Children's Hearings Scotland Board Paper
Agenda Item 3.4

Date of Meeting	19 January 2012
Paper number	CHS1112-039
Title	Communications and Engagement Strategy 2012 and; Communications and Engagement Priority Action Plan 2012
Purpose	The purpose of this paper is to outline the methods of communication and engagement that CHS will adopt in its work with children and young people, staff, Panel Members/AST Members and partners. In addition, it outlines the key priorities for the first few months of 2012.
Recommendations	The Board is invited to: • note the methods of communication and engagement that CHS intends to adopt with its stakeholders.
Attachments	Communications and Engagement Strategy 2012 And; Communications and Engagement Priority Action plan 2012.
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Agenda Item 3.4

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to outline the methods of communication and engagement that CHS will adopt in its work with children and young people, staff, Panel Members/AST Members and partners. In addition, it outlines the key priorities for the first few months of 2012.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Board is invited to note the methods of communication and engagement that CHS intends to adopt with its stakeholders.

3. Background

3.1 As a new public body, CHS needs to be focused about the way in which it plans to communicate and engage with its stakeholders. An interim Communications and Engagement Strategy has been previously drafted and a strategy now needs to be in place to cover the period to the official launch of CHS in September 2012.

4 Proposal and Discussion

4.1 Board Members are invited to discuss the approach and priorities suggested in the strategy and action plan and to bring forward any suggestions they may have to the Communications and Engagement Officer.

5 Resource Implications

5.1 A significant budget will be required to deliver all of the activity outlined in the strategy and action plan. In particular to develop a new brand, website and intranet and to organise AST consultation workshops and CHS launch events. The costs for these activities have been outlined in the Corporate Services budget.

Children's Hearings Scotland

Communications and Engagement Strategy | 2012

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Written: January 2012
Updated: N/A

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To be read in conjunction with the Communications and Engagement Priority Action Plan 2012.

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1. Introduction

The Children's Hearings System is undergoing a period of reform. It operates within the wider context of public sector reform that will increasingly require greater partnership working, integrated provision, more shared services and collaboration in pursuit of improved outcomes. Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) is the new Non Departmental Public Body, established under the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, which will bring together certain functions associated with Children's Hearings in Scotland.

The Act aims to improve the lives, outcomes and opportunities of Scotland's most vulnerable children and young people. It creates the role of National Convener, to be a figurehead for Panel Members and the new organisation, Children's Hearings Scotland, to support the National Convener in the discharge of their functions.

The fundamental principles of Kilbrandon will remain intact and should be reinforced through this reform agenda.

CHS is the first national body founded in legislation to represent Panel Members across Scotland. As a new and dedicated organisation, CHS will give Panel Members a national voice and will support them in their contribution in helping to deliver improved outcomes for Scotland's most vulnerable children and young people.

Never before has it been more important to promote a greater understanding of, awareness of and respect for the Children's Hearings System. This relates especially to employers, to ensure they understand the benefits they will gain by continuing to support the System and Panel Members in particular, in this challenging economic climate.

1.1 Aim

The CHS Communications and Engagement Strategy 2012 sets out the main issues, the approach and actions which will be employed to develop the way in which CHS communicates and engages with its stakeholders.

The final version of this strategy will be developed following discussion with CHS staff and Board Members. It represents a whole systems approach to communications and engagement, and includes all CHS's internal and external stakeholders across the Children's Hearings System. It should be read in conjunction with the Communications and Engagement Priority Action Plan 2012, which details the priorities for the period up to the formal launch of CHS in September 2012.

The CHS Communications and Engagement Officer will liaise with the Scottish Government's Children's Hearings Team and SCRA's Press and Communications Manager to ensure that this strategy dovetails with their strategies to prevent any duplication of effort. Where appropriate CHS will work with the Scottish Government and SCRA to maximise resources and budgets.

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1.2 Risks

CHS has a Strategic Risk Register for the recording and monitoring of risks to CHS. This will be managed and updated in accordance with the Strategic Risk Management Framework.

Establishment of ASTs:

- Local Authorities may view the new arrangements as an opportunity to reduce costs and withdraw support.
- Not enough CPAC clerks transfer to work for the AST and be accountable to the National Convener.
- Failure to gain agreement for the new AST arrangements from Local Authorities in time for 31 March deadline.
- Failure to agree revised AST arrangements in time for AST training.

Panel Members:

- Failure to retain and train sufficient numbers of Panel Members to maintain service delivery beyond September.
- Ensuring that Panel Member training across the Children's Hearings System is both consistent and high quality.
- Failure to secure training provision in line with revised timescales and within available resources.
- Improving the quality and consistency of the reasoning behind and recording of Panel Member decisions.
- Communicating with Panel Members.
- Failure to gain buy-in for National Standards from Panel Members.

