



Winter 2022

# Children's Health Scotland



**We met Pudsey at the BBC Children in Need Live TV Appeal Night!**

**Elle McNicoll**  
joined us  
for an extra  
special  
**SMS:HUB**  
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**It's a most  
wonderful time  
of the year.**

**A time to #ShareWithBear in  
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Our latest report is now available to download online.

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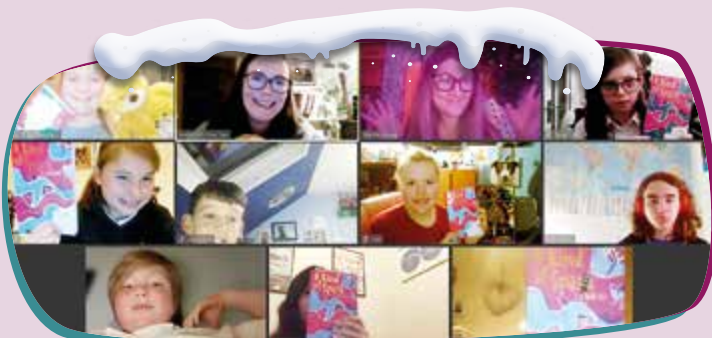
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# Our latest Annual Review and Impact Report 2021-22

**O**ur latest report is now available to download online and it is full of information about how we help children, young people, families, carers, and professionals, and how we plan to continue providing essential services in the future.

The global pandemic has changed the way we work but not our aim and objectives. From its onset, and throughout the past year we have continued to ensure that the health and wellbeing of children and young people has remained at the heart of all we do.

The pandemic has forced us to find new and innovative ways of working so that we can continue to provide much needed support to children and young people with health conditions. Through listening, learning, improving, and upscaling, we have internally modified to meet new external demands. As a result, the charity now has four distinct services:

1. Children and Young People Health and Wellbeing Services
2. Care Experienced Children and Young People Services
3. Children and Young People Health Rights Services
4. Corporate Services

Commenting on the publication Professor Richard Olver, Chair of Children's Health Scotland said: *"When you read through our Annual Review and Impact Report our commitment to do all we can to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people is evident. The services our staff provide are truly impressive and it is with real pride that we capture and showcase some of this work in the report."*

Looking to the future, Children's Health Scotland will remain focused on supporting the health and

wellbeing of children and young people through the provision of our four main services, whilst adhering to our mission, values, and five key strategic priorities as outlined in our strategy.

Helen Forrest, Chief Executive of Children's Health Scotland added: *"We understand that the next few years will continue to be extremely challenging as we emerge from the pandemic into a cost-of-living crisis, but we will remain committed to doing everything possible to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people and those who love and support them. This cannot be achieved without the continued hard work, knowledge and enthusiasm of our staff, the dedication of our supporters and volunteers, and the generosity of our funders. It will be my privilege to work with them to ensure the right of every child to the best possible health."*

To view the report, visit [www.childrenshealthscotland.org](http://www.childrenshealthscotland.org)



*Richard Olver*  
**Prof Richard Olver**  
Chair,  
Children's Health Scotland



*Helen Forrest*  
**Helen Forrest**  
Chief Executive,  
Children's Health Scotland







# The Great SPOTacular Appeal Night with BBC Children in Need!

by Beth Davidson



**B**BC Children in Need fund our Children and Young People Health and Wellbeing Services, so when they got in touch to ask if we wanted to feature on TV for their annual BBC Children in Need (Scotland) Appeal Show, we were absolutely delighted and had to say YES!

Our Young Volunteer, Eve McLaren, and Corporate Services Coordinator, Beth Davidson, were invited to talk about our award-winning Self-Management Skills (SMS) Programme, SMS:CONNECT. Eve took part in both our online programme, SMS:CONNECT, and our in-person programme, SMS:F2F, where she was supported by Beth throughout.

The aims of our SMS Programmes are to help children and young people aged 9 – 17 develop skills and strategies to manage their own health and wellbeing, with the goal to increase confidence and self-esteem, learn about their health rights, access health-related information, and learn relaxation techniques. This is all achieved whilst socialising with others experiencing similar challenges and going through similar experiences. Above all, we want children and young people to play and have fun!

