



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2024–2030

Our values reflect the way we want to work.  
We are visionary, friendly, brave, informed, and skilled.



# CHILDREN'S HEALTH SCOTLAND

The health and wellbeing of all children and young people in Scotland, and their right to the best possible health, lies at the heart of the work of Children's Health Scotland (CHS). The charity was founded in 1961, as Mother Care for Children in Hospital and since then we've grown to become experts in our sector and the leading children's health charity in Scotland.

On 2 October 1976 we registered as a Scottish Charity in our own right with OSCR.

CHS provides health and wellbeing support Programmes directly to children and young people with health conditions and Foster and Kinship Carers. We're the only charity in Scotland dedicated to informing, promoting, and campaigning on the healthcare needs and rights of all children and young people with health conditions and we work directly with children and young people, and those who love and care for them including families, carers, educators, and health professionals.



## OUR VISION

Everything we do at Children's Health Scotland is informed by our Vision, which is

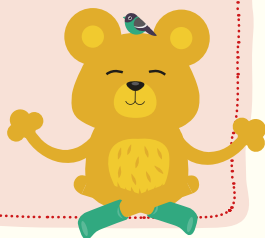
***To support the right of every child to the best possible health.***

## OUR VALUES

Our Values which support our Vision are:

### VISIONARY:

We will act as Ambassadors within our sector by continually driving awareness of the healthcare rights of children and young people.



### FRIENDLY:

We are friendly and approachable, actively engaging with children and young people and our key stakeholders. We encourage collaborative networks and effective partnerships to drive awareness and change when necessary.



### BRAVE:

We exist to make sure children and young people are treated well and are safe and we will challenge when necessary to protect their rights.



### SKILLED:

We are skilled professionals and work inclusively to welcome and support people with all kinds of differences.



### INFORMED:

We are experts in our sector and can offer guidance and information on the health and wellbeing of children and young people.



CHILDREN'S HEALTH SCOTLAND



# A RIGHT TO THE BEST POSSIBLE HEALTH



## INTRODUCTION BY MAGGIE SIMPSON, CHAIR

Our Strategic Plan, covering the period 2024-2030, has been built on the strong foundations of our work achieved during the lifetime of our previous strategic plan. It sets out how our charity will move forward from our present position to one we will aspire to reach by 2030.

This Strategic Plan will direct everything we do and has been developed by listening to the children and young people we support, families, staff, and volunteers.

Importantly it will be supported by an annual Operational Plan that sets out the detailed work plan to support our main services and our five key strategic priority areas. This Operational Plan is used to set the individual Action Plans for all staff.

The Operational Plan and the activities undertaken by our charity are regularly reviewed by the Executive Committee, which meets every six to eight weeks. The charity has a team of Trustees – volunteers who bring many years of experience in various fields of the private and public sector. They are all committed to the successful development of the charity and building on its strengths. Working very closely with the Chief Executive, the Trustees ensure that the charity is moving forward in its strategic development.

Our new Strategy, with its five interlinked strategic priorities of: expertise and information; voice; improving life experiences; training and resources; and health-related play, is set within the context of our charitable remit, and clearly maps the way forward for our services. I believe that, in working to this Strategy over the next six years, Children's Health Scotland will continue to support the right of every child to the best possible health whilst ensuring their healthcare rights remain valued, protected, and respected.

**Maggie Simpson**  
Chair, Children's Health Scotland



# CORE OBJECTIVES



A charity must have a CHARITABLE PURPOSE that helps the public (known as being 'for public benefit'). Our CHARITABLE PURPOSE is 'the advancement of health and wellbeing for children and young people and supporting their right to the best possible health'. Our CORE OBJECTIVES, highlighted on these pages, explain what we do to support our CHARITABLE PURPOSE. We're managed and controlled by trustees who act in the best interests of our charity and we deliver activities and services directly to children and young people and those who love and care for them.

## HEALTH RIGHTS DEFENDERS

We inspire children, parents, and carers with knowledge and understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and health rights. We defend these rights, when necessary, with professionals, government, committees, and non-governmental organisations.

