hour to figure out whodunnit, we got there in the end!

## September



For the September SMS: HUB we were delighted to develop and deliver the sessions with the help of our Young Volunteers, Ewan (18), Emily (16) and Blair (13), who have all taken part in previous SMS: CONNECT Programmes. Our Young Volunteers worked with See Me Scotland, an initiative to tackle mental health stigma in Scotland, to choose and adapt activities from the 'What's On Your Mind?' pack. The sessions were hugely successful, with 21 children & young people taking part. It was incredible to listen to the group sharing their own personal experiences and challenges with mental health and coming together to support each other.

## October



With the October SMS: HUB falling days before Halloween we decided to dress up spooky and have some good ol' Halloween fun! With a mission to enjoy ourselves as much as possible, for the 9-12 group we played Kahoots Halloween edition, danced to Halloween tunes and drew pumpkins, bats and witches on our heads! For our 13-17 group, we visited the Village of HUB where there were rumours of werewolves in our midst eating innocent villagers! Uh oh!

## December



To celebrate 1 Year of the SMS: HUB, we are celebrating our December SMS:HUB with Christmas tunes, Christmas quizzes, Christmas games and of course, Christmas jumpers! We're also going to get crafty and make some cool penguin decorations whilst we chat about our hopes, dreams and wishes for the year ahead.

What a year it has been! We feel so lucky to have been able to work with such brilliant partners and other fantastic third-sector organisations and can't wait to see what the next year brings. We'd like to thank all those for their time and effort and of course, all the wonderful children and young people for attending the SMS: HUB and making it what it is – we look forward to seeing you all very soon!



# Dagmar celebrates 20 years of continuous service with Children's Health Scotland

**D**agmar Kerr works within our Health Rights for Children and Young People Service and is based in Glasgow. In November 2021 she celebrated 20 years of continuous service with our charity and has very kindly shared her story with us.

In 2001, I was a busy mother of three and happy to be a stay-at-home mum. Our children were two boys: Mathias (7) and Steffen (12), and Lisa, our 10-year-old daughter. At this time Lisa had just recovered from major brain surgery at the Great Ormond Street Hospital in London, to help treat her almost constant epileptic seizures. This is when a friend showed me an advert for a post with 'Action for Sick Children (Scotland)', which later changed its name to Children's Health Scotland (CHS) and the rest is history.

I felt, having spent countless hours in hospital with Lisa and trying to support all my family at the same time, that I had something to offer. I also had an Education Degree and an

Educator's diploma from Germany, so felt strongly about the importance of play to help children process their experiences. The small number of hours and the flexibility of working also appealed to me. My application was successful, and I started work in November 2021.

Well! What a baptism of fire I had! Within days of starting, I had to attend a two day long 'peer visit' from the APA (Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists) to the Yorkhill Children's Hospital in Glasgow as a 'lay representative'. I had read the rather large file of paperwork that had to be dealt with during such a visit and the first thing I did, before the meeting started, was to ask all these highly qualified professionals to explain what the dozens of acronyms and abbreviations stood for. I did feel uneducated and ignorant, but could not have made a proper contribution, if I didn't know what they were talking about. To my pleasant surprise, they apologised for not considering a lay person's limited knowledge of medical jargon. This first meeting set the tone for a very long and fruitful partnership and mutual respect for one another's expertise. In fact, I have worked in many different professional settings where I represented the views of not just our charity, but those of families and their children. During these



times I have found that most professionals are keen to be reminded if they are accidentally using language that is difficult to understand for people who don't work in their field.

## Special Smiles Service

Still within my first month of working, I was invited to the Glasgow Dental Hospital with a request to help make their service more child friendly. This too became a long-standing partnership and eventually resulted in our Dental Play Box project at the same time as Scotland's Child Smile programme was being rolled out. We identified a gap in provision for children with additional educational needs and developed our project further into the Special Smiles Service, whilst continuing to work with the Scottish Government. And now we are delighted that Child Smile is including ALL children







in their programme, and CHS is delivering regular training to Oral Health professionals in partnership with NHS Education Scotland.

