

Bairns' Hoose Project Plan Progress
Report and
Pathfinder Delivery Plan (2023 – 25)



Bairns' Hoose

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Ministerial Foreword

On behalf of the Scottish Government, we are pleased to share this report which outlines the progress made towards delivering Bairns' Hoose (Barnahus) for children, young people and their families across Scotland. This report sets out some of the key achievements to date, outlines our current trajectory and our future plans for the Pathfinder phase.

Since the publication of the [Bairns' Hoose Project Plan](#) in February 2022, we have taken a number of positive actions towards realising our ambition to ensure *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, have access to trauma-informed recovery, support and justice.*

The [Bairns' Hoose Standards](#) were a key component of the Bairns' Hoose Project Plan and so we are pleased to welcome their publication which marks a significant step towards establishing Barnahus in Scotland. The Standards will facilitate consistency and quality in the delivery of Bairns' Hoose across Scotland, helping to ensure that all children can access the high standard of support that they deserve and to which we have committed.

Building upon this, we are introducing a three-phased approach for the development of Bairns' Hoose in Scotland, which will build in the necessary stages for learning and evaluation to enable the achievement of our ambition. The first phase, the Pathfinder phase, commences this year and will lead into a Pilot phase, ahead of national rollout. The [Pathfinder Delivery Plan](#) provides details of the coming stage, which will test the Bairns' Hoose Standards across a range of partnership areas to inform the development of a 'Bairns' Hoose Blueprint'. Close collaboration and stakeholder participation will be a key focus to help ensure that the Pathfinder phase generates as much quality learning as possible.

The lived experiences of children, young people and their families have been fundamental in Bairns' Hoose development and these contributions will continue to shape Bairns' Hoose throughout all three phases. Details of the approach can be found in our [Bairns' Hoose Children and Young People Participation and Engagement Plan](#).

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners for their huge contributions towards reaching this point in our Bairns' Hoose journey; a multi-agency, coordinated approach is critical to bringing our shared vision to life and we are looking forward to continuing this work with you through to national rollout and beyond.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Don'.

Natalie Don MSP
Minister for Children
and Young People
and Keeping the
Promise



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Siobhian Brown'.

Siobhian Brown MSP
Minister for Victims
and Community
Safety



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maree Todd'.

Maree Todd MSP
Minister for Social
Care, Mental
Wellbeing and Sport

Introduction

The ambition of Bairns' Hoose, which is based on the Icelandic model of Barnahus (child's house), provides Scotland with an opportunity for transformational change for children and young people who are victims or witnesses of harm, *as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused significant harm or abuse*, to improve their right to justice, ensure they are safe and allow access to recovery support.

Following extensive engagement with stakeholders, we have revised our [Vision, Values and Approach](#) setting out how Bairns' Hoose should be developed and implemented in Scotland, the values which should underpin the model and our approach to its practical implementation.

Our [Bairns' Hoose Project Plan](#), published in February 2022, provided the next steps for future work in Scotland to ensure that children who are victims or witnesses to abuse or harm will have access to a Bairns' Hoose to receive the support that they need.

This report highlights the progress made towards developing a national Bairns' Hoose model, sets out revised overarching actions for 2023 to 2025 and provides a detailed delivery plan for the Pathfinder phase.

Strategic context

We are committed to improving Scotland's healthcare, child protection, health and criminal justice systems for children who have experienced trauma. Bringing Barnahus to Scotland has been a long standing, crosscutting policy ambition and is a key action in the [Keeping the Promise Implementation Plan](#), the ['Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022 to 2026'](#); as well as a 2022/23 Programme for Government commitment, which stated that we will "Set out the next steps in ensuring access to 'Bairns' Hoose' services for all children referred for support."

A co-ordinated and collaborative approach across justice, health and children's services, and third sector partners is a pre-requisite for development, implementation and evaluation of the approach. Building on current good practice and improvements, across a wide range of related work-streams in children's services, health and justice, we will work to align Bairns' Hoose with:

- the Revised National Child Protection Guidance 2021;
- the Clinical Pathway for Children and Young People Who May Have Experienced Sexual Abuse 2022;
- the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019;
- the Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Act 2021; and
- the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2019.

We will also ensure that progress aligns with any developments relating to the proposed National Care Service, should children's services be included.

Phased approach

We are introducing a three-phased approach from 2023, beginning with a Pathfinder phase, leading into a Pilot phase followed by national rollout. This approach will allow the learning and evaluation needed to ensure that the Bairns' Hoose model is achieving the correct outcomes ahead of national rollout; and to ensure alignment with other key policy objectives.

What we achieved in 2022 – 2023

We appointed an independent chair and established a National Bairns' Hoose Governance Group.