We work alongside young volunteers to ensure their voices are at the centre of our work and of health rights development and promotion in Scotland.

We inform children, parents, and carers of their health rights and responsibilities, where to access information and support, and what they should expect from service providers - enabling them to participate in decisions about their care.





# EMPOWERING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



We work to improve the life-experiences of children (0-18), particularly vulnerable children, those living with health conditions or care-experienced children. We will do this through the provision of information, programmes and training designed to support their health and wellbeing.

Through sharing knowledge, understanding, and awareness - we empower children to take control of managing their health and wellbeing and their future life choices, enabling them to be the best version of themselves that is possible.

We further the health and wellbeing of children by promoting an understanding and awareness of health-related play and optimising its use through a wide range of play based materials.



## COLLABORATION

We lead, encourage, and coordinate collaboration between children, families, organisations, and agencies by providing or facilitating information, expertise, training, research and other services relating to health and wellbeing in order to nurture good practice.

We stimulate interest, campaign, and educate those responsible for health and transition services available to children in Scotland living with health conditions and care-experienced families.

We influence health policy, planning and practice for sick children at a national level with the Scottish Government, NHS, and the voluntary sector and at a local level with health professionals, parents, and carers to enable the development of child centred services that support their health and wellbeing.



# OUR SERVICES

We provide four services to support the health and wellbeing of children and young.

## HEALTH RIGHTS SERVICE

Our Health Rights Service is underpinned by Article 24 of the UNCRC which states that every child has the right to the “highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health”. We strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such healthcare. This service provides expertise, support, guidance, information, and resources regarding the healthcare rights of children and young people and offers popular health-related play workshops about visiting a health service, going to hospital, or visiting the dentist, using highly effective play resources to help children to prepare for visits or treatments.



## CARE EXPERIENCED SERVICE

There are often complex healthcare issues for children in care, so we tailor our training to help Foster Carers and Kinship Carers gain a deeper understanding of the healthcare needs and rights of children and young people. We offer a range of health and wellbeing support for Foster Carers, Kinship Carers, and the children they care for, including expertise, support, guidance, information, training, workshops, mini taster sessions, and one-to-one support.





# HEALTH AND WELLBEING SERVICE

Our Health and Wellbeing Service provides direct health and wellbeing programmes to children and young people and those who love and care for them. Our aim is to improve their life experiences (which meets with UNCRC Articles 14 and 24) through our range of Self-Management Skills (SMS) Programmes. We also provide expertise, support, guidance, information, and training that focuses on managing anxieties around health issues and practising skills and coping strategies to promote health and wellbeing.



## CORPORATE SERVICES

This service is dedicated to implementing best practices and is responsible for all the background tasks of the charity. These include:

- **Corporate Governance and Performance Management** including Health and Safety, Risk Management, Data Management, Safeguarding, Internal Audit, Strategic Planning, Operational Planning, Policies and Procedures, and GDPR. These are all done to ensure that we meet the requirements of OSCR as our regulator, and others, and to ensure that our charity remains successful, efficient, and fit for purpose.
- **Fundraising and Community Engagement** with responsibility for meeting income targets by using various techniques of income generation from sources such as Trusts and Foundations, the public (donations, community participation events and regular giving), businesses and others.



- **Marketing, Communications, social media, and PR** with responsibility for ensuring that we keep our customers informed in a responsive and accessible manner. We act as a national voice on the needs and rights of children and young people with health conditions and regularly campaign on their behalf. We also respond to consultations and discussion papers from the Scottish Government, regulators, and other relevant organisations. Our responses are informed by the experiences of children and young people with health conditions, their families and carers, and the opinions of our Specialist Advisors. We also deliver Scottish Children's Health Week, the Scottish Children's Health Awards, and conferences.
- **Finance, payroll, and ICT** to ensure effective management of our charity.
- **Human Resources and Learning and Development** to ensure staff and volunteers are supported and equipped to carry out their roles to the best of their ability.



# KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To achieve our Core Objectives, while growing and developing our service provision, we have identified five interlinked Strategic Priority Areas:



## EXPERTISE & INFORMATION

**OUR FOUR KEY ACTIONS** to support the high-quality provision of information, support, and guidance on the health and wellbeing of children and young people and their right to the best possible health.

**1 HELPLINE** Provide a national helpline service to respond to the enquiries from children and young people and families and carers.

**2 PROMOTION** Using all forms of marketing, PR, and social media to promote the health and wellbeing of children and young people and their right to the best possible health.



**3 COMMUNICATION** Through the use of various forms of communication, continue to build the Children's Health Scotland community and raise our profile as a thought-leader of the major issues of concern to the children and young people with health conditions who we support.

**4 AGE-APPROPRIATE INFORMATION** Drive forward the use of age-appropriate information and specially designed resources to support knowledge and understanding of the healthcare needs and rights of children and young people.



## VOICE

**OUR FOUR KEY ACTIONS** to voice the national concerns for all sick children and young people and promote their universal recognition.

**1 CAMPAIGN** and advocate for the right of every child to the best possible health.

**2 MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION** of children and young people and their families and carers in all aspects of our work and decision-making. We'll continue to listen to them, learn from them, and be inspired by them.

**3 PARTNERSHIP** Work together with health boards, local authorities, schools, health professionals, and the wider community to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people. Through strong collaboration we will aim to be nationally significant whilst remaining locally relevant.

**4 INFLUENCE** the development of policy and practice at a national and local level, with a focus on the health and wellbeing of children and young people, the UNCRC, GIRFEC, THE PROMISE, and the EACH CHARTER.







## IMPROVING LIFE EXPERIENCES

**OUR FOUR KEY ACTIONS** to improve the life experiences of children and young people.

1

**SERVICES** Children and young people have an explicit right to achieve their developmental potential and to sustain the highest possible standard of education and health. The challenge is for them to know and understand these rights so that they can ask for the services they are entitled to and have their voices heard. We will develop and deliver our services, with the help of children and young people, to enable them to achieve these rights.

2

**BUILDING RESILIENCE** Through the provision of tailored Programmes we will continue to help children and young people, and those who love and care for them, identify and build their skills, experience, and interests so that they become more resilient and are able to take control of their lives.

3

**PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY GROUPS** We operate two Professional Advisory Groups which act as advisory and oversight bodies for our work. We will continue to maintain and develop these so that they help to guide the overall direction and development of our work to improve the life experiences of children and young people.

4

**FAMILY PARTICIPATION GROUP** Children's Health Scotland is involved at all levels of planning and policy, and we do this with input from children and young people, families, parents, carers, grandparents, foster carers, and kinship carers. We are fortunate to have a Family Participation Group with 'lived experience'. It is their knowledge and experience which informs and shapes the development of child health services and in turn improves families' life experience.



## TRAINING AND RESOURCES

**OUR FOUR KEY ACTIONS** to ensure the right of every child to the best possible health.

1

**WORKSHOPS AND PROGRAMMES** We will encourage safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments.

2

**A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH** We will put rights at the heart of everything we do and support a rights-based approach to our training and workshops underpinned by the principles of inclusivity, accessibility, safety, and creativity.

3

**TRAUMA-INFORMED** Our work with children and young people is underpinned by an understanding of trauma and The Promise. We'll help others develop a shared awareness of trauma and how this relates to the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

4

**PERSON-CENTRED** We will embed person and community-centred approaches into training, including increased involvement of people with lived experience, carers and volunteers and more exposure to community settings.