## My highlights

Over the years I have worked with 25 ASCS/CHS colleagues, countless NHS professionals and colleagues from the voluntary sector, been involved with numerous projects, partners, service developments and committees. I can only list some highlights:

### Play Workshops

I always enjoyed delivering play workshops with our Play Boxes – both to children and young people, but also to professionals to teach them how to engage with and listen to children about their healthcare experiences. Giving talks to students, professionals, parents, community groups etc, has always been a great opportunity to raise awareness of children and young people's healthcare rights. For some talks, I have involved my daughter Lisa by encouraging her to share some of her positive and some challenging experiences within the NHS. Speaking with her has often made a big impact on professionals, like the ones who attended the NHS conference in Glasgow in 2007.

### Rights of the Child Group



Being a member of the Rights of the Child Group has been a privilege and has enabled us to work closely with NHSGGC staff about implementing healthcare rights across the Greater

Glasgow and Clyde health board area and beyond. When I discovered around 2008/9 that some patients in the children's hospital were receiving education from a hospital teacher, while others who stayed in the 'wrong' local authority, were not, we started campaigning for the Right to Education even at times of illness. My then local MSP, Mr Ken Mackintosh (later to become presiding officer at the Scottish Parliament) was instrumental in helping us to understand and use parliamentary processes. I consider this one of the biggest successes of my career, when we persuaded the Scottish Government to review and re-write the 'Guidance on Education of children unable to attend school due to ill health'.

### Transitions

Another constant theme of my work has been young people's transition from paediatric to adult services and I have particularly enjoyed working with colleagues from hospices who have been proactive and supportive of this important subject.

## A critical and constructive friend

I think, being able to attend meetings with a professional attitude as well as the lived experience of caring for someone with significant healthcare needs has allowed me to be a 'critical and constructive friend' in many meetings. It has always been important that I could represent CHS as an independent partner, without having to fear about a party-line. Also, the fact that CHS campaigns for the healthcare rights of ALL children, regardless of their condition or where they live, has made this organisation so attractive for me. I am truly grateful to all the very special people, especially within the NHS, who continue to support me and our important work.

**“I am grateful to the people I worked with, to our funders and donors – especially NHS GGC, but also to my family, and especially to my husband, David, who has my back at all times and who is my sounding board.”**

On a lighter note: I have to admit that technology is not something I enjoy very much. For me, the development of social media, learning technical things like writing PowerPoint Presentations, putting up 'Tweets' and Facebook posts, or communicating via Zoom and Teams have probably given me more sleepless nights and grey hairs than speaking to a room full of professionals at an APA conference in Brighton. However, I have learned those things and, despite my aversion of them, learned to appreciate their potential.

Looking back at over 20 years of working in the charity sector and campaigning for things I consider important, has been and still is something I am grateful for.

**I have learned many things in that time, but most importantly:**

- 1 My sense of who we are as a charity, is getting clearer all the time, but still developing.**
- 2 The importance of children's rights must not be underestimated.**
- 3 There is still lots to be done!**



# Health-related Play – Learning through virtual play

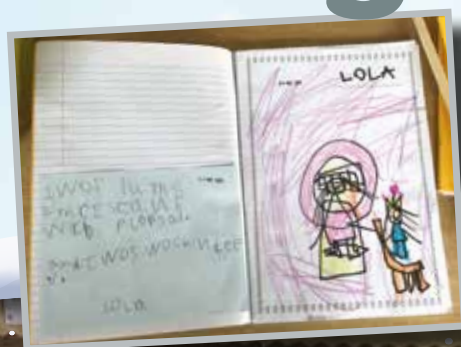
**T**his year we have hosted virtual Health-related Play Workshops for children and young people and the workshop with children from the P1 class at Battlefield Primary School in Glasgow is one of our favourites. Despite the barriers caused by lockdown restrictions, these workshops delivered learning through play in an impactful way, and they proved a real success.