Partners:

- Engaging with and retaining the support of employers, especially in the current economic climate.
- Raising the profile of, and increasing awareness of CHS with partners, the general public and employers.
- Failure to engage with partners to implement the feedback loop.
- Secondary Legislation not implemented in time.

External profile/reputation:

- Creating an independent brand for CHS.
- Potential damage to CHS reputation due to the suspension of the National Convener. The risk of uncertainty this causes for Panel Members and the potential impact this ultimately has on children and young people.

Internal:

- Creating the right internal culture for engagement.
- Difficulties in prioritising critical activity due to organisational overload.

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1.3 Key messages

- Through the work of its Panel Members and partner organisations, CHS is committed to playing its part in promoting positive outcomes for children and young people living in vulnerable situations.
- In arriving at positive outcomes for vulnerable children and young people across Scotland, CHS is committed to working in partnership with government, public, and private sectors.
- Voluntary Panel Members play a role that is unique.
- As an organisation, we are totally committed in our support for the vital work carried out by Panel Members across Scotland.
- We are committed to ensuring that our Panel Members receive a consistent level of service and training, irrespective of geographical location.
- As we work towards September 2012, we are committed to managing the process of change through a culture of accessibility, openness, support, and transparency.
- Whilst as an organisation we embrace change, we also remain totally committed to the founding (Kilbrandon) principles.
- Even as a small organisation, CHS is committed to being an effective body, with a national voice, threaded through every local community.
- Across Scotland CHS values the commitment and supportive partnership that exists between employers, Panel Members and the Children's Hearings System.

1.4 The language we use to communicate

CHS will follow the principles of Plain English to make sure that all communication is clear, concise and easy to understand. We will also make sure that the language we use is appropriate for the audience. This will apply to all forms of communication from emails and published documents to the new website.

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1.5 Stakeholder mapping

A whole systems approach means communicating and engaging with stakeholders across the entire Children's Hearings System. CHS has a large number of stakeholder groups. The level of communication and engagement with each individual stakeholder group will vary.

Internal stakeholders

- CHS Board
- CHS staff
- AST staff (previously CPAC, CPAG, Panel Chairs, Local Authorities)
- National Panel
- PanelPal users group (SG, CHS, SCRA, Panel Members, RealTime - software)

External stakeholders

- Children, young people and families who are part of the Children's Hearings System
- Children's Parliament
- Scottish Youth Parliament
- CHTOs/Training providers
- SCRA
- Safeguarders and the Scottish Safeguarders Association
- Employers
- General public (potential Panel Members and taxpayers)
- Scottish Government
- Ministers/MSPs
- Media
- SACP (Scottish Association of Children's Panels – forum for Panel Members)
- SCCYP (Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People)
- SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council)
- All Scottish Children's charities
- Partner agencies: NHS, ADSW, ACPOS, COSLA, SOLACE, COPFS, ADES
- Cross agency working groups (e.g. CHIP, Voice of the Child)

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2. Communications

2.1 Staff communications

By summer 2012, CHS will have a staff of 12 covering a range of functions from panel support to corporate services. Although only a small number of people, communication still has a crucial role to play.

Face to face:

The preferred route for communicating with staff is through face to face meetings and events. Regular team meetings should be held. Managers' briefing sheets can be produced if required to support managers when briefing their teams to ensure a consistent message is delivered. Meetings between managers and individual members of staff are also important to ensure that each staff member receives the level of support they need. As CHS is such a new body, a team building event will be held so that staff and senior management have the opportunity to get to know one another outside of the work environment. This will be considered on an annual basis.

Although preferred, face to face communication is not always going to be possible, so a range of other communication methods also need to be developed to complement this.

Intranet:

An intranet for staff can be developed quite simply using Microsoft SharePoint technology. It will provide a platform for keeping staff up to date with all the latest news, sharing documents and information, CHS policies and corporate documents, minutes of meetings, details about the Board, National Convener and teams, photos, blogs and discussion forums. It is also a powerful tool to use as an electronic records management system. A basic intranet can be set up quite quickly and then developed over time. It is worth noting that a SharePoint intranet would be hosted by SCOTS and would only therefore be accessible from a SCOTS PC. To enable the Board Members to access this would require them being allocated a SCOTS laptop. If this were done, Board papers could be accessed from a secure area on the intranet, currently papers are received via email and in hard copy.

Branding:

It is crucial that CHS develops a strong and independent brand. Alongside this a range of branded materials will be created for use by staff, for example, branded templates for letters, email signature, documents, presentations, minutes and papers and an accompanying CHS style guide. This will provide staff with the tools they need to do their job, whilst also ensuring that we create a professional and consistent image to partners and the general public.

