



# REPORT

## The Foundations for Bairns' Hoose (Scottish Barnahus)

14 September 2021



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# MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

We have made a clear commitment to deliver an ambitious programme which aims to ensure that all children in Scotland who have been victims or witnesses of abuse or violence, as well as children under the minimum age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused significant harm, will have access to a 'Bairns' Hoose' by 2025. Barnahus is the Icelandic word for 'Child's House' and we use 'Bairns' Hoose' to reflect the ambition of our Scottish approach within our unique systems in the application of the international Barnahus concept.

At present, young people who are caught up in our justice system have to go to multiple different services and locations. We believe that every child victim or witness has the right to consistent and holistic support, to access specialist services and recover from their experiences under one roof.

This Foundations report highlights examples of current practice and models, particular areas of excellence and new research evidence and literature. It explores the key changes that have taken place across the four 'rooms' of the European Barnahus model: child protection, health, justice and recovery and will inform the work of the Standards Development Group as they shape and develop the Bairns' Hoose standards, ensuring the standards are embedded in evidence, policy, and practice and reflect capacity, resource and implementation considerations.

Although work on drafting the standards was suspended during the pandemic, significant progress has continued to be made in developing legislation, policy and practice across children's services, health and justice to improve the experience of child victims and witnesses.

Engaging with children and young people across Scotland to reflect their views on what a Barnahus would mean to them is critical in developing a Bairns' Hoose model in Scotland. The work carried out by the Moira Anderson Foundation and the Glasgow Initiative of Facilitation and Therapy (GIFT) provides a building block for developing a standards document that will help children and young people understand what would happen to them once they're in a Bairns' Hoose.

The Barnahus ideal reduces the number of times children have to recount their experiences to different professionals. The work undertaken to enhance our approach to Joint Investigative Interviews, and in particular the roll out of the Scottish Child Interview Model, will continue to ensure that interviews are conducted with the best interest of the child as a primary consideration: with scope for this to be used as evidence in chief, increasing the use of pre-recorded evidence, and minimising the risk of further traumatisation. The principles underpinning the Scottish Child Interview Model for Joint Investigative Interview will be a fundamental aspect of our Bairns' Hoose model.

The Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2019 is also a milestone piece of legislation in the journey towards the Bairns' Hoose model. Child witnesses under 18 in the most serious criminal cases now have their evidence pre-recorded in advance of the trial, with the aim that they will give all of their evidence in advance of the court hearing.

I very much welcome this report, which provides the foundation for future work in Scotland to ensure that every child victim/witness will have access to a Bairns' Hoose to receive the support that they need.

*Clare Haughey*

**Clare Haughey MSP**  
Minister for Children and Young People



# **Introduction to Barnahus in Scotland (Bairns' Hoose) - the Foundations**

In 2019, the Scottish Government commissioned Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Care Inspectorate to jointly develop standards which will provide a blueprint for a Scottish Barnahus (Bairns' Hoose). The same year, a Standards Development Group with representatives from across social work, police, health, justice and children's voluntary organisations began developing the standards. In March 2020, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Care Inspectorate paused the development of the standards in order to reduce undue strain across the system and prioritise resources to support the national response to Covid-19.

The Barnahus project team took the time to review the progress of the work and identify specific themes which could usefully be explored as part of the next phase of the standards development process. In autumn 2020 to spring 2021, the project team undertook a comprehensive after-action review of the first phase of the Barnahus standards development. Throughout this review, we heard from stakeholders that despite work on the standards being paused, significant progress continues across Scottish Government and in practice across social work, health and justice to improve children's experience of the current system. We heard a strong message from stakeholders: that as a nationally-agreed blueprint for Barnahus in Scotland takes shape, the standards should recommence with a renewed focus and ambition. This report outlines our key learning from this review and aims to provide the Standards Development Group with information and guidance to resume this work.

## **Background**

In 1998, child advocacy centres in the United States proposed an alternative child-rights based approach for victims and witnesses of violence and abuse. Barnahus, Icelandic for 'Child's House', has been implemented in 22 countries in Europe and is considered to be best practice internationally. The Barnahus model provides a safe, homely and therapeutic setting where children can give evidence and receive ongoing support. The model puts the rights of children first, limits the number of times they have to recount their experience to different professionals and provides all services under one roof, away from the hospital, police station and court. In Europe, Barnahus is imagined as a house with four rooms, representing child protection, justice, health and recovery.