Dagmar Kerr, our Coordinator for Greater Glasgow & Clyde and the presenter of this workshop, said: *"The children concentrated and participated really well and showed a lot of knowledge about hospitals and doctors. They are now looking forward to having a play corner for the next couple of weeks and have promised me drawings of their own experiences."*

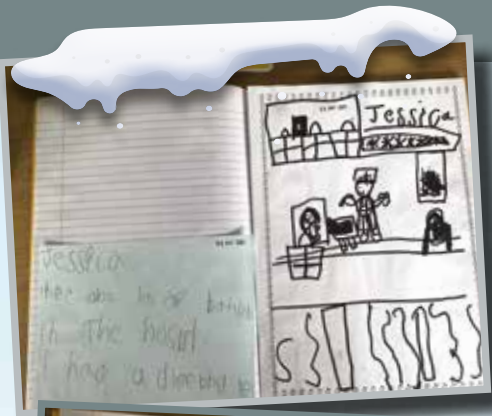
The virtual workshop was presented using Microsoft Teams, where Ms Wilson, the teacher of the P1 class, used the school iPad to allow Dagmar and the children to interact face to face. A paired resource format was used, which meant that both Dagmar and the P1 class had an identical Play Box. As various pieces of the Play Box equipment were introduced by Dagmar, Ms Wilson would take the same item from the hospital Play Box in the classroom and give it to the children to look at and experiment with. The

children were able to ask lots of questions and were very enthusiastic participants.

We asked Ms Wilson about the benefits and learning outcomes this workshop provided. *"The children always benefit from being involved with external agencies that can offer expert information about subjects that are accessible to them and engaging. The learning outcomes were in Health and Wellbeing, learning about who can help them and ways they can look after their own health. The children also*







developed talking and listening skills. The benefit of being virtual was that it was possible to carry on with learning through play during the pandemic with no additional staffing required."

Ms Wilson also felt that this kind of activity fits well within the Curriculum: "The work is firmly placed in the play led curriculum that we deliver in P1 which allows the children to be guided by their interest and use knowledge and subject specific language whilst having fun in their role play. We used the syringes and other medical type equipment in water play and this allowed the children to develop measured language. They also wrote stories and drew pictures around their own personal experiences of being in a clinic of some kind.

Following the virtual workshop Ms Wilson told us what the

children thought: "The children were clearly engaged at the time and this enthusiasm to work with the equipment showed their interest. You can see what they thought in their writing and drawings, but they all were able to be involved."

And these photos show how engaged and enthusiastic they were.

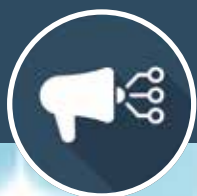
When asked, how we could improve the experience of the workshop, Ms Wilson answered: "As such, I felt it went as well as it could. Obviously in person experience cannot really be replicated but we really enjoyed it and it led to some quality learning and engagement."

Commenting on the event, Helen Forrest, Chief Executive of Children's Health Scotland said: "We know that children have the right to play (UNCRC

article 31 and EACH Charter article 7), and that playing is especially important to help them explore and deal with medical experiences. We know that at least 50% of all children will have had a hospital experience by the time they are 5 years old, and we are delighted to have developed a solution which enables children to access our Health-related Play Boxes."

The success of our virtual workshops demonstrates that children are inquisitive about health and wellbeing and are intrigued to learn more about how their health will be cared for by professionals, should they need it. For more information on Health-related Play Boxes and/or to book a workshop (subject to availability) visit <https://www.childrenshealthscotland.org/resource/hospital-playboxes/> or telephone **01315536553**.

For more resources on helping children and young people cope with hospital visits and healthcare needs, visit our resources page <https://www.childrenshealthscotland.org/resources/>



# Next Step Towards Scottish Human Rights Bill

**A new Scottish Government Advisory Board has been created to support the development of ground-breaking human rights legislation. Equalities Minister Christina McKelvie is Chair of the group that will play a key role in progressing the Human Rights Bill.**

The new Bill will aim to give Scots law a wide range of internationally recognised human rights and follows on from the work of the First Minister's Advisory Group for Human Rights Leadership and the recommendations of the National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership.