National Convener/Board blogs/podcasts:

Regular updates from the National Convener and Board Members on their activities and thoughts through either an online blog or podcast will ensure that staff receive a consistent message from the senior management team. These will be hosted on the intranet.

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Email:
Where communication needs to take place between individuals, email will continue to be used. Where a communication needs to be sent to all staff, the intranet latest news function will be used instead. Any large documents will also be hosted on the intranet and a link inserted into an email to avoid filling up mail boxes with large attachments.

Staff also need to be aware that all email communications can potentially be the subject of a Freedom of Information request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA). Whether these are formal letters or informal emails between staff. This means that all staff should be aware that anything they write can be released and they should adapt their written style accordingly.

Text messages:
In emergencies and to enable contingency planning, it is good practice to have the mobile numbers of all staff members, so that text messages can be sent out and contact made quickly. This will be easy to achieve without the need for any special software due to the small number of staff involved.

Press cuttings:
A press cuttings service will be provided to the Board, the National Convener and the two Directors to ensure they are aware of all relevant media coverage. Any articles of particular note will be highlighted to all staff through the intranet or in the interim via email.

Staff magazine:
Due to the small number of employees in CHS it does not make sense to produce a staff magazine. Instead the latest news section on an intranet will be used to keep staff informed of all the latest developments and articles will be written online too. This will be reviewed in the future.

Photos:
CHS needs to build up a stock of photos of the Board and staff at events and general photos at all Panel Member events held. To do this, CHS will purchase a small camera and tripod to enable photos to be taken locally, with a professional photographer being used as required. CHS will also set up an account with iStockphoto.com for the purchasing of low cost, royalty free images for use in corporate publications.

2.2 Panel Member and AST Member communications

CHS needs to communicate with approximately 2,700 Panel Members and over 300 AST Members. In order to be effective, it is important to understand the needs of this diverse group and to recognise that these needs will differ. In the medium term, the aim should be to communicate electronically, to assist CHS with its environmental obligations. However, CHS needs to start communicating with this group immediately. Not all Panel Members have an email address, which may reflect that some are not keen IT users so this creates a challenge in itself. As a result a wide range of communications methods, including some more traditional paper-based methods, will need to be used. CHS also needs to ensure that we do not solely rely on Panel Chairs to cascade information to their Panel Members as we know that this does not happen in a consistent manner across Scotland.

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Newsletter:
Panel Members and AST Members already receive a 'Children's Hearings Reform Newsletter' which is written and distributed by the Scottish Government's Children's Hearings Team. In addition to Panel Members and AST Members, this is also sent to a wide range of partner organisations within the Children's Hearings System. During this period of significant change, a simple email newsletter will be developed using Microsoft Publisher specifically to give Panel Members and AST Members regular news updates. Paper copies could be printed and posted to those without an email address to ensure that everyone receives regular and consistent information.

Magazine:
The Scottish Government's Children's Hearings Team currently publishes a twice/three times yearly magazine – 'Communicator' - which contains articles of interest from the Scottish Government, local panels, CHS and SCRA. This is edited by Susan Anderson (Moray Panel Chair) and provided in printed format for use in Hearings Centres and it is also distributed to partner agencies. Given the large number of Panel Members and AST Members across Scotland, it is important to continue with this magazine. However, once CHS has developed its brand, the Communicator will be updated to reflect the new CHS brand. Consideration will also be given to the format of this publication and whether it can become an electronic publication.

PanelPal:
PanelPal is a system developed by Amor Group, originally for the management of Hearings rotas and the recording of Panel Member contact details. Its functionality is currently being further developed to include an email system that will give all Panel Members an email address and will include all training records. Although all Panel Members have PanelPal log-ins, it is not yet used consistently by the whole Panel Member community. Future development work will need to include some reorganisation to align with the new AST structure. Consideration will also be given to whether the functionality of PanelPal can be developed to include access to documentation that currently appears on the Extranet section of the Children's Hearings website. This would give Panel Members one log-in with access to everything they need in one place.

Social media:
Both Twitter and Facebook have an important role to play in communicating with Panel and AST Members. A Twitter account will be set up, but Facebook should only be used after full consideration has been given to the potential risks involved. A digital media strategy will be written to explore the options before proceeding with this element. CPAC Members in Glasgow have already set up their own Facebook page, which will be studied as part of this work.

Website:
Depending on the capability and cost of developing PanelPal, the new CHS website may need to include a secure area that allows Panel Members and AST Members to log-in to find a wide range of information and training materials.

