The Bairns’ Hoose
Draft Standards

August 2022
Your voices have been vital in shaping our understanding of how a Bairns’ Hoose should look for children and young people in Scotland. The children who will use the Bairns’ Hoose will have gone through really awful experiences so your contribution to this project will make sure that we can help them to recover in the best way possible and give them the support they need and deserve.

We have listened to what you have told us about what children coming to a Bairns’ Hoose should be able expect. It is clear to me from this, that making sure children’s rights are respected throughout the child’s journey through the Bairns’ Hoose will be absolutely fundamental. If you are a child coming to a Bairns’ Hoose, you will be listened to, and get the care you need in the way that best supports you.

I promise that the Scottish Government will work as hard as we can to make sure that what you’ve told us happens across the 11 standards.

Thanks again to the children and young people and link workers from Includem, Kibble Care and Education Centre, Children 1st, Children and Young People’s Centre for Justice, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service at NHS Ayrshire and Arran and Dumfries and Galloway Family Hub 75 West for your work in contributing to this document.

I’m looking forward to seeing this become a reality as part of our commitment to improving children’s experience of Scotland’s healthcare, child protection and criminal justice systems for children who have experienced trauma.

Clare Haughey, Minister for Children and Young People
The idea of a Bairns’ Hoose comes from Iceland. Any child who has been a victim or witness of abuse may be referred to a Bairns’ Hoose. It is a place designed for children and young people where your rights are put first and where people understand what you and your family are going through. At a Bairns’ Hoose, things happen at your pace and are done in a way that’s right for you. Children who may have harmed others but are too young to be held responsible in law may also be referred.

The Bairns’ Hoose will make sure that children and young people have a safe space to share what has happened and get the right support and care.

Children and families say it is important that they feel heard, respected and supported by professionals ‘under one roof’. A Bairns’ Hoose will help you to see as many of the people you need to in one place.

If something has happened to you and you come to a Bairns’ Hoose:

- you might have an interview with a police officer and social worker about what happened
- you might see a doctor or nurse who will look after your health and wellbeing
- you might meet someone who understands what you are going through and helps you talk about it, and
- if the case goes to court you will be supported in this process by someone from Bairns’ Hoose.
About these standards

This document is for you. It has been written by adults who have worked with different groups of children and young people over the last few months and tells you what you should expect from a Bairns’ Hoose.

The children and young people have told us what is important and what they would like to see in a Bairns’ Hoose. We have used their words as much as possible in the section called ‘children and young people told us’.

Bairns’ Hooses will be opening across Scotland over the next few years. These standards are a blueprint for adults in power to know what they should do to get it right for you, no matter what their Bairns’ Hoose looks like. They set out what’s important when it comes to planning and designing a Bairns’ Hoose and how they can show they have met these standards.

You can find the full version of the standards [here](#). The full version contains more details for people planning and running a Bairns’ Hoose on exactly what they have to do.

These standards are still being written and we have published them as a draft to ask for feedback. Your opinion could help shape what a Bairns’ Hoose looks like. You can tell us what you think by filling in our [online survey](#) using the link or QR code.
The Bairns' Hoose draft standards

1. My rights are upheld. My best interests are always considered, I am listened to and my views are taken seriously.

2. Senior leaders across Scotland work together to ensure Bairns' Hoose helps me and other children.

3. If I am referred, I can go to a Bairns' Hoose no matter why I need to go, what my needs are or where I live.

4. The Bairns' Hoose feels cosy, comfortable, relaxed and well-kept. I have to travel to as few places as possible.

5. The people who help me, work well as a team. Things are explained to me in a way that I can understand.

6. I am supported to tell the police and social work what happened. My interview will be videoed, unless I don't want it, so that I don't have to repeat myself as much.

7. If I need to give evidence in a court process, someone explains what is happening and supports me through this.

8. My physical, emotional and mental health is looked after. Someone helps to plan appointments and I'm supported to go.

9. If me or my family need help, we can speak with someone who understands what we are going through. I get the help and support I need to recover. I have one person who I trust who is there for me throughout my time at Bairns' Hoose.

10. The people who help me at Bairns' Hoose understand how to protect my rights. They work as a team and they get the help they need to do their jobs well.

11. The people at the Bairns' Hoose, listen to what I have to say about my experience there. What I tell them helps to make the Bairns' Hoose better for other children.
Children and young people told us:
• It should be about me and what works best for me, not what works best for services.
• I should have the chance to make choices about what I want and need.
• I should be genuinely involved and know what is happening at every step of the way.
• Things should happen at a speed that I am comfortable with. I should be able to stop and start when I want to.
• There needs to be support for my family and those who look after me.