Eve, who is studying Animal Care at College, has four dogs named Bear, Odie, Ellie, and Skye. Odie and Bear are Eve's emotional support dogs, who help her at appointments and groups and are her best friends. She competes in dog agility and hoopers with them, with a dream to go to Crufts compete or to compete one day in ParAgility in Spain. Eve recently helped to create an Autism awareness film with the help of her disability group, and endeavours to fight for Autism acceptance and education. She spoke in June at the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Conference in Liverpool with The Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, Bruce Adamson. In September she spoke at our 'My Health, My Rights' Conference in September.

Eve and Beth were invited to attend the live Great SPOTacular Appeal Night on Friday 18 November at the BBC studios in Glasgow, which was very exciting! Commenting on the occasion Beth said: "It was truly a Pudsey filled event, with the night hosted by journalist and broadcaster, Jackie Bird, and filled with music from Boyzlife and Brooke Combe. Special guests included River City stars, Jordan Young and Joyce Falconer and comedian Farmer Jim Smith. Our own



*Bear even got to meet Pudsey which was fantastic.*

*"It was amazing watching live TV unfold right in front of you and wonderful to hear about the incredible work and organisations that Children in Need support all over Scotland. Watching the film was a truly magical moment and an incredible opportunity to spread the word about our SMS Programmes for children and young people with health conditions all across Scotland."*

Our SMS Programmes are provided FREE at the point of delivery as they are funded by grants and donations.

Helen Forrest, Chief Executive of Children's Health Scotland added:







*"I would like to take this opportunity to send big bear hugs and a huge thank you to BBC Children in Need who donate a fantastic £10,000 each year towards our SMS Programmes. We couldn't run these SMS Programmes without their support."*

*"All of our SMS Programmes are designed to encourage children and young people to improve the relationship they have with their health and wellbeing whilst building their confidence and self-esteem. During the SMS Programmes our children and young people meet others who understand how it feels to cope with a health condition, as living with one can be overwhelming and isolating. We cover a range of topics with direction from the young people themselves and take the time to listen to them whilst*

*having fun. One of the great things about our SMS Programmes is that you don't need a diagnosis to take part, and referrals can be made easily through our website. So, if you think you may know a child or young person who might benefit from one of our SMS Programmes then I would encourage you to get in touch with us."*



To find out more information or to make a referral to an SMS Programme, please go to **[www.childrenshealthscotland.org](http://www.childrenshealthscotland.org)**





# It's a most wonderful A time to #Share

**W**e really are approaching one of the most wonderful times of the year. It's a time to be with those you love, wrap up warm, drink hot chocolate, and share some precious memories you've made over the past year. This season we're doing the same at Children's Health Scotland with our Festive Advent Calendar showcasing some of our highlights over the past year, the friends we've connected with, and the occasions we've celebrated.

## Join us for our jolly 'A Year with Bear' Festive Advent Calendar

Children's Health Scotland has achieved so much this year... and so has Bear! Join Bear as he shares his favourite moments and memories from 2022. There will be tons of fun (and CHOCOLATE!)

As the leading children's health charity in Scotland, we are proud to deliver health and wellbeing services directly to children and young people. We are the only charity dedicated to informing, promoting, and campaigning on behalf of the healthcare needs and rights of all children and young people. We provide expertise and information to those who need it, we are the voice for children's health issues, and we have championed health-related play in hospital and at home for decades.



Meeting our young volunteers!



Clowning around with the Clown Doctors!



Getting ready for dental workshops



Speaking at a very important conference

With all this in mind, 2022 has been an amazing year for us and the people we support. We hosted an incredible conference, expanded our team, and helped many children and young people, carers and professionals. Our festive Advent Calendar has given

us the opportunity to celebrate the extraordinary things that have happened this year, especially when we've had the privilege to work with others to make sure every child has the right to the best possible health!





# ful time of the year.

# reWithBear!

Interested? Here's how you can join in.

## THREE WAYS FOR YOU TO #ShareWithBear



### 1. Join us on social media, email newsletter, and the Children's Health Scotland website

Every day from 1 – 25 December, Bear will share the highlights of their year with you. You can join us on Facebook (@ChildrensHealthScotland) and Twitter (@ChildHealthScot) to watch daily videos where Bear opens our Festive Advent Calendar and reminisces about some fabulous occasions over the past year (followed by eating a chocolate coin, of course).