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Information leaflets:
A suite of information leaflets were produced by the Children's Hearings Team in 2011 for the Children's Panel Recruitment Campaign, these include:

- A Brief Background
- Information for Employers
- Information for Referees
- Panel Member Training
- Time off Work

CHS will own the design of these information leaflets in due course and so we will be able to update them in the future as required. New leaflets should also be designed if required.

Text messages:
Consideration will also be given to using text messaging software as a means of communicating with Panel Members and AST members.

2.3 Partner communications

Website:
The current CHS website (www.chscotland.gov.uk) was developed in 2005 and now needs to be replaced with a new one, so that it can be entirely managed and updated by members of the team and will reflect the new CHS brand. A new website will play a vital role in communicating with Panel Members, partner agencies, children and families and the general public. It will also be used for promoting work carried out by partners and will include links to partner websites. CHS needs to develop an accessible and user friendly website that is up to date, dynamic and a reliable source of information. The website also needs to be available in a mobile version suitable for use on Blackberries, Smartphones and iPhones.

In order to encapsulate a whole systems approach, consideration will be given to producing a 'Children's Hearings System' website or landing page that explains the whole system and brings together CHS, SCRA and social work with links to the individual websites.

Social media:
As previously mentioned, both Twitter and Facebook are effective ways of communicating and will be used as part of a communications strategy with partners. A Twitter account will be set up straight away but Facebook should only be used after full consideration has been given to the potential risks involved. A digital media strategy will be written to explore the options before proceeding with this element.

Newsletters:
CHS will develop newsletters for a number of different stakeholders. A general newsletter will be developed to keep partners up to date with what is happening in CHS. Consideration will also be given to establishing a newsletter for employers of existing Panel Members. This would be a first step to engaging with employers and would be used to communicate relevant events and information.

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Brand:
It is crucial that CHS develops a strong and independent brand. As part of this project, a design agency will be asked to provide a logo and styled type face for the wording 'Children's Hearings Scotland', a strapline, and branded templates for newsletters, documents and magazines that can then be populated by CHS staff to ensure a consistent and professional approach.

Information leaflets:
As previously mentioned, a new suite of information leaflets were produced by the Scottish Government to support the 2012 Panel Member recruitment campaign. These also have alternative uses. For example, a reprint of the 'Information for Employers' leaflet will be used to support a specific employers awareness campaign. Once updated with CHS details, the 'Brief Background' leaflet can be used with partners and the general public. Additional printed leaflets may also be required in the future and this need will be continually assessed.

CHS also needs to ensure that all printed materials dovetail with those already produced by SCRA.

Partner publications:
CHS will provide copy for inclusion in any partner publications such as SCRA's staff magazine 'The National Reporter' to help inform and to promote the development and work of CHS.

Mission, vision and values:
A mission statement, a vision and some values are in the process of being developed. These statements will help CHS to communicate what is stands for to stakeholders.

Media:
CHS will forge good relationships with key representatives of the news media and trade press. The purpose of this is two fold. Firstly, it is essential that the media has a sound understanding of the roles that CHS and Panel Members play within the Children's Hearings System, to ensure accurate reporting. Secondly, regular media reporting and positive coverage will help to raise the profile of CHS and the role of Panel Members, which will in turn raise awareness of this work with employers and the general public.

To assist with this work CHS will produce some media briefing sheets containing background information about CHS, guidance about attending a Hearing, contact details, the role of Panel Members and possibly the role of employers.

CHS will also respond to any media enquiries in a timely and professional manner. All coverage will be reported to the Board and senior management team through the use of an external newspaper monitoring service.

A media protocol will be developed in partnership with SCRA and the Scottish Government. This will clearly establish who has responsibility for responding to which types of media enquiry. For example, if a journalist wishes to attend a Hearing, who should accompany them - an officer from SCRA or CHS?

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CHS will also consider undertaking media awareness training for senior members of staff, Board Members and the Area Conveners.

Corporate publications:
All CHS corporate documents provide an important means of communicating key information with stakeholders. CHS will need to produce a Corporate Plan, Annual Report and regular performance reporting. To ensure a professional and consistent approach, all these reports will be formatted in line with the CHS corporate brand.

Merchandising:
As well as corporate literature, it is important that CHS has a range of branded items to help support attendance at external events. This will include some pop-up exhibition panels. Consideration will also be given to merchandising that is suitable for both children/young people and adults.

Email:
CHS needs a suite of email addresses to be set up to enable partners, members of the public and Panel Members to contact CHS staff. For example:

- information@chs.gsi.gov.uk – for FOI and Data protection enquiries.
- complaints@chs.gsi.gov.uk – for complaints.
- enquiries@chs.gsi.gov.uk – for general enquiries.
- communications@chs.gsi.gov.uk – for media enquiries, copies of printed materials, questions about the website.