## HEALTH-RELATED PLAY

**OUR FOUR KEY ACTIONS** to support health-related play for children and young people.

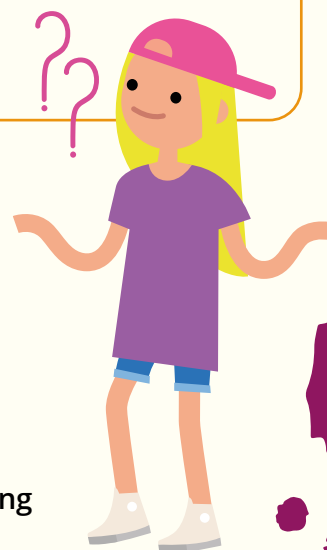
- 1 PROGRAMMES** More than just a chance to have fun, play is serious business when it comes to a child's health and health-related play can help children physically, mentally, and emotionally. We will continue to develop programmes such as FLOURISH to support the health and wellbeing of under-represented and disadvantaged children and young people in local communities.
- 2 WORKSHOPS** We will continue to develop and deliver health-related play workshops that can help to combat anxieties associated with health.
- 3 PLAY BOXES** We will develop the use of our play boxes and other resources to help children and young people understand their healthcare rights in fun and imaginative ways.
- 4 DENTAL HEALTH** We will use health-related play techniques and our knowledge of healthcare rights to help to promote good oral health for children and young people in Scotland.

## HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

**We're committed to measuring and understanding our impact, making the most of our resources and achieving outcomes that matter.**

As a rights-respecting charity we have embedded Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) as a policy 'approach' within our organisation. This enables us to identify, analyse, and record how our policies and procedures impact on the rights of children and young people whilst giving us the opportunity to make changes to enable children to better realise their rights across our organisational ways of working.

We use Logic Modelling to show the link between activities and outcomes, and various methods of collating information to measure impact. This enables us to learn lessons for continual improvement. It also allows us to evidence the high quality, collective impact of our work to demonstrate how we make a difference.



## OPEN AND TRANSPARENT ABOUT OUR WORK

We remain committed to being open and transparent about our work and how we raise and spend our money so that everyone can be confident that we act responsibly and invest our resources wisely in our efforts to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people and their rights to the best possible health.





# STRATEGIC AND NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT



The Scottish Government's ambition is for "Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow up and the best place in the world to bring up children" and our Strategic Plan is designed to support this high-level aspiration. It focuses on how this can be achieved within current national policy and strategic developments such as:

- 1 Children, Young People, Families and Adult Learners affected by Poverty:** supporting organisations that are alleviating the impacts of poverty for children, young people, families and adult learners – in particular, those organisations that are supporting the six priority family types identified as being at higher risk of poverty; supporting adult learning organisations that support adults who are at risk of entering/facing or already in poverty. As well as organisations that provide youth work interventions to young people who are experiencing poverty.
- 2 The Promise:** supporting organisations that are providing support to care experienced young people and their families and those young people and families on the edge of care; transition of young people from care and those delivering the aims of the Promise Change Programme One.
- 3 Family Support:** supporting organisations that are providing early, preventative, holistic whole family support; including those that provide parenting support; those that are promoting play and the right to play; and those that are supporting recovery in families' health and wellbeing.
- 4 Children, Young People, Families and Adult Learners Mental and Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing:** supporting organisations that are providing support to children, young people, families and adult learners mental and physical health and mental wellbeing that aren't being funded through existing Scottish Government mental health and wellbeing core funding programmes.
- 5 Children, Young People and Families Equalities and Wellbeing:** supporting organisations that challenge and promote action to prevent inequality or who provide support for children, young people, families and adult learners who experience or at risk of racial, religious, gender, disability, LGBT+ or other inequalities. Also assisting organisations to provide equality and wellbeing support to children, young people and families; those that are providing support on child protection including recovery from abuse; additional support needs; supporting disabled children and their families; supporting those who have experienced gender based violence in their recovery from abuse; children and young people adversely affected by crime or criminal behaviour, young carers support; looked after children; early learning and childcare and school age childcare; supporting young language learners in Gaelic and Scots.
- 6 Implementation of the UNCRC:** supporting organisations that are raising awareness of children's rights and supporting others to take a child rights-based approach to policy and practice.
- 7 The Scottish Government Policy** on Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) that supports children and young people so that they can grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and can realise their full potential.



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Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
[gov.scot](http://gov.scot)

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