As well as providing holistic and comprehensive support, evidence from Europe highlights that where Barnahus has been introduced, there has been an increase in the number of cases being reported and prosecuted, as well as reduced delays in the justice process.

**European Barnahus Quality Standards** (also known as the PROMISE standards) were developed by the PROMISE Barnahus network as an international framework for best practice across Europe. Each country implements Barnahus within the context of its own legal, child protection and healthcare systems. The PROMISE standards need to be adapted to each jurisdiction's systems to fully reflect the governance, approach, and ambition of the model in that country.

Standards are an important milestone on the journey to implement Barnahus in Scotland in a way that is nationally consistent. On 14 September 2021, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Care Inspectorate, in partnership with Scottish Government, will jointly host a national symposium on the progress of the work towards Barnahus and to explore what this might mean for the standards. Both the learning from this report and the symposium will provide a springboard into the new phase of the standards development which will commence soon after, in October 2021. The final Barnahus standards will be published in December 2022.

During the review, we heard directly from Standards Development Group members, members of national groups and networks and international Barnahus practitioners. We identified four key areas for development:

- the standards should be informed by a nationally-agreed vision of how a Bairns' Hoose model will work
- the standards should be underpinned by an updated evidence base and reflect the significant changes to policy and practice in the last two years
- children and young people should be supported to meaningfully influence the standards, and
- the approach we take to developing standards should be informed by feedback from stakeholders and be fit for purpose.

This report outlines the learning from each of these four themes in turn.

# Section 1: The journey to a national Barnahus (Bairns' Hoose) model for Scotland

Scottish Government's commitment and vision for the Bairns' Hoose in Scotland is bold. As outlined in the [2021-22 Programme for Government](#), it represents a significant commitment to the implementation of the model in Scotland by 2025.

The Scottish Government's overall vision for for Bairns' Hoose is that:

All children in Scotland who have been victims or witnesses to abuse or violence, as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused significant harm or abuse will have access to trauma informed recovery, support and justice.

The key values which underpin this vision are that:

- we are child-centred, trauma-informed and respect the rights and wellbeing of the child at all times
- we provide consistent and holistic support, which allows children to tell their stories, access specialist services and recover from their experiences
- we aim to prevent children being retraumatised and will improve the experience of the criminal justice process for children and families, and
- we demonstrate connectedness and national leadership to uphold children's rights to protection, support, participation and recovery.

A number of activities are being led by the Scottish Government to bring this commitment to life and provide the framework to fulfil the vision of Bairns' Hoose:

» **Develop the vision for Bairns' Hoose in Scotland.** The Scottish Government has published a paper setting out clearly the Scottish Government's vision of how the Barnahus should be implemented in Scotland; the values which should underpin the model and our approach to its practical implementation. It is the first statement of Scottish Government's intent to pursue a Bairns' Hoose model in Scotland. Scottish Government will use this as a starting point for wider conversations about how Bairns' Hoose should work in Scotland and to support discussions relating to the scope of the standards.

- » **Establish a National Strategic Governance Group.** Ministers have agreed that a National Strategic Governance Group for Bairns' Hoose will be established to provide the necessary governance, legal, policy and practice expertise for the development, piloting, establishment and implementation of a model for Scotland. This will include representatives from across children's services, health, justice, and third sector. The views and experiences of children and young people and their families will be represented on the national governance group.
- » **Develop Bairns' Hoose standards by 2022.** Commissioned by Scottish Government, we intend to bring forward draft Bairns' Hoose standards for consultation by summer 2022 and publish the final standards by the end of 2022. These standards will support a framework for health, justice, children's services and third sector partners to understand what is required to improve our collective response to child victims, and provide a roadmap for developing a national Bairns' Hoose model.
- » **Ensure a collaborative and co-ordinated approach.** Work is underway to ensure that the development of the Bairns' Hoose is in line with existing cross cutting policy and processes in Scotland. This includes embedding the implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model of Joint Investigative Interview within the Bairns' Hoose and aligning this work with the implementation of the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 and the Forensic Medical Services (Scotland) Act 2021. This work builds on current good practice and improvements, across a wide range of other related work-streams in children's services, health and justice. The work is aligned with the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) national practice model; the incorporation of the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law; the implementation of The Promise; the implementation of the revised National Child Protection Guidance and the new clinical pathway for healthcare professionals working to support children and young people who may have experienced child sexual abuse. Scottish Government will also ensure that developments align with any proposed changes to children's services in the review of the national care system.
- » **Find solutions for key questions.** Scottish Government has held workshops with relevant stakeholders to understand and consider the answers to critical questions about delivery of the model. Further and ongoing engagement will be held with external partners, particularly regarding areas of tension within the scope of our work, such as including children whose behaviour causes serious harm to others. An age of criminal responsibility of 12 years may bring few children into the scope of the work; if, in the future, the age of criminal responsibility increases, there will be a real need to balance the rights and needs of both children who are harmed and those who have caused the harm but who may also be a victim themselves.