Ms McKelvie said: *"Human rights should be protected and advanced for all and be put into everyday practice to the benefit of the people of Scotland, so this board is a significant milestone in the country's human rights journey."*

*"Our Human Rights Bill will be innovative and ambitious. It will incorporate into Scots law multiple international human rights treaties, as far as possible within devolved competence. It will be developed carefully through extensive engagement and consultation. We look forward to continued collaboration on this vital work."*

The Bill will incorporate into Scots law, so far as possible within devolved competence, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, alongside three further UN human rights treaties that will strengthen protections for women, disabled people and minority ethnic people.

For more information visit

**<https://www.gov.scot/news/next-step-towards-scottish-human-rights-bill/>**

# New National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland

**The Scottish Government has published new National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021. Replacing the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, last published in 2014, this revised guidance describes the responsibilities and expectations of everyone who works with, or comes into contact with, children and young people, families and carers in Scotland. It sets out how agencies should work together with children and young people, families, carers, and communities to protect children and young people from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.**

The Guidance has a strengthened focus on children's rights, engagement, and collaboration with families, and on building on existing strengths. There is a stronger emphasis on the range of issues that impact on the wellbeing and safety of children, including the importance of assessing the impact of all structural factors such as poverty and poor housing as part of all care and protection planning. The intention is to further support more holistic approaches that reduce stressors on families and communities to help reduce the risk of

harm to children and young people. Implementation of this Guidance will support greater consistency in what children and families can expect in terms of support and protection across Scotland.

One of the key revisions to the guidance is how this aligns with recent developments and changes in legislation and policy in Scotland, including the intended incorporation of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law, and the greater integration of child protection within the 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC) policy and practice model.

The guidance seeks to integrate the ambitions of The Promise of the Independent Care Review by placing a greater emphasis on supporting practice that embeds children's experiences, needs, wishes and feelings, and which underlines the critical need to engage with families and communities to reduce the risk of harm to children.

For more information visit

**<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021/>**





# The UK Supreme Court Judgment on UNCRC

**O**n 6 October, the UK Supreme Court gave its judgment on the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill. The judges unanimously decided that four sections of the Bill go beyond the powers of the Scottish Parliament. The following information provided by Together Scotland gives a little insight into the case and what could happen next.

## What is the UNCRC Bill?

The Scottish Parliament passed the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill unanimously on 16 March 2021. It seeks to make children's human rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child part of the law in Scotland. This includes things like the right to education, the right to health and children's right to have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

## Why did the Bill end up in the Supreme Court?

The Scottish Parliament has limited powers. This means there are some topics it can't make laws about. These are known as "reserved matters" and include the constitution and related power of the UK Parliament to make laws for Scotland. If the Scottish Parliament appears to go beyond its powers, this can be challenged in the UK Supreme Court. This is a key part of devolution.

Shortly after the Bill was passed, the UK Government raised concerns that parts of the Bill exceeded the powers of the Scottish Parliament.



It sent the case to the UK Supreme Court which held a hearing on 28 – 29th June 2021. You can read more about the hearing [here](#).

## What did the Supreme Court decide?

The judges unanimously decided that four sections of the Bill go beyond the powers of the Scottish Parliament. Their decision focused solely on technical matters. They did not object to the intention behind the Bill or the Scottish Parliament's ability to incorporate the UNCRC – so long as it stayed within its powers:

*"No-one disputes the right of the Scottish Parliament to regard the UNCRC as an important convention and to give effect to it, provided that it does so within the limits of its legislative competence."*

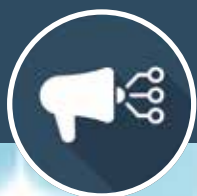
In reaching their judgment, the judges looked at four sections of the Bill:

- 1. Definition of public authority (Section 6)**
- 2. Interpretation (Section 19)**
- 3. Strike down powers (Section 20)**
- 4. Incompatibility declarators (Section 21)**

## What will happen next?

The judges said that the UNCRC Bill should return to the Scottish Parliament so that MSPs can address their concerns. The Bill cannot be sent for Royal Assent until it is amended, so the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament will need to act quickly to prevent further delay.

