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CHILDREN 1ST Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Context

Consultation on this five year Strategic Plan for CHILDREN 1ST has taken place within a period of significant change in the external environment. The current backdrop of financial austerity is forecast to continue and has been taken account of in its development.

It is the 130th Anniversary of CHILDREN 1ST, originally as the Royal Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, in 2014. In this time we have built a wealth of knowledge, understanding and experience of the challenges facing, and the support required by, vulnerable children, young people and families to thrive. We have helped many thousands of children and families during this time.

But many children and young people in Scotland are still suffering through poverty, neglect, abuse and exploitation. There is an increase in the impact of parental alcohol and drug misuse with a subsequent rise in looked after and kinship care placements.

Very public revelations of sexual abuse have again raised awareness of this as an issue which continues to affect children. We hope that publicity will make it easier for children and young people to speak up and find the help they need. However, we are not complacent and more needs to be done to make that happen including taking active steps to reduce the vulnerability of children.

New technology and the evolution of digital communication provide both opportunities and dangers for children. As a modern organisation we must strive to keep abreast of these developments, to support its safe use for children and young people and to find ways to maximise the benefits it can provide for CHILDREN 1ST to work smarter.

There is new evidence about the clear benefits of intervening early, particularly in the earliest years of a child's life, providing a real opportunity to change things for both this and future generations.

Our Strategic Plan takes account of the reducing spend on public services at the same time as all sectors experience increasing demands, as poverty and cuts set in with further welfare reforms just around the corner. It is not reasonable to continue to do more with less – the imperative is to do different with less.

We will embrace the opportunity to influence changes to service delivery in the belief and knowledge that there are untapped skills and resources in families



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and communities that we can support. We will work with them to ensure that they can play a large part in the solutions. The two strategic areas where there is an increasingly different emphasis from our previous strategic plan are early years/early intervention and in community engagement and development.

We have taken account of the external drivers including: the Scottish Government Getting it Right for Every Child strategy and Early Years Framework; the findings of the Christie Commission and the enhanced role of Community Planning Partnerships; the planned Children's Act; and the potential impact of constitutional reform, whatever the outcome of the referendum in 2014.

In many ways our strategic plan is about CHILDREN 1ST returning even more closely to our roots.

Evidence used to inform Context

In choosing our strategic priorities for the next five years it has been important for us to take account of the current information available about the reality of vulnerable children and families' lives. Our plan will address the needs of children, young people and their families at a universal and targeted level.

The issues which impact adversely on the lives of vulnerable children and young people in Scotland remain, sadly, constant. But looking ahead to the next five years, the need is likely to grow. We are working in an environment unprecedented in recent times. This is illustrated by the following challenges and context:

- **Children at significant risk of harm** - in many instances of serious harm to children members of the public or family had been concerned but were unsure what to do or who to talk to, or had tried to express their concerns but did not feel they had been taken seriously
- **Children who are in trouble or unsafe** - CHILDREN 1ST's own research suggests that 44% of adults would not intervene to help a child in trouble or in an unsafe situation because they feel it is not their business – a further 36% would not intervene because they don't know what to do¹
- **Children living in poverty** - child poverty is growing – 220,000 children - nearly one in four of all children - in Scotland is estimated to be growing up in poverty and disadvantage²
- **Children living with parental substance misuse** - new Scottish Government figures show that there could be up to 92,000 children living

¹ ParentLine survey conducted with 250 callers, summer 2011

² [Save the Children Scotland 2012](#)

with the harmful effects of parental alcohol misuse and up to 60,000 living with parental drug misuse³

- **Children on child protection register** - there are now 2,571 children, including unborn children, on the child protection register in Scotland – the figure is growing and includes neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse⁴
- **Children affected by sexual abuse** - around 11% of children, young people and adults supported by CHILDREN 1ST's services have been affected directly or indirectly by sexual abuse
- **Children affected by sexual abuse** - recorded crimes involving sexual abuse against children – rapes, sexual assaults, indecent images, online pornography, sexually coercive conduct – have all increased in the last year⁵
- **Children at risk online** – OFCOM data shows that 42% of children and young people say they have seen something worrying, nasty or offensive online in the last year, while 59% of children have experienced cyber bullying.⁶
In addition, one in five young people in the UK have received unwanted sexual content online.⁷
- **Children living with violence** - research by the Violence Reduction Unit Scotland, as part of a joint winter campaign with CHILDREN 1ST in 2011, found that around 7,000 children and young people had been directly affected by violence in the home over the festive period – that indicates that around 50,000 children are living with domestic abuse and its impacts year round⁸
- **Looked after children** - the number of looked after children in Scotland – 16,171 – is at its highest since 1981 and the numbers in kinship care arrangements are also increasing – there were just over 2,138 in 2007 and are now 3,963⁹
- **Children in their early years** - Scottish Government research suggests that investing appropriately in effective interventions in vulnerable children's earliest years could result in savings of £131 million per year to the public sector by the time children reach adolescence¹⁰