This list of communication methods is not exhaustive and will be developed over time, so that communication practices are continually being improved. For example in the future CHS may wish to consider the development of a range of Apps to help support children and young people (potentially in partnership with SCRA), Panel Members and employers.

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3. Engagement

Successful engagement starts with creating the right internal culture. CHS is in a fortunate position in that, as a completely new body, it has the opportunity to create and promote an engagement culture right from the start.

CHS needs to engage with a wide range of stakeholder groups, each having their own concerns, needs and levels of influence. So it is essential to have a good understanding of each of these groups and what motivates them. It is good practice to consider a range of different approaches to ensure effective engagement takes place with each different stakeholder group in a way that suits them.

Consideration needs to be given to the levels of engagement required with each stakeholder group. For example, does CHS need to:

- **Inform** – provide stakeholders with information.
- **Consult** - obtain feedback.
- **Involve** - work with the stakeholder to ensure that concerns and hopes are understood and considered in the decision making process.
- **Collaborate** - develop options and alternatives, and identify a preferred option.
- **Empower** - place the final decision in stakeholder's hands.

The desired outcomes of engagement should be clear at the outset, e.g. is it to improve working relationships, bring about a change in perceptions, to generate new ideas, to improve services, or to bring about changes to policy?

Engagement is an ongoing process that should be built on over time, so the process should be reviewed and improved. It is not a tool for resolving one-off issues.

3.1 Staff engagement

The Board and senior management have a key role to play in engaging with staff, as they need to lead by their actions. The Board and senior management team need to actively seek the views of staff and demonstrate how these ideas influence the way services are planned, designed and changed.

Staff Engagement Framework:

CHS will develop a staff engagement framework to establish a shared understanding of engagement and to help ensure that staff are committed to engagement.

It is important to ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. In a new organisation, it is especially important to understand how everyone fits in and what everyone's roles are. Staff need to understand their role in the success of the organisation, so they understand the bigger picture. When staff feel valued and passionate about their work, they build better relationships with stakeholders. Employee engagement should always result in some positive change of behaviour which will then lead to the achievement of organisational goals.

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The engagement message needs to be reinforced, so staff hear the same message over and over through different mediums. This can be done by publicising CHS's commitment for engagement and including it in organisational policies. It is also important to communicate and celebrate success, to share stories about what has worked and why.

A staff engagement framework will be complemented by a range of tools that enable staff to participate in engagement.

The Board:
The CHS Board has a great opportunity at Board meetings and other meetings held at Ladywell House to spend time with CHS staff. This could take the form of breakfast or lunch with the Board, giving the chance for informal chat. This should be supplemented with more formal engagement around specific topics.

Asking individual Board Members to become sponsors for different subject areas like communication, governance and FOI, would give members of staff a point of contact for discussing issues and ideas.

Staff forums/focus groups:
Face to face engagement through forums or focus groups will be the preferred method of giving staff the opportunity to engage on specific projects or ideas.

Staff survey:
An annual staff survey will enable staff to provide honest and open feedback anonymously. This will be carried out using a tool such as Survey Monkey. The results of each staff survey will be used to identify areas for improvement and will then be analysed year on year to evaluate the progress that CHS is making.

Blogs/discussion forums:
An intranet based on SharePoint technology, will enable CHS to set up blogs and discussion forums – good tools for seeking staff's views on a range of subjects. However, the option of emailing views to an individual's email address will always be given for those staff who do not feel comfortable sharing their views in this type of public environment.

Staff suggestion scheme:
This will enable staff to make suggestions for improvement to any aspect of CHS. In order to be successful, each suggestion needs to be given due consideration by a defined person or group and timely feedback needs to be given to the person who made the suggestion. If a suggestion is implemented, it will be fed back to the whole staff group via the intranet.

3.2 Panel Member and AST Member engagement

There are approximately 2,700 Panel Members, and over 300 AST members all from different backgrounds, of different ages, with different technical abilities and motivations. Therefore, the approach to engagement will include a range of methods to enable everyone to engage in a way that suits them.

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CHS Board:
The CHS Board has a crucial role to play in engaging with Panel and AST Members. Board meetings provide an opportunity for this to happen. Previously, evening dinners have been hosted by the Board, to which a number of local Panel Members have been invited. These dinner meetings should continue as a way of engaging with Panel and AST Members.

Any views or concerns raised at these meetings will be fed back to the senior management team, so that answers or explanations can be communicated to the wider Panel Member community via the established methods of communication. Alternate Board meetings will be held in locations outwith Edinburgh to enable engagement with Panel Members from across Scotland.