The Barnahus concept requires adaptation from the Icelandic approach given our very different policy and legal landscape. Scottish Government will give consideration as to how a Bairns' Hoose model will interact with our unique Scottish justice system and respect the rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. A national Bairns' Hoose model will continue to respect the independence of the judiciary and the Lord Advocate's independent role as Head of Prosecutions and Investigations in Scotland. These discussions will continue to seek solutions for these key issues.

The policy aim of the Bairns' Hoose is to reduce inequalities by providing early intervention and to ensure no child is retraumatised by having to retell their story multiple times. In order to make this a reality there needs to be a blueprint, or set of standards, on which the model is based.

## Section 2: Changes in policy and practice

In early 2021, the Bairns' Hoose standards project team commissioned work to update our evidence base and to take account of learning from international best practice. In summer 2021, the University of Edinburgh in partnership with Children 1st undertook a comprehensive review of the literature and evidence. Their report describes the scope of violence against children, including during the Covid-19 pandemic, and discusses the impact of experiencing and witnessing forms of violence as a child. It outlines best practice in how practitioners may support needs of children and families during recovery. The report found that violence against children is a significant global concern with potentially far-reaching and costly consequences to the child and to society. For children and families who have been affected by violence, having an effective process of protection and recovery helps to bring justice and closure. Reintegration in society, such as the return to school, was found to be a key part of this recovery.

The research team also reviewed child rights and international standards relevant for recovery-based models. The Barnahus model aims to fully uphold children's rights as outlined by the UNCRC, as well as the international standards as outlined in the Lanzarote Convention, and is supported by the Council of Europe (2018). The PROMISE standards were mapped against the research and policy evidence base.

As outlined in the report, any set of standards for Barnahus should include ten core standards, each reflecting a core element of the Barnahus model:

- a child-rights focused approach which reduces undue delays to recovery and justice
- a multiagency and multidisciplinary team
- a broad mandate for eligibility
- a child-friendly environment
- efficient case management across agencies
- a child-friendly forensic interview
- a child-friendly medical examination
- a child-friendly therapeutic service
- capacity building for professionals, and
- building community prevention awareness and knowledge mobilisation through Barnahus.

The report notes that the core standards are based on the premise that Barnahus is a ‘one-stop-shop’ location where all of the required services are co-located. From the evidence presented in the report, co-location provides continuity of service across agencies, ease of access for children and families and ensures a high standard of service that is tailored to the child’s specific needs as well as the needs of non-offending family members. The research also found that the Barnahus model is associated with better judicial outcomes while upholding international standards of children’s rights to participation, access of information, and reducing undue delays. The model was found to reduce the trauma experienced by children and their family members during the disclosure journey and support process.

The report includes a suite of recommendations for developing standards for a Barnahus recovery model.

The evidence provided by the commissioned report supplements the existing research, guidelines and legislation that collectively forms the foundations of evidence on which the standards will be based. This evidence will further inform the impact assessments that we will undertake to ensure that our standards reduce health inequalities and uphold the rights of children. The project team will learn from developments and the ongoing evaluation of projects such as the Meadows, Seymour House, Onehouse Galway, the Equally Safe Multiagency Centre and The Rowan in Antrim in addition to other examples of best practice nationally. The Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime in London has recently published a [Child House in a Box toolkit](#) which will be the starting point for this work.

Intelligence from those working within the current system is vital to understanding the scope of service change. During the pause to the standards development project, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Care Inspectorate undertook a review of policy and practice changes which form the foundations for Barnahus in Scotland. This included a series of structured interviews held in summer 2021 with key stakeholders from across the four ‘rooms’ of the Barnahus: child protection, health, justice and recovery. Alongside this exercise, we met with practitioners across Scotland and internationally and attended information sessions and network meetings. Throughout this exercise, we engaged with:

- Archway Sexual Assault Referral Centre
- Children 1st
- Children and Young People Expert Group: Chief Medical Officer’s Taskforce for people who have experienced rape or sexual assault
- Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- NHS Lothian Equally Safe Multiagency Centre
- Onehouse Galway
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Child Interview Model for joint investigative interviewing project team
- Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration
- Social Work Scotland
- The Lighthouse, London
- The Promise

The project team held a series of virtual meetings with key representatives from each sector to provide an update on key areas of policy and practice. Participants were asked:

- what has changed in the last three years?
- what has been your learning from the Covid-19 pandemic?
- how is your work laying the foundations for a Scottish Barnahus?
- what needs to change in order to implement Barnahus in Scotland?