In February 2022, to drive forward and support delivery on the Programme for Government commitment, Val de Souza, former Director of Health and Social Care at South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership, was appointed by Ministers as the independent chair of the National Bairns' Hoose Governance Group (NBHGG). Its inaugural meeting was held in October 2022, alongside four Collaborative Intelligence workshops; which were aimed at supporting Governance Group members to grow into a cohesive team, with a shared vision of how they will work together, to oversee the effective implementation of the Bairns' Hoose model across Scotland.

The remit of the Group, along with the connections to related groups, are outlined in the Group's Terms of Reference.

We carried out extensive stakeholder engagement across all key sectors to inform our plans for Bairns' Hoose.

We have carried out extensive engagement with partners from across children's services, health, justice, and the third sector. This has included Chief Officers' Public Protection Groups (COGs), who will play a key role in the delivery of Bairns' Hoose.

The design and delivery of Bairns' Hoose will be between partners at a local level and through local structures. It is anticipated that COGs will collaborate regionally, according to their needs and proximity to local resources, to identify the likely scope of demand for Bairns' Hoose in their area.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Care Inspectorate published Scotland's Bairns' Hoose Standards, which were commissioned by Scottish Government.

These Scotland-specific Standards are based on the European PROMISE Quality Standards for Barnahus, which reflect best practice from the Nordic countries. The Standards set out what Bairns' Hoose will mean in reality for children and young people and their families, as well as for the professionals who will work to support them, throughout their journey to justice and recovery. Based on the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Standards were written in consultation with children who have lived experience of child protection and justice systems, and through comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

[The Bairns' Hoose Standards](#), published 31 May 2023, will provide a blueprint for delivery to support consistent national implementation of Bairns' Hoose.

We have established an approach for the participation of children and young people in the Bairns' Hoose governance framework.

Applying the principles of the European Barnahus Quality Standards provided a framework for engaging with children and young people in the development of the Standards. It ensured continuity between the aims of the Standards and the approach. It also provided clarity on expectation and enabled a clear accountability framework to be developed.

This was achieved through the application of a "link worker model", where Participation and rights workers from six organisations supported children to play an active role throughout the standards development period. Through creative sessions, play, videos, group work and one-on-one sessions, children inputted their ideas into the draft Standards and fed back on their experiences to the Standards Development Group at every meeting. Each organisation nominated a 'link worker' (usually a rights or participation worker) to act as the go-between between the children and the Standards Development Group.

The link workers were able to build trust and meaningful relationships with the children and young people, while effectively sharing information and experiences between them and the Standards Development Group. Given the topic, it was important that link workers could be responsive to the experiences and emotions that the children and young people shared, and could support them appropriately.

The link worker model requires appropriate support and resources to enable it to be sustainable, flexible and meaningful. In developing the Bairn's Hoose Standards, it has been an effective, well-supported and well-evaluated approach.

Due to the success of the model, we are looking to continue this work as we move from the Standards development phase towards implementation, by engaging link workers to contribute to the design and preparation of the Pathfinder phase and to connect with the National Bairns' Hoose Governance Group. This is detailed in our [Bairns' Hoose: Children and Young People Participation and Engagement Plan](#).

We published a participation and engagement plan for children and young people with lived experience.

Children and young people have a right to be heard and to be involved in decisions that affect them. We are committed to recognising, respecting and promoting children's rights, as set out in the UNCRC, and to ensuring that the voices of children and young people play a central role in shaping our approach to the implementation of a Scottish Bairns' Hoose Model.

We published our [Bairns' Hoose Children and Young People Participation and Engagement Plan](#) on 1 June 2023. This sets out our approach to participation and engagement and the actions we will take to ensure this is embedded within the development and implementation of Bairns' Hoose. Through this, we will make sure that children who access Bairns' Hoose will experience a service that best reflects the views of those with lived experience.

We funded the National Joint Investigative Interviewing Team to progress the introduction of the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) in all areas by 2024.

Bairns' Hoose will build on the Scottish Child Interview Model for Joint Investigative Interviewing, which is being introduced nationally between 2021 and 2024 and is considered to be a precondition for national Bairns' Hoose implementation; given the trauma-informed approach embedded within the model and the improvements to the quality of joint investigative interviews it seeks to achieve.

We have continued to fund the National Joint Investigative Interviewing Team for £2.2m over a three-year period, to assist COSLA, Social Work Scotland and Police Scotland to provide specialist training and tailored implementation support to local multi-agency partnerships, in order to integrate the Scottish Child Interview Model into local child protection systems. This new approach supports improved experiences and outcomes for child victims and witnesses.

Twenty-two local authorities, 10 policing divisions and 10 health boards are now live in practice with the Scottish Child Interview Model, with several areas collaborating in cross-authority partnerships. All remaining local authorities and police divisions are undertaking the necessary preparatory work to create the local conditions to implement the new model of practice.

We carried out an online survey with multi-agency partnerships, followed by structured interviews, to gather learning about existing and planned services and shared our findings with key stakeholders.