Board members should also continue to attend other events such as long service awards and from time to time Hearings, with both providing the opportunity for engagement.

Panel Member/AST Member suggestion scheme:
This will enable Panel and AST Members to make suggestions for improvements to any aspect of CHS. In order to be successful, each suggestion needs to be given due consideration by a specified person or group and timely feedback needs to be given to the person who made the suggestion. If a suggestion is implemented, it will be fed back to the wider Panel/AST Member community via established communication routes.

Social media:
As previously stated, both Twitter and Facebook have an important role to play in effective engagement with Panel and AST Members. A Twitter account will be set up but Facebook should only be used after full consideration has been given to the potential risks involved. A digital media strategy will be written to explore the options before proceeding with this element.

Panel Member/AST Member reference groups:
A reference group of Panel Members and AST Members will be established to provide help and guidance on specific areas e.g. Communications and Engagement. Quarterly meetings will be held to gain feedback from the group on any new forms of communication that are being developed. This format will apply equally to any number of subject areas.

CHS will seek to attend meetings of the Scottish Association of Children's Panels to use this as a means of communicating and engaging with Panel Members.

Consultations:
Consultation events will be held around the National Standards. These will be used to facilitate Panel and AST Members discussions about the National Standards consultation and to submit a formal response.

Informal consultations will also be used. For example, CHS needs to develop a brand. Panel Members need to feel that the brand belongs to them. Rather than just launching the new brand, the process will include some elements of engagement with Panel Members to gain their views on a number of proposed alternatives. The new Panel Member newsletter in

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conjunction with Survey Monkey will be used to gain their views on the new brand proposals.

Panel Member/AST Member survey:
This will be carried out on an annual basis, to enable CHS to assess its progress on a range of subjects. As with the staff survey, annual results will be analysed to establish trends and areas for improvement. Software such as Survey Monkey will be used to easily administer this type of survey.

Surveys will also be carried out on specific subject areas such as communications, to establish which of the current methods of communication work and how they are rated to establish how best to engage and provide feedback. Quick polls will also be used to 'test the temperature' on particular questions.

Events:
A number of events have already been identified in the course of this strategy, including Board dinners, long service awards and consultation events. All Panel Members and AST Members will also be attending training events during the summer months. An annual practice event will be held to promote dialogue, training and networking. Consideration will also be given to a joint event with SCRA for Panel and AST Members and Reporters around the implementation of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) 2011 Act.

3.3 Partner engagement

CHS needs to engage with a wide range of partners, but in the short to medium-term should concentrate on targeted engagement activity with key groups.

3.31 Children and young people:
CHS is committed to engaging effectively with Scotland's children and young people. In the immediate-term CHS will work with SCRA and their Modern Apprentices to engage with young people.

CHS can also benefit from other established routes of engagement with children and young people such as Young Scot's National Consultation Toolkit 'Says Who?', which has been developed in conjunction with the Scottish Government, Who Cares? Scotland's Peer Education Group and services offered by Celcis (Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland). Some of these options will be considered as part of the engagement process around the new CHS brand.

There are also a number of research documents already published by organisations like SCRA and the Children's Parliament that will be useful to CHS.

CHS already sits on a number of cross agency working groups to help develop better services for children and young people, such as the Voice of the Child and the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) and membership of these groups and others will continue.

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Social media could play a significant role in engaging with children and young people. However, due to the risk of a child or young person being identified as being part of the Children's Hearings System, serious consideration will be given to this prior to any action. This risk will be considered fully as part of the digital media strategy.

In the longer-term, CHS will work with partners such as SCRA, Young Scot and Who Cares? Scotland to gain knowledge of how best to engage with children and young people. This will lead to the creation of a framework (or the adoption of SCRA's existing framework) for participating and engaging with children and young people. This will ensure that the participation and involvement of children and young people is valued and that their views are integral to decision making, policy and improvement throughout the organisation.

In the longer-term, work will also be completed to identify any young people who have been through the Children's Hearings System and have become Panel Members. This will hopefully establish an ambassador for the Children's Hearings System, whose story of how the System helped them can be told, which may in turn help inspire other young people in similar situations.

All work with children and young people needs to be considered in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12: "..the child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting them.." and Article 13: "..the child shall have the right to freedom of expression.."

3.32 Scottish Government

The responsibility for all the functions relating to Children's Hearings, currently carried out by the Scottish Government's Children's Hearings Team, will need to transfer to CHS before the implementation of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act in September 2012.

This will require each member of the Children's Hearings Team and CHS staff engaging on a regular basis to ensure that a comprehensive handover plan is put in place. All the functions that need to be transferred will need to be documented, the necessary training completed and associated information and documentation migrated.