This section summarises our learning from conversations through this phase of the project.

## Ambition for change

In February 2020, the Independent Care Review published its findings from a root and branch review of services for children needing care in Scotland. Established by the Scottish Government following the review, The Promise demands system-wide transformation of children's services, child protection, healthcare and justice in order to uphold the rights of children and young people experiencing care. [The Plan 21-24](#), a blueprint for the first three years of a ten-year change programme and service redesign, will provide much of the foundations for the future of children's services policy and practice.

In March this year, the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill, a landmark piece of legislation which aims to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law to the maximum extent possible and signals a revolution in children's rights. A judgement is awaited on the UK Government's challenge on the legislative competence of certain provisions of the Bill.

The pandemic is providing added impetus to overcome structural and cultural barriers and has enhanced a prior commitment to fundamental reform and redesign across all sectors. During the pandemic, however, organisations reported that they have seen that many families experienced higher levels of poverty, violence, mental health and faced significant challenges. They have also seen families support each other and demonstrate resilience. Organisations that provide recovery work with children who have been victims or witnesses of abuse and violence have reported an increased number of children experiencing a high level of complex trauma. The relationship-based response to work has adapted to less face-to-face work, with greater use of phone calls and video calls when appropriate.

Organisations reported that digital tools enabled more effective communication and collaboration in some situations. For justice in particular, using remote hearings allowed the system to respond effectively and efficiently to the increased caseload. The Scottish Government has recently launched a consultation on [public services, justice system and other](#) reforms which reviews the legislative powers that have supported the national response to the pandemic. It includes proposals to respond to the impact of Covid-19 on the justice system, specifically where backlogs have unavoidably built up.

## **Child protection**

The adoption of The Promise has taken place within the context of the GIRFEC approach and continuing improvement to child protection. The Scottish Government has recently published the revised [\*\*National Guidance for Child Protection\*\*](#) following public consultation and extensive stakeholder engagement. The guidance outlines a national approach to Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD). This national guidance will be supported in its implementation by an ongoing national IRD training programme delivered by Police Scotland. Organisations reported how mechanisms for close and effective partnership working were being built on across Scotland, particularly in pilot sites, in the journey towards national consistency.

In 2020-21, practitioners have completed the pilots of the new Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) for Joint Investigative Interviews. Pilots were undertaken by partnership projects in Lanarkshire, North Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway and Glasgow. Additional support to children going through this process in the North Strathclyde partnership was provided by Children 1st. The SCIM is set firmly within the multiagency child protection system. This includes enhanced training, for social workers and police specialising in interviewing children that aims to secure the child's best evidence at the earliest opportunity and minimises the risk of further traumatisation. The principles underpinning the SCIM will be a fundamental aspect of Bairns' Hoose. It is now being implemented in other local authority areas: Fife in August 2021, followed by Lothian and Borders shortly after.

## **Justice**

In order for the SCIM to be an effective foundation for Barnahus, pre-recording of evidence needs to become the norm for child witnesses in the most serious cases. Under the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995, all deemed vulnerable witnesses, including everyone under the age of 18 years of age, should routinely be offered special measures to reduce trauma associated with giving evidence in court. The Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2019 was a milestone piece of legislation in the journey towards Bairns' Hoose and introduced the presumption that child witnesses in the most serious cases should have their evidence recorded in advance of the trial.

It is the ambition across Scotland that in the most serious cases, all child witnesses will have their statement pre-recorded rather than having to give evidence during a trial, providing that the interview is of sufficient quality to be used for that purpose. Questioning of the witness will still be carried out by defence and prosecution lawyers, with a video recording being played during the trial.