Children's Health Scotland is a member of Together, who will continue to support full implementation of children's human rights in line with the UK's existing obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



# Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow wins award for exceptional app

**This year, the Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow (RHC) has reconfirmed their commitment to support the Rights of the Child at the annual NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Women and Children's Directorate Staff Excellence Awards by celebrating achievements that improve access to services, information about healthcare, and the involvement of children and young people in decisions surrounding their care.**

The inaugural winners of the Rights of the Child Award were Dr Morag Wilson and the team involved in the development of the Royal Hospital for Children Website and App.

The judging panel acknowledged the achievement of Dr Wilson and Team (Seona Hamilton, Melville Dixon, Dr. Geetika Kumar and Coral Brady) in developing the app over the last two challenging years, using innovative technology which has significantly contributed to children and young people's rights to best quality health.

Jamie Redfern, Director for Women and Children's Services, NHSGGC said "We are absolutely delighted that Morag and the team have been



*recognised for their hard work and dedication of the RHC App and look forward to them achieving more in the future."*

Part of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) focuses on a child's health and their ability to access appropriate health care. The UNCRC states that all children if unwell, should be able to access the medical care they need. Using such innovative technology like the RHC app, allows information to be accessed easily and by everyone. The

RHC App allows children to access healthcare information including health, mental health, wellbeing and being involved with decisions surrounding their care.

The RHC app, developed by a multi-disciplinary team, aims to make health information accessible in a clear and accurate way. It provides information about coming to hospital, common health conditions and what to do in an emergency. The app and accompanying website can be accessed at [rhc.nhsggc.org.uk](http://rhc.nhsggc.org.uk)





# kiltwalk 2022



## ARE YOUR BOOTS READY TO WALK?

**W**ith New Year on the horizon, are you ready for a new challenge? We are seeking Kiltwalkers who are willing to stride, walk, or even toddle, next year in support of Children's Health Scotland.

We have Kiltwalk Promotional Codes, so we will pay for your registration fees. All we ask is that you pledge to raise at least £100 through sponsorship for Children's Health Scotland to fund our work supporting children and young people with long-term health conditions in Scotland. Once again, thanks to the generosity of The Hunter Foundation, all funds you raise will be topped up by a massive 50%. That means if you raise £100, we will receive £150!

### What is the Kiltwalk?

The Kiltwalk is a mass walking event that happens every year to raise funds for Scottish charities and projects. There are different walk lengths, in different cities, on different dates to choose from, including The Mighty Stride (16.5 miles) and The Wee Wander (3.5 miles). The Wee Wander is suitable for children and has wheelchair and pram accessibility so there's something for everyone!

The Kiltwalk is the perfect opportunity to improve your own health and wellbeing whilst also raising funds to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland. This is the right time to get the New Year off to the right start and we'll be with you every step of the way.

### KEY DATES

- 24 April GLASGOW
- 29 May ABERDEEN
- 21 August DUNDEE
- 18 September EDINBURGH
- 7-9 October Scotland's VIRTUAL Kiltwalk



To become part of #TeamCHS email Esther Bates at [esther.bates@childrenshealthscotland.org](mailto:esther.bates@childrenshealthscotland.org) or give us a ring on 07483 230577.



# Calling All Adrenalin Junkies...

All fundraisers will receive a Children's Health Scotland bundle containing a shirt, water bottle and bag to help you with your journey!