You can also join us on our bespoke #ShareWithBear Festive landing page, where each day, one fabulous Bear experience from 2022 will be revealed.

### 2. Share your best moments from 2022!

We would love you to be involved. Head over to our social media channels and join Bear in sharing your favourite moments from this year. December is a great opportunity to reflect on the year you've had so far and what you are looking forward to most in 2023.

Was it a family holiday, a friends birthday party, or an amazing piece of news you received?

Did you achieve any goals or a New Year resolution which you want to celebrate? Let us know with the hashtag #ShareWithBear. We can't wait to hear about the awesome things you've done in 2022!

### 3. Share a donation with Bear and the children and young people we support



Can you share a donation, no matter how small, to support the vital services we provide?

We are encouraging everyone who can to donate to support the services we provide to children and young people with health conditions. We understand that times are tough right now with the cost-of-living crisis, so please only give what you can. Even the smallest donation will help us ensure that every child and young person in Scotland achieves the best possible health.

**If you can share a little with Bear this Christmas, then we can share a lot with children and young people in 2023. THANK YOU!**



# IT'S BOOK WEEK CELEBRATIONS WITH ELLE MCNICOLL AND HALLOWEEN HILARITY FOR SMS HUBBERS

By Rhianne Forrest

Over the past few months, we've been having some fantastic fun at our SMS:HUBs – monthly online sessions for children and young people who have taken part in one of our Self-Management Skills (SMS) Programmes. During our sessions we chat, laugh, reflect, and do some fun activities together. Our Halloween Spooktacular in October and our Book Week Celebration in November (with best-selling author Elle McNicoll) received a massive thumbs up from our Hubbers and Rhianne Forrest, one of our Coordinators, tells us a little more about them.



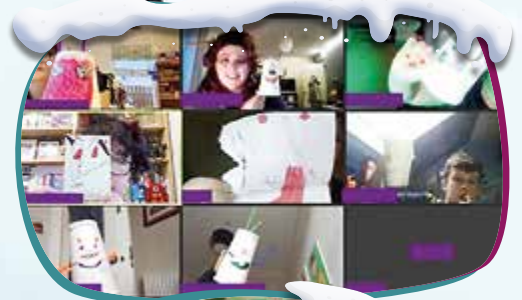
## Spooktacular goings-on

For our Halloween SMS:HUB there were some spooktacular goings-on as we made breathing stick Pumpkins and created ghostly cup monsters. These were actually very easy to make, as we just needed some pens and our imaginations. We met Monster Rager who loves chocolate, Monster Larry who loves Strawberry Jam Cheesecake and Monster Tam who eats children!

During the session Michelle Wilson

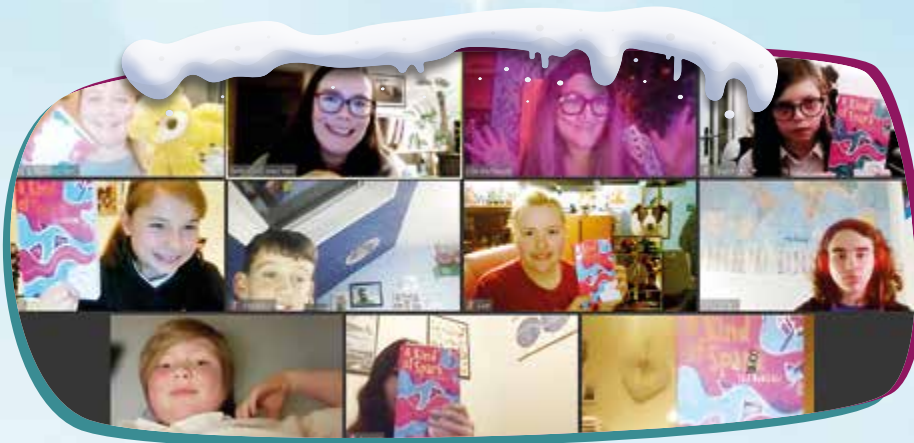
who is our Head of Service asked: "Would you rather eat gross rotten rats or mouldy fly bread?" As you can imagine that caused a bit of a reaction with some choosing the bread because at least the bread was food but some the rats because mouldy fly bread might just put you off bread!

In our Spooky Quiz which followed we learned about lots of different things! Like Halloween is also known



as All Hallows Eve, that we used to carve Turnips instead of Pumpkins and the world record for the fastest a Pumpkin has been carved is 16.47 seconds. Thank you to the NSPCC for sharing such a fun free Quiz, we loved it!