The Act's implementation is well underway for cases appearing before the High Court with a planned implementation for cases appearing before the Sheriff Court in the next phase. As part of implementation, the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service opened a new evidence and hearings suite in Glasgow in 2019 with further suites planned for Edinburgh, Inverness and Aberdeen. The Glasgow suite, which was supported by almost £2m Scottish Government funding, has facilities for Evidence by Commissioner hearings and video rooms for links to live court proceedings. This facility reflects the Scottish Government's commitment to improve the experience of children and vulnerable witnesses who come into contact with our criminal justice system. The work of the [\*\*Victims Taskforce\*\*](#) and the recent Thrive report on [\*\*Transforming Services for Victims and Witnesses\*\*](#) highlighted the need for staff in the justice system to show kindness and receive trauma-informed training.

## **Health**

In 2017, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) set up a [\*\*Taskforce for the improvement of services for adults and children who have experienced rape or sexual assault\*\*](#). In February 2020, the [\*\*national clinical pathway\*\*](#) for healthcare professionals working to support children and young people who may have experienced sexual abuse was published. The pathway outlines the need for a multiagency and child-centred response for children who have experienced sexual abuse and supports the implementation of the 2017 Healthcare Improvement Scotland [\*\*forensic medical services standards\*\*](#). The standards represented a step change to a new national service model, informed by people with lived experience. All services which provide forensic medical examinations should now meet the requirements of the [\*\*Scottish Sexual Assault Response Co-ordination service specification\*\*](#). The specification outlines the need for services to be trauma-informed and person-centred. In many areas of Scotland, new purpose-built services have been designed and developed to meet this requirement.

To further support the delivery of the CMO Taskforce's aims, legislative change was required. The Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Act 2021 (which is yet to be fully commenced) places a responsibility on NHS boards in Scotland to provide forensic medical and therapeutic support for everyone who has experienced rape or sexual assault. Significantly, this new law will strengthen the presumption of putting healthcare and wellbeing first for all individuals who experience sexual crime, and will result in the following amendment to the Patient Rights (Scotland) Act 2011: 'Regard is to be had to the importance of providing health care in a way that seeks to avoid re-traumatisation and is otherwise trauma-informed'.

Support, recovery and a trauma-informed response is an essential foundation of any Barnahus.

The learning from the work of the Taskforce has provided national learning on multiagency collaboration, innovation and transformational change. The developments in health reflect learning from innovative service provision, such as the Meadows service in Falkirk for adults and children who have experienced sexual assault, rape or gender-based violence. The Equally Safe Multi Agency Centre in Edinburgh will also make a valuable contribution to establishing Bairns' Hoose across Scotland by bringing services together under one roof in a child-friendly setting.

## Recovery

The 2017 [\*\*Right to Recover\*\*](#) report, published by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), highlighted gaps in the provision of, and access to, therapeutic recovery services for children who have experienced sexual abuse. Ongoing recovery is a central component of a Barnahus model. While this is led by many specialist third sector services, statutory services (including community mental health services) play a key part in delivered trauma-informed and person-centred care for children and young people. At The Lighthouse in London, successful partnership working between services ensures that children's needs are assessed and that they and their families receive the right support at the right time. The [\*\*Letting the Future In\*\*](#) model of therapeutic support delivered in partnership with clinical mental health teams has been recommended by the Home Office and the National Institute for Healthcare and Excellence as a key area of best practice for children who have experienced sexual abuse. Strong examples of statutory-led best practice in Scotland include the work of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health service specialist sexual trauma recovery team in NHS Lothian and the work of specialist and dedicated social workers such as the Family Change Team in Perth.

In Scotland, the third sector is instrumental and leads on the delivery of support for children and young people who have experienced or witnessed violence or abuse. Following the successful funding bid to the People's Postcode Lottery, Children 1st, Victim Support Scotland, University of Edinburgh and Children England will design, develop and build Scotland's first Bairns' Hoose (known as the Child's House for Healing). The Child's House for Healing puts recovery at the centre of its ethos and design. It covers the North Strathclyde Sheriffdom area involving four local authorities and two police divisions and will be evaluated by the University of Edinburgh. With children and families' (including carers') voices being critical in the design and development of the Child's House for Healing, the Scottish Government funded the Stories for Change work which is delivered by Children 1st. A 'Delivering the Vision' governance group for the Child's House for Healing is now fully operational, alongside an International Research Advisory Group to harness the strong evidence base and learning.

## Section 3: Participation

In March 2021, the Moira Anderson Foundation partnered with the GIFT to engage with children and young people across Scotland and ask what Barnahus means for them and how this might be reflected in the final standards document. GIFT held a series of workshops and interviews to engage with nine young people. Participants, some of whom had lived experience of the current child protection system, were sent a pack containing art making materials and attended workshops which included games, creative activities and space for discussion. Due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions at time of delivery, all sessions were facilitated via Zoom. The young people were supported to participate by trained facilitators from GIFT.