³ [Scottish Government Business Regulatory Impact Assessment on alcohol minimum pricing, October 2012](#)

⁴ [Scottish Government Child Protection Statistics 2011](#)

⁵ [Scottish Government, Recorded Crime in Scotland 2011](#)

⁶ [Ofcom Media Literacy Tracker 2012](#)

⁷ [NSPCC Online Safety Campaign](#)

⁸ VRU Scotland, March 2011

⁹ [Scottish Government, Children Looked After Statistics 2010-11](#)

¹⁰ [Scottish Government, The Financial Impact of Early Years Intervention in Scotland, Nov 2010](#)



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Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision

CHILDREN 1ST's vision for the future is a happy, healthy, safe and secure childhood for every child and young person in Scotland.

Our Mission

We will work together with and listen to children, young people, their families, communities and other organisations and influence public policy and opinion to improve the lives of vulnerable children and young people.

Our Approach

Helping Scotland's vulnerable children and young people thrive safely within their families is at the heart of what we do.

- We will be a strong public voice for vulnerable children and young people to influence public policy and opinion
- We will provide excellent services which promote the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people

Our Values

At CHILDREN 1ST we are motivated by the desire to make the best possible difference to the lives of Scotland's vulnerable children, young people and their families. This is reflected in everything that we do.

Involve others in our work - We believe that the best possible outcomes are achieved with the active participation and inclusion of children, young people, their families and our staff and volunteers.

Treat everyone with respect - We are committed to treating everyone with respect and fairness - children, young people, their families, our staff and volunteers are all different and equally valued.

Be the best at what we do - Scotland's children and young people deserve the best quality support. We strive for the highest possible standards in all areas of our work - having a can-do approach

Be responsible and accountable - We are committed to providing the best quality services by using our resources wisely. We take responsibility for our actions and are open and transparent in all we do.



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Policy focus - what CHILDREN 1ST will do to improve the lives of vulnerable children and young people in Scotland:

During 2013 – 2018 we will:

- use the skills, knowledge and experience of our staff and volunteers, built up over almost 130 years, to influence policymakers, professionals and the public to understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities, turning the concept that 'it's everybody's responsibility to protect children' into reality.
- work in partnership with families and increasingly with communities, investing in their resources and resilience to make long and lasting change, focussing on community engagement and development, so that more children and young people grow up feeling safe and secure.
- work towards making Scotland more child-centred and child-friendly, so that children's rights are at the centre of policy and practice, service design and planning so that more children are protected from abuse, neglect and violence.
- ensure our services have a focus on early years so that children get the best start in life and are enabled to reach their potential, in the knowledge that support in the earliest years is crucial to a child's development and life chances now and in later years.
- work with vulnerable children, young people and their families, intervening early to promote their safety and wellbeing and prevent the development of more acute needs, including recovery from abuse, neglect and trauma.
- speak out on issues that affect children and their families adversely and strive to change and influence policy and practice for the better. We will challenge practice that does not protect children or marginalises them, by providing education, advice and support.
- campaign to promote families having a right to be offered family group conferences to support family decision-making when major decisions require to be made about the future of their children.
- proactively involve volunteers in our work making best use of their skills, experience and enthusiasm



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We cannot achieve our vision alone and we will work in partnership with other organisations, the government, communities and volunteers to maximise our impact and bring about change.



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Strategic Aims and Objectives

CHILDREN 1ST has two strategic aims of equal importance

Strategic Aim 1. To be a strong public voice for vulnerable children and young people to positively influence public policy and opinion		
Strategic Aim	Strategic Objectives	Performance Indicators / how we know we are achieving the strategic aim
1.1 We will be an even stronger public voice and leader in influencing public policy and improving practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will raise awareness of and campaign to address abuse, neglect and violence We will highlight instances where vulnerable children are not protected and offer education, advice and support so that everybody can take responsibility to protect children We will identify key partners for our influencing activity, maximising our reach to increase our potential to achieve change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One major campaign developed and implemented each year on a key issue relating to abuse, neglect and violence which uses key architecture – e.g. annual lecture, parliamentary event, local services, Christmas fundraising appeal Year 1 – evaluation tool devised comprising KPIs for public policy and communications activity and in years 2 and beyond campaign activity evaluated Promotional campaign rolled out for Twelve Top Tips, focusing on theme of everybody's responsibility and linking into community engagement activity – three national mailshots to key interest groups per year; national, regional and specialist media coverage for community engagement programme; national and local media coverage achieved for research around everybody's responsibility, quarterly e-newsletters to external contacts – contacts by 2018 increased to 10,000 Two partnerships identified and developed each year, one around public policy influencing, one around community engagement and everybody's responsibility.