## A Kind of Spark

**I**n November our SMS:HUB celebrated Book Week Scotland! The wonderful (and best-selling author) Elle McNicoll joined us for an extra special SMS:HUB and talked all about her novel 'A Kind of Spark.' We started off our SMS:HUB with a Scavenger Hunt based on the book, finding things that helped soothe us and things we love talking about - just like Addie in the novel. After a fun filled game, we then gathered and got to ask Elle some of our burning questions.

**“ I loved it! It was great hearing about the TV show! – Sonya ”**

**'What inspired you to write the book?'**

She told us the inspiration for writing 'A Kind of Spark' came from her own experiences but she wanted a heroine who was Autistic that got to go on adventures (which we loved).

**'Is the book based on real people? Did you live in a small town like Juniper?'**

Elle explained that Juniper wasn't real but she did grow up in a small town.

**'Was it hard writing about bullying and did you experience bullying yourself?'**

Elle also spoke to us about bullying and how we might come across people like Emily and Miss Murphy in our lives and it is good to know we aren't alone and talking about it can help a lot! Which is great advice and a lot of us found it hard to read but comforting to know we aren't alone.

**'Why did you pick sharks as Addie's favourite animal? Are Sharks your favourite too?'**

Sharks are Elle's favourite animal too and we all talked about how cool they are!

**'Do you think we should learn more about why the Witch Trials happened in school and not just about the killing?'**

Talking about the women who were called Witches in Scotland as people was very important to Elle. Although Maggie, Mary and Jean weren't real people their stories very much are.

**'Do you have more books coming out? When does the TV show come out and where can we watch it?'**

Elle does have more books coming out and the TV adaptation of 'A Kind of Spark' will be coming out on the BBC, so keep your eyes peeled!

**“ ‘I read the book twice!’ – Katie ”**

Elle McNicoll is a bestselling and award-winning novelist. Her debut, A Kind of Spark, won the Blue Peter Book Award and the Overall Waterstones Children's Book Prize, as well as Blackwell's Book of 2020. She is Carnegie nominated, and was shortlisted for the Books Are My Bag Awards 2020, the Branford Boase Award and The Little Rebels Award. Her second novel, Show Us Who You Are, was Blackwell's Book of the Month and one of The Bookseller's Best Books of 2021. She is an advocate for better representation of neurodiversity in publishing, and currently lives in East London.







# Talks, presentations and workshops from Children's Health Scotland – could this be something for YOU?

- Are you the parent or carer of a child or young person?
- Do you work with children and young people? Maybe you are a health professional, work in education or in a voluntary service?
- Are you training to be a nurse, doctor, teacher, social worker?
- Are you a child or young person at school or in a youth organisation?



If you said YES to any of the above questions, you should get in touch with us by emailing **enquiries@childrenshealthscotland.org** to find out about a session with one of our colleagues.

Here are some of the comments we got when we asked childcare students what the most important learning had been for them after receiving one of our training sessions:

- "That children really do have choices."
- "That if children don't receive the correct rights, it can affect them."
- "The rights of children having education whilst in hospital."
- "The importance of rights impacting the way a child is cared for."



A lady who had attended our talk to her women's group said: *"It was such a good presentation and gave us all a real insight into how much you offer. It was particularly interesting to have your work linked to the rights of children."*

After attending one of our full day Special Smiles training courses, a Dental Health Professional said: *"The course was very enjoyable and has given me a nice boost in my job as a CHILDSMILE Dental Health Support Worker. I will practice these skills in the community and will use this information in my many different scenarios in both my work life and my own life. All great."*







Our workshops for Foster and Kinship Carers are themed around topics that are particularly relevant for these groups. Some of the comments we've received following these Workshops include:

*"I really appreciate sharing ideas with other people. You come into the Workshop, and you are listened to, believed, and supported by others in the same position."* Kinship Carer

*"This Workshop has given me coping mechanisms to research and practise. It made me think about the impact of loss as an adult and how much more difficult this must be for a child."* Foster Carer

Judging by the feedback we receive, we are confident that our sessions are interactive, entertaining, and informative with most participants wanting to keep in touch with us.