Individuals within each staff group have already started this process, but a more formal procedure needs to be implemented and managed by the respective management teams. This work will commence with a meeting of all staff from both organisations in early February.

3.33 SCRA

Because of the important roles played by both CHS and SCRA within the Children's Hearings system, it is essential that effective engagement between the two organisations takes place at all levels.

Board/Senior management

Six weekly meetings already take place between the National Convener/Chief Executive Officer of CHS and the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive Officer of SCRA. The plan is for these meetings to continue along with the attendance of the chairs of both CHS's and

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SCRA's Boards at alternate meetings. Both organisations also carry out joint training and strategy planning sessions, which will also continue.

Operational staff
Joint events between Panel Members/AST members and SCRA's Children's Reporters will help to promote better working relationships between these key groups of people.

Communications staff
Regular meetings/contact will be organised to ensure that each is aware of the others plans and that key messages are communicated between the organisations as required. In addition, it is essential to make sure that communications and engagement strategies align with each other to avoid any duplication of effort, and that where appropriate resources are pooled to deliver a piece of work.

Shared Services
As SCRA provides a number of services to CHS e.g. HR, training and finance, staff will have the opportunity to meet one another. This will improve working relationships and will make discussing sensitive or personal issues with HR much easier.

3.34 Employers:
Due to the current economic climate, employers may be more reluctant than ever to support Panel Members in a workplace where budget cuts have lead to a reduction in staff numbers. It is even more essential therefore that CHS engages with employers to retain and grow their support of Panel Members. There are a number of tools that will support this:

Electronic communication: create an electronic newsletter to communicate with employers of existing Panel Members. This will inform and help build relationships, it may also provide a source of testimonials and supportive employers to help raise awareness. Short electronic surveys using Survey Monkey will be included in the newsletter to gain feedback.

Social media: CHS will use social media campaigns within the business community to raise awareness of the valuable work that Panel Members do. As previously mentioned, a digital media strategy should be written to explore the options before proceeding in full.

Podcasts: CHS will consider producing podcasts of employers talking about the benefits of supporting a member of staff to become a Panel Member, and podcasts of young people talking about the ways in which Panel Members help to improve their lives. These will be placed on internet sites (CHS website, SG website, YouTube Facebook, Twitter).

Information leaflets: the employers leaflet used for the 2012 Panel Member Recruitment Campaign will be used to support any work with employers.

Employers recruitment campaign: CHS will consider enlisting the services of the specialist agencies involved in the Panel Member recruitment campaign to help sell the benefits of supporting Panel Members to Scottish employers. This would include a range of printed and online material, podcasts, a social media campaign and events at large employers in Scotland. The campaign would highlight the benefits of transferable skills to employers as well as corporate social responsibility. A kite mark system and logo could be developed to

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recognise employers who support Panel Members by signing up to a 'contract' offering Panel Members a range of benefits, including paid time off and support. CHS will need to work with Scottish Employers Bodies to accomplish this, e.g. Scottish CBI, SCDI, Scottish Enterprise.

CHS Board: Board Members could run workshops to supplement the above campaign aimed at employers in their local areas. These would help to raise the profile of the work that Panel Members do in local communities, as well as promoting the benefits of supporting employees to become Panel Members.

3.35 Complaints:
CHS needs to have a comprehensive complaints handling procedure to enable anyone to make a complaint about the work or staff of CHS, an AST Member or Panel Member.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Monitoring progress

Monitoring and evaluation will be factored in to CHS's communications and engagement strategy to ensure that success can be assessed. There are a number of options available to achieve this:

- Including questions on communications and engagement in the annual staff survey.
- Evaluation of feedback forms following staff and stakeholder events.
- Verbal and anecdotal feedback from staff and stakeholders.
- The number of hits to the website.
- Analysis of articles in the media relating to CHS.
- FOI requests.
- Parliamentary Questions.
- Communications and engagement questions in partner surveys.

4.2 Delivering a whole systems approach

This strategy will be driven by the Board and senior management team and implemented by the Communications and Engagement Officer with support from other CHS staff. However, in reality, effective communication is the responsibility of every member of staff whatever their role within CHS. Therefore, its success is dependent on the creation of a culture where communication and engagement are valued and seen as a priority.

The effectiveness of this strategy will also depend on using a range of relevant communication and engagement techniques to deliver a clear and coherent set of messages to key audiences about CHS. It is vital that this strategy is aligned with the overall objectives of CHS, as laid out in the CHS Corporate Plan (once written).

This strategy, along with the Communications and Engagement Priority Action Plan, will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis and will continue to reflect changes and developments across the organisation.