## JustRunning

Children's Health Scotland has signed up to JustRunning, an online platform that allows us to easily get fundraisers ready to take part in all the best running and walking events across Scotland. Each runner can create a unique landing page for their fundraiser and set goals for how much they would like to raise. There are plenty of races to choose from for different skills levels and even virtual events, such as the Edinburgh Marathon, the Big Fun Run and the Dog Jog. If you want to run for the lives of children and young people with health conditions across Scotland, then contact us using the details below.



## Forth Rail Bridge Abseil

Do you want to free-fall abseil from 165ft down to the beach below? This challenge sees the bravest of fundraisers making their way down one of Scotland's most iconic landmarks, to help raise funds for charities of their choice. The registration fee is £21 and the fundraising target is £165 - but you can raise higher than the Forth Rail Bridge as well! So, if you want to take part in this blood rushing event, contact us.



## Video Game Livestreaming

Are you a gamer? Do you have a following on Twitch, YouTube or any other kinds of social media? You can create an online challenge for yourself to raise money to support Children's Health Scotland. Maybe you'd like to challenge yourself to beat your favourite game in a tight time limit or see how long you can keep the livestream going. You could try to play a really difficult game and ask everyone watching to donate £1 for each time you game over! The possibilities are endless and the fun is infinite.



**If you would like to register or have any questions about any of the heart pumping events above, contact Esther Bates at [esther.bates@childrenshealthscotland.org](mailto:esther.bates@childrenshealthscotland.org), or give her a call on 07483230577. We can't wait to speak to you!**





# Please give a phenomenal Christmas gift to help children and young people living with long-term health conditions!

*Cloaked in the hazy fog of a crisp Tuesday dawn, Bear took to the skies with Snowman. It was the moment they've been eagerly anticipating all year round.*

*Paw-in-hand, they whooshed above the hilly lands. And when the world beneath transformed into a checkered blanket, Bear and Snowman started spreading festive snowflake good wishes to everyone below.*

*"Have a Phenomenal Christmas" – they sang into the skies and the giving season thus began.*



**W**e're excited to launch our **Have a Phenomenal Christmas Giving Campaign** once again. With the help of Snowman and our mascot, Bear, we're asking everyone to support our charity with donations to help fund our vital work in Scotland. This year our festive giving campaign also includes social media activities with exciting give-a-ways. Check out our social media channels at the start of December for more information.

Children's Health Scotland is the only charity in Scotland entirely dedicated to ensuring that children and young people receive the healthcare and treatment they need. As such, our efforts are essential for a healthier and happier society. We have focused on helping all children and young people with health conditions in Scotland for over 40 years, and we

simply could not have done our work without the generous help of people like you.

Helen Forrest, the Chief Executive at Children's Health Scotland, put it this way: "Children's Health Scotland just wouldn't be possible without the hard work, knowledge and enthusiasm of our staff, the dedication of our supporters and volunteers, and the generosity of people, trusts, and foundations. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their support over the past year."

*"A donation to our Christmas Giving Campaign will enable us to continue*

*to provide our much-needed services to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland, especially those with long-term health conditions. We would be extremely grateful for any donation that you can make to help fund our work."*

If you would like to donate towards the work of Children's Health Scotland, then please go online to the Children's Health Scotland website at **www.childrenshealthscotland.org** and click the **Please Donate** button at the top of the page. This will take you to our JustGiving page. Alternatively, you can also donate using the donate button on our Facebook page. All donations, large or small, are gratefully received, and every penny makes a difference.

Thank you and have a phenomenal holiday season,

Children's Health Scotland





# HAVE A PHENOMENAL CHRISTMAS



Kindness and care are the best Christmas presents you can give. They don't need a shiny package or a pretty bow either. Just a simple donation and you can spread some holiday joy. Donate today at [childrenshealthscotland.org](https://childrenshealthscotland.org) and help Bear deliver a phenomenal Christmas to Scotland's children and young people.

Thank you!

## Registered office:

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 [www.childrenshealthscotland.org](https://www.childrenshealthscotland.org)



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We acknowledge the support of the Scottish Government  
through CYPFEIF and ALEC Fund Grant.



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