*"I've now joined your mailing list, as I'm interested in exploring information on your website, ongoing events, and information sessions. I will also pass it on to other members of our patient support group."*

*"I feel more confident in my knowledge to share with families."*

*"Great training day and I gained lots of knowledge also some good practice to take back to my project."*

*"The overall training was interesting and informative. The speakers were excellent and approached issues in unique ways."*

The children we have worked with through our health-related play sessions have always impressed us with the way they think about their healthcare rights. These P7 children and their teacher wanted to share their knowledge with other young pupils and told us: *"Thanks again for your input last Friday. The children all thoroughly enjoyed it and are busy thinking about how they can convey the information to a P3/2 class."*

Another teacher told us how health-related play fits in with 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 measure language. They also wrote stories and drew pictures around their own personal experiences of being in a clinic of some kind."*

We want as many people as possible to increase their knowledge and awareness of children and young people's healthcare rights and are delighted when we are asked to speak to nursing and medical students or address teams as part of their professional development. We deliver these sessions in person at colleges, universities, workplaces, and community halls, but also virtually via Microsoft Teams and Zoom to allow us to reach people in remote areas, like oral health teams from Orkney and Shetland.

Please get in touch, if you want to know more about any of our sessions.

**enquiries@  
childrenshealthscotland.org**







Children's  
Health Scotland

# Millie meets the dentist

**9-year-old Millie is worried about going to the dentist.**

Our story book tells how Millie worked through her anxieties by understanding her rights to play, to be informed, and to participate in decision making.

Using health-related play, Millie was able to visit the dentist, who gave her control and respect throughout her visit.

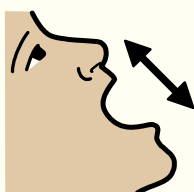
**'Millie meets the dentist' is now available to buy from Children's Health Scotland for £6.99.**

Please visit our shop at

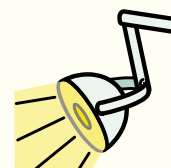
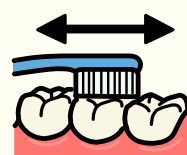
**<https://www.childrenshealthscotland.org/how-you-can-help/shop/>**  
To purchase your very own copy of this book.



The second half of 'Millie meets the Dentist' contains information and ideas to help adults communicate with children, how to create a personalised story and includes links to helpful downloads.



The 'grown-up' section of the book provides ideas on how to communicate and play with your child, how to create a personalised story and includes links to helpful downloads.





# ON SALE NOW

**O**ur latest book 'Millie meets the Dentist' is now available to purchase online. The book looks at ways to help children, young people and those who love and care for them, to become confident about going to the dentist. It is dedicated to Millie and other children who benefit from being well prepared for new situations.

The book was written by our own Dagmar Kerr, Coordinator, Children and Young People Health Rights Services and Amy Joss who is an expert in health rights and health-related play. It was originally launched at our My Health, My Rights Conference, with each attendee receiving a copy in their delegate bag, and sales have been increasing since its launch.

Commenting on the publication Dagmar said: *"We are very proud of this wonderful book and the conference presented the perfect occasion to launch it. This book represents what we stand for as the leading Scottish children's health charity and the big part we play in enabling children and young people, and those who love and care for them, to learn more about their rights in relation to their health and wellbeing."*



On launching the book at the conference, our Vice-Chair Gwen Garner said: *"It is my great pleasure to announce the launch of our new, book entitled 'Millie meets the Dentist'. The star of this book is Millie who struggled to go to the dentist because she is autistic. Her mum got in touch with us, and we were able to offer Millie a dental play session with dressing-up, real equipment, toys, and books. This allowed Millie to learn about the dentist, and her rights, in a playful way. The whole experience made it possible for her to feel respected and involved in decisions about her treatment."*



*and I would like to thank Millie and her mum for working with us to produce such a wonderful publication that is so firmly focused on 'my health and my rights'."*