The full engagement report is available [here](#).

Thinking about their lived experiences, the young people explored what a Barnahus would mean to them. 'Safety' was a recurring theme. Participants expressed what that sense of 'safety' looked like as a colour, a line or a mark. Many of the participants associated 'safety' with a sense of feeling cosy, or, as one young person described it 'a warm, comfortable environment'.

When reflecting on what Barnahus means to young people, 'child-friendly' was a recurring term used in the documents which the participants explored through discussion and art. A number of participants felt that it was 'about the space', language that would 'not harm a child physically or mentally' and 'somewhere you feel safe, somewhere that you feel yourself and that you can be yourself'. They felt that it was essential for the children's voices to be included in the standards document, with one participant saying that 'by hearing it from another wee boy or another wee lassie, saying that this is safe...is very, very, very valid'.

The young people highlighted the importance of having the opportunity to speak to and hear from their peers who have had similar experiences. One young person said 'it made me feel like I wasn't alone' another commented 'I felt like relief that I could talk' and another said 'I'm going to speak up and tell them more about what I went through, so that they don't feel alone either.' Professionals explaining the process step by step was something which also came up during the discussions with one young person saying 'to me, it would be talking the child through every step that you do to them' and another participant said 'tell me every single step.'

Privacy was important to the young people with some not wanting to share information on social media because it made them feel vulnerable disclosing personal information; one participant commented 'not social media as I didn't want people to know my business'. A number of the young people spoke about having dyslexia and dyspraxia and how this impacts their experience of reading documents. The young people recommended that the standards document should be accessible and be written and designed in such a way as to be inclusive for all young people.

Working with an art director, the young people designed a set of colour palettes and shapes which represented these feelings, with the aim that these designs will inform the design of all publications including the logo for this report. The young people felt it was important for the document to clearly outline the processes that form the Barnahus structure using words and visuals. Imagery was an important feature that came up in several discussions as it was felt that 'some pictures' and 'diagrams' would help children and young people understand what would happen to them during the process.

The review reaffirmed the need for us to consult regularly with children and young people in a child-friendly way in order for engagement and participation to be meaningful and effective. As we go forward, the Barnahus project team will continue to broaden and enhance the representation of children and their families and listen to the voice of people with lived experience of the current system. In addition, the process for engaging with young people will be strengthened, including establishing a participation and engagement strategy.

## Section 4: Our approach

Support for the standards development process was positive during our review. Contributors to the process recognised the difficulty of developing standards, but recognised the efforts and progress made to date and the need to build on these strengths. Our values of equal influence and consensus decisions were highlighted as a positive. We will continue to follow the [International Society for Quality in Healthcare](#) (ISQua) methodology for developing standards and follow the principles of the [Scottish approach to service design](#).

We heard from The Promise, the Child's House for Healing steering group and the Onehouse Galway that implementing Barnahus requires effective partnership working and a whole-system approach to putting children's rights at the centre. Our standards development process should reflect the systemic and dynamic nature of the national ambition for Bairns' Hoose. Throughout this process, we will not lose sight of the evidence base that underpins standards, the reality of our legal system and the challenges faced by services in the midst of pandemic recovery. Listening to the voices of children, young people and their families will be central to our way of working and we will uphold children's rights to be meaningfully involved in decisions that affect them.

To develop the standards, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Care Inspectorate will continue to work in partnership across all sectors. Our Standards Development Group is key to delivery, so we will ensure that the membership is representative of all required sectors while being focused enough to deliver the ask of the project.

## Next steps

The Barnahus standards development project will recommence in October 2021. The foundations outlined in this report will inform a refreshed Standards Development Group, both in the evidence and policy underpinning the standards. We will strengthen our participation structures and ensure that we will continue to be flexible, creative and listen to the voices of children and their families and carers.

The standards will ensure that systemic shifts in practice result in consistently applied principles across Scotland. It is our vision that children and their families and carers who access Bairns' Hoose are safe, supported and listened to wherever they live. As the PROMISE standards outline what 'good' looks like in Europe, we will adapt the standards to ensure they work for the children of Scotland and reflect our child protection, justice, health and wider recovery systems. The foundations outlined in this report are the first milestone in our journey towards Bairns' Hoose.

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