What this looks like:
• The people running the Bairns’ Hoose have to show that they are upholding rights for all children. This includes disabled children and children that live in remote and island areas.
• They have to involve children in the way things are run.
• Information has to be designed with children who might have needed to go to a Bairns’ Hoose.
• When people write documents about how Bairns’ Hooses should be run, they have to ask children what they think and listen to them.
Children and young people told us:

- Things should actually change and be different for children who go through what I did.
- People in power should stick to their promises.
- The Bairns’ Hoose should be checked against the standards.
- The adults responsible for the Bairns’ Hoose should actively seek out children’s views and listen to them.
- I should be involved in the way the Bairns’ Hoose is run.

What this looks like:

- The people planning a Bairns’ Hoose have to have a shared plan for how they will run it together.
- Shared plans have to cover everything from who works there to how it’s funded. It has to explain how children will be involved.
- There has to be one person who is ultimately responsible for a Bairns’ Hoose.

What does the standard mean for children?

- People in charge will plan the way a Bairns’ Hoose runs and agree what it looks like.
- You can give feedback on your experience of a Bairns’ Hoose and it will be listened to.
- You have the chance to make a formal complaint if you need to. This will be taken seriously.
- Bairns’ Hooses will have to show that they meet these standards.
Children and young people told us:

- Everyone going to a Bairns’ Hoose needs help.
- Children whose behaviour might have caused harm should also be treated with respect and be able to get support.
- Support should be available for my family too.

What does the standard mean for children?

- These standards are for you no matter where you live, who you are or why you are going to a Bairns’ Hoose.
- The standards are for you if you go to a Bairns’ Hoose because your behaviour might have caused harm to someone.
- There will be people at the Bairns’ Hoose who speak your language.
- There will be things like sensory equipment, quiet spaces, hearing loops and ramps if you or your family need it.

What this looks like:

- There has to be a system in place so children who need it most can go to a Bairns’ Hoose.
- People running a Bairns’ Hoose have to prove how they are including children or family members with disabilities.
- People planning a Bairns’ Hoose in rural and island areas need to think how to make it work.
The Bairns’ Hoose Draft Standards

Children and young people told us:

- The Bairns’ Hoose should look and feel welcoming, inviting and safe on the outside and the inside. It should be bright and have windows in every room.
- There should be activities, games, music I can control and things to fidget with to help me relax. I should have a space to be a kid.
- The Bairns’ Hoose should be cared for and invested in. Nothing should be old, broken or forgotten.
- There should be things like toys and activities for older and younger kids.
- Every Bairns’ Hoose should feel the same no matter which one you go to.
- There should be somewhere nice outside with plants and toys where I can play and relax when I choose to.

What does the standard mean for children?

- You will get the help you need in one place as much as possible.
- It will be private and be as close to home as possible.
- A Bairns’ Hoose will feel like a comfortable and welcoming place to be.
- Children will have a say over the design of the Bairns’ Hoose.
- You won’t come into contact with anyone who might have harmed you or other people you know.

What this looks like:

- The people designing a Bairns’ Hoose have to involve children and listen to their ideas about how to make it feel welcoming and homely.
- They have to think about what works best for the local area when they decide where to build it.
- They have to design it so that there are separate spaces for children whose behaviour may have harmed others.
The people who help me, work well as a team. I am safe, supported and things are explained to me in a way that I can understand.

Children and young people told us:

- The Bairns' Hoose should be designed around me and my needs.
- I should have the option to visit or have a virtual tour to see the place before I go.
- I should be able to meet the people who work there or find out about them before I go.
- All staff should be on the same page, so children and young people feel safe enough and supported.
- The people who support me should be kept up to date with what's going on in my life so that I don't have to repeat myself.
- I shouldn't have to risk meeting people I know or people who have caused harm to me.
- I should have a person who I trust who tells me what is happening.
- I should be asked things I actually have a choice about before I go.
- I should have a say over who I would like to support me.

What does the standard mean for children?

- Social workers, police and health professionals will work together to help you.
- You will have the name of a person who is there for you who will explain what is happening.
- You will be involved as much as possible in the process. This involves being able to make choices about what's important to you as much as possible.
- Your privacy will be important and will be respected. You will be helped to understand what information is being shared about you and why things are being shared.

What this looks like:

- Any processes that happen in a Bairns' Hoose have to flow well together and be explained properly.
- The people running a Bairns' Hoose have to have legal agreements and follow rules for how information is shared. These need to be explained to children.
- There has to be a person in a Bairns' Hoose who runs things on a daily basis.
- Someone needs to be in charge to make sure things get done.
Children and young people told us:

- I should feel safe when I’m being interviewed.
- I should feel like the person listens to me and believes me.
- People should remember I’m a child and not put too much pressure on me.
- The interview should go at my pace.
- I might forget all the details, so people should remember that’s okay.
- I should feel like the people working with me respect me and want to help me.
- I should be shown where the cameras are in the room. Everything should be explained to me in a way I understand.
- Someone should take the time to get to know me a bit and make sure I feel okay to say what happened.

What does the standard mean for children?