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Children's Hearings Scotland
Communications and Engagement Priority Action Plan

Date	Action	Update
This is a working document that will be updated on a very regular basis. As projects develop it will become a record of work completed and a plan for forthcoming work. Currently it focuses on the period until the end of March 2012.		
December 2011 – March 2012		
	Mission, vision & values	
December	▪ Write draft mission statement, draft vision and draft values based on published management statement	Draft written 12.12.11 (CS, DB, RC, FG, LT)
December	▪ Engage with CHS staff for feedback (include Alison Gough)	Complete 19.12.11
Dec/Jan	▪ Engage with 4 x Panel Chairs for feedback (Ian Hart, Rhona Morrison, Hugh McNaughton, David McMillan)	In progress
January	▪ Engage with Scottish Government for feedback	In progress
January	▪ Engage with SCRA's MA for feedback	Complete 05.01.12
12.01.12	▪ Engage with Board for feedback	
19.01.12	▪ Obtain Board approval	
	Communications & Engagement Strategy	
Dec/Jan	▪ Write Communications and Engagement Strategy and Priority Action Plan	Complete 05.01.12
19.01.12	▪ Gain approval from Board	

	Branding	
05.01.12 06.01.12 **15.02.12** Feb-Mar Feb-Mar Feb-Mar Feb-Mar End Feb **14.03.12** By end Mar During April+	▪ Apply to SG procurement to use design framework agreement ▪ Complete procurement paperwork (brief for design agency) ▪ Contact agencies, supply briefing paper and ask them to quote ▪ Determine which three companies to interview and ask them to develop some branding options to present to us ▪ Carry out interviews ▪ Share branding ideas with Board ▪ Use panel member newsletter to introduce the brand and survey monkey to ask for panel members feedback ▪ Use some of the National Standards engagement events with panel members to get feedback on branding ideas ▪ Engage with SCRA's MA and other young people through Young Scot's National Consultation Toolkit – 'Say Who?' and Celcis ▪ Ask Board and staff members to gain the views of their own children ▪ Appoint agency and ask them to develop favoured option ▪ Board to approve corporate brand ▪ Apply brand to Corporate Plan ▪ Implement brand across CHS	Complete 05.01.12
	General media and communications	
January Ongoing January January January January	▪ Establish a press cuttings service – investigate shared services with SCRA ▪ Respond to media enquiries ▪ Set up a Twitter account ▪ Set up a survey monkey account ▪ Set up an iStock account ▪ Buy a camera	

	Intranet	
January 15.02.12	▪ Look at SharePoint options available – WSS 3.0 & MOSS 2007 – free offer from Visit Scotland/Historic Scotland – establish costs ▪ Write options appraisal for Board ▪ Decide which option to take up ▪ Implement chosen option (set up basic design - can be developed over time)	
	Website	
January January January Jan/Feb 14.03.12 February March+	▪ Speak to ISIS team to find out what service they can offer ▪ Establish who hosts/manages the children's panel website – do we need two different websites? Can this website be developed into a CHS website and domain name changed? ▪ Establish the procurement route that would need to be taken if brand new website is required ▪ Write technical requirements document (need to source technical expert to assist) ▪ Board to approve expenditure ▪ Consider options available and decide how to proceed based on which option will meet technical requirements ▪ Manage project to deliver new website by September 2012	
	Panel member newsletter	
January January+	▪ Get Microsoft Publisher and set up template for newsletter (need laptop first before software is installed) ▪ Start issuing newsletter from January onwards	

	National Standards Consultation ▪ Consultation due to be launched 31.01.12 ▪ Organise 7 consultation workshops for panel members during February and March	
March 01.04.12	**CHS 'soft' launch – launch of Corporate Plan** ▪ Write press release to support launch ▪ Use of twitter, existing website, panel member newsletter and email to partner agencies to promote launch	
15.02.12	**CHS 'formal' launch event** ▪ Write Board paper with options for launch ▪ CHS formal launch 25th September – possible use of the Garden Lobby at Holyrood plus a number of local events to be more inclusive for panel members.	
April –June 2012		
	Establishment of ASTs	
	Harmonisation of panel member expenses	
	Transfer of panel members to National Panel	

	Feedback Loop	
	Conversion training	
	CHS 'formal' launch event ▪ Book venues for launch events ▪ **Main event: Garden Lobby, Holyrood (TBC):** ▪ Kit to speak to Adam Ingram to see if he would sponsor the event. Once date is known need to establish Minister's availability. Would be an evening event to invite panel members and partners to. Catering to be organised. Look into asking 'The Big Noise' Children's Orchestra from Raploch, Stirling to play at the event. ▪ Organise a number of local events around Scotland to support the launch of CHS to make the launch more inclusive for panel members.	