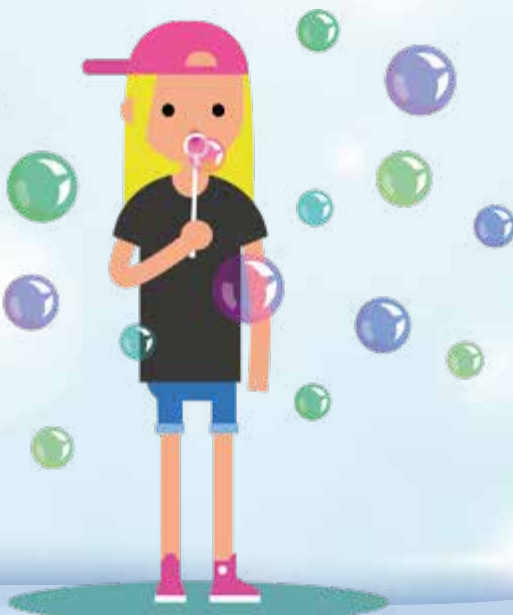
*"The book also includes a section for adults and professionals who support children like Millie. It offers information, evidence, and lots of practical advice on how to help anxious children through a rights-based approach"*



We want to give special thanks to the B Smile Studio in Barrhead for allowing us to visit with Millie and to take lots of photos for her own special book and to Steffen Kerr for the wonderful photographs.

To purchase a book please visit

<https://www.childrenshealthscotland.org/how-you-can-help/shop/>







# Mental Health Concerns for Care Experienced Children and Young People

**We recently took part in a Scotland Policy Conference on the children's care system in a session on Improving the Care Experience for children and securing better outcomes - raising educational attainment, tackling mental health concerns, developing relationships and workforce development.**

Children's Health Scotland delivers workshops to Foster and Kinship Carers on health-related matters, and unsurprisingly, Mental Health (MH) and Emotional Wellbeing are by far the most popular topics.

## Statistics and Background

The pandemic has seen a marked increase in mental health issues for all children. Previously, 1 in 10 of the general population experienced mental health problems, whereas now this number is closer to 6 in 10, with the majority of developed before age 24 [1][2].

If this is the general population, how much more difficult is it for Care Experienced (CE) children, where childhood adversity and poverty will have a lifelong impact on their mental health?

- 6/10 in Foster Care and 9/10 in Residential Care experience mental health problems.
- 9/10 affected by abuse or neglect, will have mental health problems by the age of 18 (2/3 are in care due to abuse and neglect) [2].
- 65% of Children and Young people (CYP) with mental health needs are not receiving statutory services.

The other two main drivers of poor mental health outcomes are **insecure attachment** and **childhood trauma**. In the former, the child's world view is affected

causing insecurity, low self-esteem, distrust of people and fear of the world. Experience of trauma has a clear link to poorer mental health as there is a tendency to become hypervigilant and catastrophise, which affects the child's ability to form social relationships which impact adversely on health, education, and social and emotional needs.

We already have everything in the toolbox, i.e. laws, strategies, guidelines and policies (Figure 1). So if it is not working why not? Children and young people experience numerous barriers to help:



Figure 1. Key Scottish Public Policy



- Long waits (sometimes up to 2 years)
- Mental health problems not severe enough for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Moving house to different Local Authorities leading to rejected/lost referrals
- Falling between 2 services – CAMHS/Community Child Health

It should be possible to facilitate access so that CYP are not victims of system barriers. So, can we employ a conscious bias for them and reduce barriers on ethical grounds?

GIRFEC, UNCRC, Equalities Act (2010) and #ThePromise are all key drivers in addressing social inequalities and adversity. GIRFEC is the golden thread running through all services with children and young people at its heart, where building #relationships can be evidenced as vastly improving outcomes for children and young people and those who love and care for them.

We have heard a great deal about the importance of education for mental wellbeing and the vital role trauma-informed practice and a trauma informed workforce plays in this. The following examples are just two of many supporting the mental health of children and young people.

Children's Health Scotland worked in partnership with Digital Bricks to develop the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing: A Professional Learning Resource for All School Staff (3) commissioned by the Scottish Government to promote positive mental health in schools.

## References:

1. BMJ Editorial: Mental health of children and young people during pandemic BMJ 2021; 372:n614 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n614> 10 March 2021
2. IRISS: Care experienced children and young people's mental health <https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/outlines/care-experienced-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health>
3. children and young people Mental Health and Wellbeing: A professional Learning Resource for All School Staff <https://www.childrenandyoungpeoplemh.co.uk/>
4. MCR (Motivation, Commitment and Resilience) Pathways <https://mcrpathways.org/our-impact/>

**Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing**  
A Professional Learning Resource For All School Staff

The Mental Health Foundation Scotland, Digital Bricks Learning and Children's Health Scotland have created a Professional Learning Resource for Scottish Government in Mental Health and Wellbeing. It has been designed for all staff working in schools across Scotland. It is open access and available to anyone who may find it of benefit.