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Strategic Aim	Strategic Objectives	Performance Indicators / how we know we are achieving the strategic aim
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will proactively and reactively respond to the development of public policy and influence relevant issues in the public arena We will create an influencing strategy which enables us to develop our role consistently while maximising our organisation's available resources We will raise awareness of who we are, what we do and what we stand for through messages which reflect our knowledge, experience and priorities derived from our work with children, young people and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2018 annual media coverage worth £2 million in advertising value achieved. All relevant consultations responded to within deadlines; participated in at least one parliamentary inquiry and in one bill process each year. Year 1 - a parliamentary e-bulletin for MSPs, Scottish MPs and MEPs introduced and rolled out and one CHILDREN 1ST Ministerial visit or engagement achieved each year Year 1 - influencing framework developed and approved, appropriate policies and procedures implemented or refreshed and roadshows run through RMT, Managers' Days, Service Managers' Days to raise internal awareness. Years 2 and 3 audited and where appropriate, refreshed Year 1 - key messages refreshed to reflect agreed strategic plan and objectives, new website launched, media manual produced, 4 new policy factsheets generated; By year 3 - 100% consistency in corporate brand application across all platforms and materials obtained and maintained. Year 3 - 50% of our media output generated by pro-active rather than reactive content. Year 1 - each local and national service provided with suite of promotional materials



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Strategic Aim	Strategic Objectives	Performance Indicators / how we know we are achieving the strategic aim
<p>1.2 We will use the knowledge, experience and voice of children, young people, families who use our services, and staff and volunteers, in our influencing and awareness-raising activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure all staff and volunteers are ambassadors for our work • We will develop additional ways for the views and experiences of children, young people and families to be involved in our influencing and awareness-raising activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each year all regional team meetings visited to promote key messages, public policy activity • Two policy forums held each year to engage with staff and volunteers on key topical policy issues • Year 1 - external media training undertaken by key spokespeople and every year at least one internal media skills training session provided • One community partnership secured comprising policy and fundraising activity and linking in to community engagement projects • At least one major piece of research involving children, young people and families on a key public policy issue undertaken. Each year, a research report produced on what we know about children, young people and families using our Integrated Information Management System data. • In 2014, to mark 130th anniversary, one national conference held, local civic receptions for local services secured, a First Minister reception achieved and each activity has involved staff, volunteers, children, young people and families using our services <p>All measures in 1.1 and 1.2 will work towards achieving the following KPIs by 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve unprompted awareness of CHILDREN 1ST and what we do by at least 0.5% each year • 60% prompted awareness of CHILDREN 1ST and what we do • 35% prompted awareness of ParentLine Scotland and 10% awareness of all other national services



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Strategic Aim 2. To provide excellent services which promote the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people

Strategic Aim	Strategic Objectives	Performance Indicators / how we know we are achieving the strategic aim
<p>2.1 We will develop and deliver services around the existing and emerging needs of vulnerable children and young people with an increasing, but not exclusive, focus on early years, early intervention and prevention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure service delivery and development is informed and improved by research, best practice and evaluation combined with analysis of compatibility with the mission. • Improve outcomes for children young people and families. • Involve children, young people their families and communities in the improvement and development of our services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 - agree and act on a strategic plan to support identified commitments set out in the National Parenting Strategy. • Year 1 - implement and evaluate cost/benefit analysis tool to inform decision making and planning for new bids and tenders. Year 2 and beyond - evaluate the impact of this tool. • Year 1- further embed the National Practice Model (GIRFEC) in service delivery. Year 2 and beyond - evaluate impact evidenced through assessments and recording audits. • Year 1 and beyond - integrated Information and Management system used to analyse and report improved outcomes for children, young people and families in each of our services. • Year 1 and beyond - evaluation tools for all services introduced in line with new Inspection model and National Practice model. • Year 1 - self-evaluation, incorporating views of children, young people, families and funders, demonstrates that services are models of good practice. Evaluation tools introduced. Year 2 - rolling programme to evaluate all services introduced.



