

Children's Hearings Scotland information in compliance with the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Introduction

The [Public Services Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2010 \(the Act\)](#) came into force on 1 October 2010. Sections 31 to 32 of Part 3, places duties on public bodies to provide and publish information on certain expenditure and exercise of functions. The Act names Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) along with other named public bodies to publish information on:

- Expenditure in relation to:
 - Public relations;
 - Overseas travel;
 - Hospitality and entertainment;
 - External consultancy.
- Payments with a value in excess of £25,000.
- Members or employees who received remuneration in excess of £150,000.
- Sustainable growth.
- Efficiency, economy and effectiveness

1. Expenditure in relation to public relations

CHS does not directly engage the services of external public relations consultants and does not have a dedicated public relations team, but a communications team who manage both internal and external communications for the organisation. A review of the costs of communications in the year to 31 March 2017 indicates expenditure of £20,319.

2. Expenditure in relation to overseas travel

In the financial year ended 31 March 2017 CHS incurred no expenditure on overseas travel.
Expenditure in relation to hospitality and entertainment

3. Expenditure in relation to hospitality and entertainment

CHS is committed to spending the public money it receives properly, efficiently and effectively. Expenditure by CHS in relation to hospitality and entertainment is very small and is primarily incurred in the provision of refreshments for staff and meeting guests including volunteers. In the financial year ended 31 March 2017 CHS incurred expenditure of £3,893 in the provision of hospitality and entertainment.

4. Expenditure in relation to external consultancy

The Scottish Government (SG) defines 'consultancy' as including a wide range of professional services such as management consultancy, IT consultancy, financial consultancy, construction and infrastructure related consultancy, research and evaluation and policy development. SG guidance states that 'external consultancy' does not include outsourcing or buying in technical or specialist services such as legal advice and representation or recruitment services. CHS incurred expenditure of £2,645 on external consultancy in the financial year ended 31 March 2017.

5. Payments which have a value in excess of £25,000

The Act requires Children's Hearings Scotland to publish a regular statement of payments made during the financial year which have a value in excess of £25,000. In the financial year ended 31 March 2017 Children's Hearings Scotland incurred the following payments in excess of £25,000:

West Lothian College	£140,708
Carat	£136,109
West Lothian College	£130,597
West Lothian College	£111,982
Scottish Children's Reporter Administration	£78,469
West Lothian College	£76,708
West Lothian College	£69,907
Brightwire Technology Services Ltd	£67,221
West Lothian College	£63,906
West Lothian College	£63,759
West Lothian College	£63,759
Leidos	£56,340
West Lothian College	£53,647
West Lothian College	£46,370
West Lothian College	£45,188
Leidos	£42,240
The Highland Council	£40,294
West Lothian College	£36,651

Aberdeenshire Council	£35,550
The Union Advertising Agency Ltd	£34,710
The Union Advertising Agency Ltd	£33,146
Leidos	£27,600
West Lothian College	£26,791

Individual payments above may be settlement of multiple invoices covering different goods and services.

6. Remuneration in excess of £150,000

Section 31(4) requires of the Act listed public bodies to publish a statement specifying the number of individuals (if any) who received remuneration during that financial year in excess of £150,000. No member of staff of Children’s Hearings Scotland received remuneration in excess of £150,000 for the financial year 2016/17.

7. Sustainable Growth

The primary activities undertaken in 2016/17 related to the National Convener’s statutory responsibility to recruit, appoint, train and support children’s panel members. Other activities were carried out in the context of CHS’ Corporate Plan 2015-2018 and Business Plan 2016/17.

The activities undertaken in 2016/17 contribute towards achieving CHS’ vision and mission:

“Our vision is of a Children’s Hearings System where everyone works together, making sure that all children and young people are cared for and protected, and their views are heard, respected and valued.”

“Our mission is to improve outcomes and experiences for children and young people in Scotland who may be at risk. We will do this by supporting the Children’s Panel, working with partners and using our national influence to drive improvements across the Children’s Hearings System.”

CHS also contributes to almost half of the outcomes under the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework, including:

- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.

- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Finally, in March, CHS produced its first [Corporate Parenting Plan](#) under part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Corporate parenting has been integrated into CHS' primary planning and reporting cycle and the report sets out CHS' aims and ambitions as well as the work already underway. CHS has also begun consideration of its obligations to report in future on children's rights and on how CHS can best reflect the core activity it undertakes both to improve the welfare of Scotland's most vulnerable children and young people but also how it sets out to protect their rights in the Children's Hearings System.

Further details are set out in the [Annual Report and Accounts](#).

8. Efficiency, economy and effectiveness

Section 32(1)(b) of the Act requires listed public bodies to publish a statement in relation to efficiency, effectiveness and economy as soon as possible after the end of the financial year.

Ministers have stated that they expect every public body to deliver efficiency savings of at least 3% in 2016/17 and to report publicly on the actions taken and the results achieved. CHS's efficiency target for 2016/17 is 3% of 2015/16 Departmental Expenditure Limit, i.e. 3% of the approved level of grant in aid of £3.7m, equivalent to £111,000.

In 2015/16, a revised Memorandum of Understanding of Shared Services was agreed with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), allowing the two bodies to cost-share four full-time members of staff. This agreement continued throughout 2016/17. It is estimated that, in the absence of this agreement, it would cost CHS around an additional £10k to recruit, train and derive a similar benefit or resource, were CHS to act independently and use commercial markets for these staff.

- CHS uses Scottish Government frameworks and collaborative contracts wherever possible, including:
 - banking facilities;
 - media planning and buying;
 - internal and external audit functions;
 - stationery and printing;
 - postage;
 - travel;
 - conference and meeting venue booking (via West Lothian College);
 - ICT equipment, applications and web development;
 - ICT network;
 - telephony; and
 - photocopying.

Together, the use of Scottish Government frameworks and collaborative contracts has saved CHS £39k compared to procuring all of these goods and services commercially.

CHS also occupies National Registers of Scotland property with whom it cost-shares rates and utilities. It is estimated that similarly serviced office accommodation in a similar location, procured commercially, would cost an additional £19k per annum.

CHS substantially reviewed its contract with West Lothian College in 2015/16. On-going efficiency savings from this renegotiation are £48k per annum.

The total of these efficiencies is £116k.