The resource takes a whole school approach centred around prevention and early intervention to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for everyone in the school community. It aims to provide school staff with knowledge and understanding of mental health and wellbeing in schools and a range of opportunities to learn about experiences and advice from practitioners and young people.

There are four main sections split into bitesize topics. The core content should take around 6-7 hours to complete and there are suggestions for further learning. Learners can move through topics at their own time and pace in any order.

- An Overview of Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Factors influencing Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Applying Prevention Based Approaches to Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools
- School Staff Wellbeing

Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing: A Professional Learning Resource

It includes:

- Understanding emotions
- Talking to children and young people
- Supporting children and young people to manage a mental health crisis

Motivation, Commitment and Resilience (MCR) Pathways [4] is a national award-winning mentoring programme working directly with young people in care to redress the effects of inequality and disadvantage. It works across Scotland in 120 schools supporting 4,000 young people through mentoring group work and pathway coordinators.

Of course, it is not only within education but also health and social care where promoting Care

Experienced children and young people's emotional wellbeing is the responsibility of all working in the care system.

We asked Care Experienced children and young people what makes the difference for them, and their unequivocal answer was relationships.

**“ Relationships are the agents of change, and the most powerful therapy is human love. ”**  
- Bruce Perry





# SMS: **WHYWEIGHT** is **BACK!**



**O**ver the past month we have once again been delivering our **SMS:WHYWEIGHT Programme** in partnership with **NHS Forth Valley**. This Programme revolves around patient centred care, and the development of self-management skills (SMS) for children and young people. **NHS Forth Valley** has adopted the Programme as an introduction for young people to the Dietetics Department.

The healthy weight programme is aimed at increasing the confidence and self-esteem of children and young people so that they feel able to take control of their own health and wellbeing and take steps towards positive behavioural changes. Two SMS:WHYWEIGHT Programmes are available, one for children aged 9 to 12 and one for young people aged 13 to 17 years. During our latest Programme we welcomed Cara, a new member of the NHS Forth Valley Dietetics WHYWEIGHT Team, and together we were excited to welcome eight new young people.

The content of the SMS:WHYWEIGHT Programme reflects challenges faced by the children and young people taking part, with a focus on creating positive routines and managing stress and anxiety. Each session is a mixture of fun activities and games focused on the health, wellbeing, and rights. During the first week we get to know each other, playing the fun game of 'Never have I ever' during which we all take turns saying a different one and then letting everyone guess if it



was true or false. We laugh a lot but also learn new things about each other. After that, we learn what health means which includes our physical health and wellbeing, our mental health and wellbeing, our social health and wellbeing, and feeling socially included.

During the Programme we talk as a group about different hobbies and activities we all do and how these might support our health. We enjoyed hearing about the different things everyone does. One of our favourite examples came from one young person who said: "If I feel a bit unhappy, I get my friends together and play a game of basketball". We all thought this was a great example of an activity that was fun, and which helped with physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

We finish an hour-long session with a scavenger hunt. We play this for a few minutes each week and by the end of our twice weekly programme it can get quite competitive. One hunt that always makes us smile is the search for something yellow and favourite toy or book. We shout out each item individually and then the first person back gets one more point than everyone else. We all enjoy talking about what everyone has returned and in the last session we met two dogs and one cat when everyone came back with their favourite things. Pets often make an appearance during our Programmes.

It is always a buzz when the young people feedback to us on how much they are enjoying the sessions and how much they look forward to Thursdays!



# Join in with our Scavenger Hunt

The young people on our SMS:WHYWEIGHT PROGRAMMES love this activity, so why not have a go yourself?

## FIND...

1

### One thing that makes me smile

For this one, Bear found his new buddy, Atlas the Golden Retriever, because this new friendship always makes Bear smile!

What makes you smile?



**TICK HERE**



2

### Something yellow

Bear found his yellow raincoat which always keeps him warm and dry in the wet Scottish weather. (Bear also found a new feline friend who wanted to say hello!)

What yellow items can you spot around you?