- You will be interviewed by police and social work in a special room that is designed just for this purpose.
- You will be able to see the room and be shown the equipment beforehand.
- Your interview will be planned with input from people who know you or who have the right skills to support you and help you communicate.
- The people interviewing you will be trained to a very high standard. They will let you say what happened in your own words and not interrupt. You can meet them before the interview.
- Your interview will be recorded unless you don’t want it to be. The recording of the interview might be used in court instead of you giving evidence in person.
- Your family can wait in a comfortable room where they can’t hear what you’re saying. They have someone to talk to if they are worried about you.

What this looks like:

- All interviews have to be done in the best way recommended for children. Interviewers have to be people who have the right skills and training.
- The interview has to take place in a soundproofed room.
- The interview needs to be planned with the right input from specialists. It has to be planned for every individual child to meet their needs.
- All interviews have to be done in a Bairns’ Hoose unless it’s not possible or right for the child.
- The sound and recording equipment has to work properly and be the right kind to make sure it can be used in court.
Children and young people told us:

- Being involved in a court case can be difficult and upsetting so someone should be there for me to help me through it.
- It should be easy to find out information about what happens and who can help me.

What this looks like:

- There has to be space and equipment in a Bairns’ Hoose which can be used to live link to a remote court.
- If a Bairns’ Hoose knows about a family’s court case, this has to be shared with social workers, health professionals and police officers who are helping that family.
- Children have to be offered advocacy support to make sure their rights are upheld throughout any legal processes.

What does the standard mean for children?

- Information about the court or hearing process is explained to you in a way that you can understand.
- You have the name of a person you can go to who will keep you and your family up to date on what’s happening.
- You can take part in the court process remotely from the Bairns’ Hoose if this is allowed by the court.
- You can talk to someone to help you with your feelings while you are waiting for a trial or hearing.
Children and young people told us:

- Anywhere I go for a medical examinations should feel bright and comforting.
- Health staff should be well trained, calm and welcoming.
- I should have the option to meet the medical staff before any examinations so that I am more familiar with them.
- I should be able to choose the sex of the person examining me.
- If I need support for my health or wellbeing at any point of my time at Bairns’ Hoose I should get it.
- I should get advice and support for my mental health.

What this looks like:

- The people running the Bairns’ Hoose have to make sure it’s joined up with the rest of the NHS.
- They have to meet standards for how they do examinations to make sure people’s health and wellbeing is looked after.

What does the standard mean for children?

- You will have someone to check your health and wellbeing at a Bairns’ Hoose, if this is what you need.
- Staff will plan any appointments you need and organise them all for you.
- The staff who look after your health will take the time to consider your feelings and experiences.
- If you need support for your mental health, you will be able get it when you need it in a way that’s right for you.
- Check-ups and tests will go at your pace and you can take a break.
Children and young people told us:

- My family should get the right support so they can help me.
- I should have a person throughout, who I trust, who doesn’t judge me, and is there for me. I should be able to choose them and change them without it being a problem.
- I should be able to get support at the right time for me, even if it’s after I have been to the Bairns’ Hoose.
- I should be given time to think about what support and help I want and need.
- I should be able to get support even when someone is off ill or on annual leave.

What does the standard mean for children?

- Someone will sit down with you and talk to you about what support you need.
- You will have someone to help you with how you’re feeling.
- You will get the help and support you need to recover.
- Support will be available. You can access support when the time feels right for you.
- You will be able to go at your own pace and work with people who you trust.
- There will be a person who is there for you and you will know who they are.
- Your family will be supported to help you the best they can.

What this looks like:

- Support has to be available for every child and their family.
- The people running a Bairns’ Hoose have to know what support services are in the local area.
- They have to know who a family is already working with and involve them as much as needed.
Children and young people told us:

- The people who help me should understand trauma and how it might affect me.
- Staff should be able to talk about their feelings and get the right support for themselves so they can be the best support for children and young people.
- I should feel well supported by all members of staff, no matter which part of the Bairns’ Hoose I am in.
- Staff should enjoy working with children.

What does the standard mean for children?

- You will be listened to.
- The people working at Bairns’ Hoose will support you in the best way possible.
- Staff will understand what your rights are and do everything they can to uphold them.
- You will be treated with kindness and respect.

What this looks like:

- Staff working at a Bairns’ Hoose have to go on a special course to understand trauma and its impact.
- They have to have the right skills to do their job well.
- The people running a Bairns’ Hoose have to support staff, look after them, and make sure they are well trained.
The Bairns’ Hoose Draft Standards

Children and young people told us:

- The Bairns’ Hoose should keep getting better and keep learning from others.
- My thoughts and ideas should be listened to. I should be able to see where things have changed.

What does the standard mean for children?

- The help you get at a Bairns’ Hoose will be the best it can be.
- You will have the chance to give feedback and see where changes have been made.

What this looks like:

- People running a Bairns’ Hoose have to learn lessons from their own work and other Bairns’ Hooses.
- They have to be part of national and international networks to share ideas.
- They have to make sure that people know what Bairns’ Hoose is and what it does.
- They have to run programmes to prevent children being harmed.