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Strategic Aim	Strategic Objectives	Performance Indicators / how we know we are achieving the strategic aim
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide joined up local and national services with inherent flexibility and sustainability to deliver better outcomes • Develop and implement a flexible cost effective model of Family Group Conferencing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 and beyond - a programme of engagement applied consistently with parents/carers/children and young people to influence service development and quality assurance. • Year 1 and beyond - more children, families and young people benefit from a menu of supports, locally and nationally – a year on year increase of 10% in the number of children and young people receiving a direct service. This will include early years and early intervention. • Year 1 - Family Group Conference options are being offered to families in 6 Community Planning Partnership (CPP) areas in year 1 rising to 21 CPP areas by year 5.
<p>2.2 We will implement programmes to protect children within their families and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accessible and flexible services which engage and harness the strengths of communities • Develop and support volunteer led services based in communities of need to maximise our resources • We will promote ParentLine as a source of support and advice to anyone concerned about a child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 – learning from the evaluation of our community engagement pilot projects we will roll out programmes across at least 6 CPP areas rising to 21 by year 5. • Year 1 – at least 3 new local, volunteer led services are developed to support Kincarers, their children and young people rising to 9 in total by year 5. • Contacts to ParentLine Scotland increase by 5% year on year. • Brand awareness of ParentLine Scotland increased by 1% - 2% per year



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Strategic Aim	Strategic Objectives	Performance Indicators / how we know we are achieving the strategic aim
<p>2.3 We will continue to be a trusted leader and effective partner and collaborator within national and local structures to influence the development and delivery of services, which promote the safety, and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create, maintain and further develop effective partnerships in pursuit of our aims in a changing and competitive environment • All staff work creatively and effectively across services and functions to maximise our impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 - engaged in at least 9 CPPs and/or their subgroups and influencing local Integrated Children's Services Plans and strategic commissioning arrangements rising to over 21 by year 5. • Year 1 and beyond - represented and engaged on the National Early Years Task Force and subgroups. • Year 1 - involved in at least 6 early years collaboratives rising to 15 by year 5 • At least 3 new service funding bids each year in response to local Integrated Children's Services Plans with a specific focus on early years and/or early intervention services. • 4 new multi-agency service funding bids per year made in collaboration with other agencies. • At every service or contract review we add value to the service by identifying and agreeing plans to work more effectively across our national and local services. Review each year.

Enabling Environment

In order to achieve our strategic aims and objectives for 2013-18 we will create an enabling environment across the organisation.

Objective	Mechanisms to ensure objective is achieved
1.Resource Management and Quality	
1.1 Deliver value for money in all that we do	Annual budget setting and six month reforecasting; measure performance against these; set and measure KPIs and outcome targets to deliver maximum impact per £ of income.
1.2 Deliver high quality and excellence in all our work	Quality audit carried out each year, outputs and outcomes for children and families are met year on year; quarterly and annual service reports on a standard format in-house template
1.3 Optimise our use of technology and digital communication to extend our reach and relevance	Conduct an annual scan of current usage and its impact to monitor effectiveness; conduct a review of new developments and opportunities to plan for continuing optimisation
2. Funding	
2.1 Grow our voluntary income to protect our continued independence and our ability to influence and innovate	Increase on voluntary raised income year on year
2.2 Maximise our statutory income to meet our aims	Maintenance or growth on statutory income year on year
2.3 Critically appraise the allocation of income against the delivery of our strategic aims	Income allocation part of annual business planning/budgeting, quarterly review of income allocation at OMT, fundraising income tracker reviewed monthly
3. Participation	
3.1 Increase the involvement of volunteers in all areas of our work to expand our reach	Increase in volunteer numbers year on year, Increase in volunteer roles year on year
3.2 Increase the participation of children, young people and families who use our services, and staff and volunteers in all areas of our work	Service user participation audit carried out at least biannually, growth of participation by all groups year on year; annual staff and volunteer surveys and attendance at policy forums
3.3 Increase the participation specifically of children and young people in all areas of our work	All departments record participation of children and young people and report annually

4. Workforce and Management	
4.1 Demonstrate open and accountable governance and management	Publish annual report and accounts, OSCR annual returns. OMT minutes shared across the organisation
4.2 Nurture open and constructive Board and Management working relationships, respecting the roles of each individual, the CHILDREN 1 ST values and the common objective of delivering the CHILDREN 1 ST Vision and Mission	Annual review overseen by Governance Committee of effectiveness of Board and Management working relationship
4.3 Develop a skilled and flexible workforce that delivers our strategic plan	Competency based job descriptions, recruitment and appraisals by end of 2013-14 Skills audit, supply/demand audit carried out each year Regular support and supervision in place for all staff and for volunteers with specific roles Learning and development plans in place for every employee each year. Leadership development programmes carried out across the charity
4.4 Nurture open and constructive working relationships across the organisation that promote wellbeing, dignity and respect in the workplace.	Annual staff and volunteer surveys Regular support and supervision in place for all staff and for volunteers with specific roles Partnership working with Unite the union