**TICK HERE**



3

### A favourite toy or book

Bear's favourite book right now is 'A Kind of Spark' by Elle McNicoll. Bear was so excited to meet Elle at the recent SMS:HUB and ask her all about this book.

What is your favourite book or toy right now?



**TICK HERE**







# Referrals are now open for our SMS Programmes

By Eilidh Findlay

The health and wellbeing of children and young people lies at the heart of our work. Being experts in our sector, we understand that living with a health condition can be overwhelming and isolating for children and young people. To support them we deliver award-winning Self-Management Skills (SMS) Programmes which have been developed with the direct input of children and young people. These SMS Programmes are delivered face-to-face in Edinburgh or offered nationally online. So, if you are a child or young person living with a health condition, or know someone who is, we would encourage you to contact us or make a referral.

## What does Self-Management mean?

Self-Management means improving the relationship that you have with your health and wellbeing whilst building your confidence and self-esteem and we run a range of SMS Programmes. Our team support children and young people to access information and develop skills to cope with their 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.

## Why is SMS important for children and young people?

Living with a long-term health condition can be overwhelming and isolating. During our SMS Programmes, children and young people have the opportunity to meet other people their age, who understand how it feels to cope with a health condition. They aim to build confidence, self-esteem, communication skills and coping strategies so that children and young people feel better able to manage their health and mental wellbeing whilst living with a health condition. Our sessions have an informal atmosphere with a mixture of activities and games to help our participants get to know other young people and have fun! We listen to children and young people, and we adapt our Programmes to meet their needs and concerns.



## SMS:F2F

SMS:F2F is our in-person, face-to-face SMS Programme which is available for children and young people living in the central belt of Scotland. We offer two groups, one for children aged 9 to 12 and one for young people aged 13 to 17 years.

SMS:F2F has undergone quite the makeover in recent months! We have listened to feedback from our young people and their families and now adapted our Programme with their guidance.

The new and improved SMS:F2F Programme keeps the best bits from previous years but perhaps the biggest change on the horizon is the inclusion of partnership organisations! We have invited various partners to work with us on our Programmes to deliver activities based around our sessions and themes and we're so excited to be working together with these special organisations!





## SMS:CONNECT

If you don't live in the central belt of Scotland please don't worry – you can join our national, award-winning SMS:CONNECT Programme. Similar to SMS:F2F, we offer two online groups – one for children aged 9 to 12 and the other for young people aged 13 to 17 years. This Programme also covers the same skills of confidence, self-esteem, communication, relaxation and much more! This online service means that children and young people can join from the comfort of their home which allows them to connect with other children and young people with health conditions.

## When and where are the SMS Programmes?

A calendar will be uploaded to our website in the next few weeks that will detail when and where the SMS Programmes will run in 2023. If you are interested in finding out more, we would love to hear from you. Please email our team at [sms@childrenshealthscotland.org](mailto:sms@childrenshealthscotland.org) or download a Referral Form from [www.childrenshealthscotland.org/self-management-service-interest-referral-forms](http://www.childrenshealthscotland.org/self-management-service-interest-referral-forms).



# Please make a donation

We need your help to make 2023 amazing to our children and young people!

**£1** will buy:

My Health tip cards, full of advice suitable for children.

Guides on many topics, including Visiting the Hospital, Coping with Needles, and Dental Care.

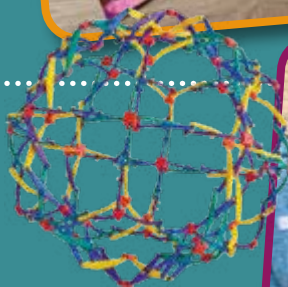
Bubbles, which are fun and help with relaxation.



**£15** will buy:

A Hoberman sphere, a fun toy used to support children and young people with breathing exercises.

A book which encourages health and wellbeing in children and young people, including Ruby's Worry and A Kind of Spark.



**£50** will buy:

A Home Pack filled with relaxation resources, health rights information, fun crafts and a work sheets to support children and young people on our SMS Programmes.



**Even the smallest donation right now will help fund our work to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland. Every child has the right to the best possible health.**



Scan the QR to donate now!

**#ShareWithBear**

## Registered office:

Children's Health Scotland  
22 Laurie Street, Edinburgh EH6 7AB

 [enquiries@childrenshealthscotland.org](mailto:enquiries@childrenshealthscotland.org)

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



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