The online survey focused on understanding how multi-agency partnerships currently operate and/or how they plan to operate in the future. It captured learning from partnerships in various locations and at differing stages of development in their multi-agency working, providing insight into challenges and opportunities for establishing a Bairns' Hoose. Key findings from the survey included details around the practical requirements for a Bairns' Hoose building, off-site services, co-location and the use of different interview models.

The follow-up interviews allowed for deeper exploration of the themes that arose from the survey. Discussion revolved around some of the major challenges facing partnerships and how the Scottish Government might best provide support going forwards.

The report will be shared internally and with key external stakeholders to inform the approach of the Pathfinder phase and subsequent Bairns' Hoose implementation.

We carried out a data review on children and young people who have been victims and/or witnesses of abuse across Scotland.

This data review maps the key available data sources and indicators relating to children and young people who are victims or witnesses of abuse; as well as those whose behaviour may have caused harm and who are under the age of criminal responsibility, to inform the development and planning of the Bairns' Hoose approach.

The paper presents information on the number of children and young people currently known to be affected by abuse or known to cause harm. The information comes from the following data sources: Police Recorded Crimes; Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA); Children's Social Work Statistics; Criminal Proceedings; and the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS). The paper, which was shared internally and with members of the National Bairns' Hoose Governance Group, also highlights data limitations and gaps to inform any future data development.

The Scottish Government joined the European PROMISE Barnahus network as an associate member.

We are keen to learn from international best practice and benefit from the knowledge, experience and expertise of other countries which have contended with, and overcome, many of the challenges to implementation that we face in Scotland.

The network comprises membership from over 20 member states and works to harmonise and consolidate good Barnahus practice across Europe and an established peer-to-peer network.

A harmonisation of Barnahus practice across Europe serves to ensure quality Barnahus services, to boost the legitimacy of the approach, and ensure that all children in Europe have the same access to their rights to protection from violence, to support, and to be heard.

As associate members, Scottish Government participated in an international European Barnahus Forum in Stockholm in December 2022. We have continued to engage with policy officials and Barnahus practitioners in a number of countries and regions including Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, Germany, Norway, and Catalonia; as well as The Lighthouse (London) and the UK Government.

We have engaged with existing Barnahus and multi-agency sites in Scotland and abroad.

This included a visit to the Barnahus in Linköping in Sweden, providing a rich learning experience about the services provided and the experiences of children who access the site. A key reflection from the visit was seeing how the Barnahus was designed for children and with input from children, as well as the supportive environment for the staff. This brought to life how beneficial the model is for supporting child victims and witnesses' recovery.

In Scotland, through visiting multi-agency sites at the Sycamore Centre in Edinburgh, Seymour House in Dundee and The Meadows in Larbert, the Scottish Government's Bairns' Hoose Policy Unit developed a deeper appreciation of the ways that agencies can be collocated and work together to improve experiences for children in different ways.

This has built on previous knowledge gained from the former First Minister's visit to the Barnahus in Reykjavik, Iceland in 2021, where she met Bragi Guðbrandsson, Member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and founder of the very first Barnahus. The former Minister for Children and Young People also had the opportunity to visit the two sites of the North Strathclyde Bairns' Hoose at an early stage in their development.

We have launched a Bairns' Hoose website - bairnshoosescotland.com - for interested stakeholders and practitioners.

The website will include: an overview of what Bairns' Hoose is; news and updates; links to relevant published documents; information on our phased approach to implementation and information for children and young people. This will be a continual process and we will work with children and young people to develop this.

We will build on the content of this site as a key way of communicating our progress, and as a means of supporting the sharing of learning with Pathfinders.

Bairns' Hoose Next Steps

Our Bairns' Hoose Project Plan and its actions, has been the subject of ongoing review to reflect emerging learning from stakeholders, evaluation of the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) and international Barnahus developments, wider conversations about how the Bairns' Hoose should work in Scotland and discussions relating to the scope and development of the Standards.

From this bank of learning, new and revised actions have been developed to drive progress over 2023 – 25. Some of these actions are now encompassed in the Pathfinder Delivery Plan. The following overarching actions from the 2022 Project Plan will also be carried forward as part of this work.

Overarching actions

We will:

- hold a health event to raise awareness, secure commitment and encourage partnership working to fully involve the sector in testing and rollout of the Bairns' Hoose model
- develop a stakeholder communications and engagement plan
- support the Bairns' Hoose governance framework
- carry out the full range of impact assessments
- work with children and young people with lived experience of child protection and justice processes to produce a published charter which will outline the principles of how they want to be engaged in Bairns' Hoose development
- implement the participation and engagement plan for children and young people with lived experience
- hold a children and young people event to celebrate their contribution to development of Bairns' Hoose

- support introduction of SCIM in all areas in Scotland
- continue ongoing dialogue with justice partners on the intersection of justice processes and Bairns' Hoose to produce a route map
- produce a scoping report on therapeutic recovery and support provision.

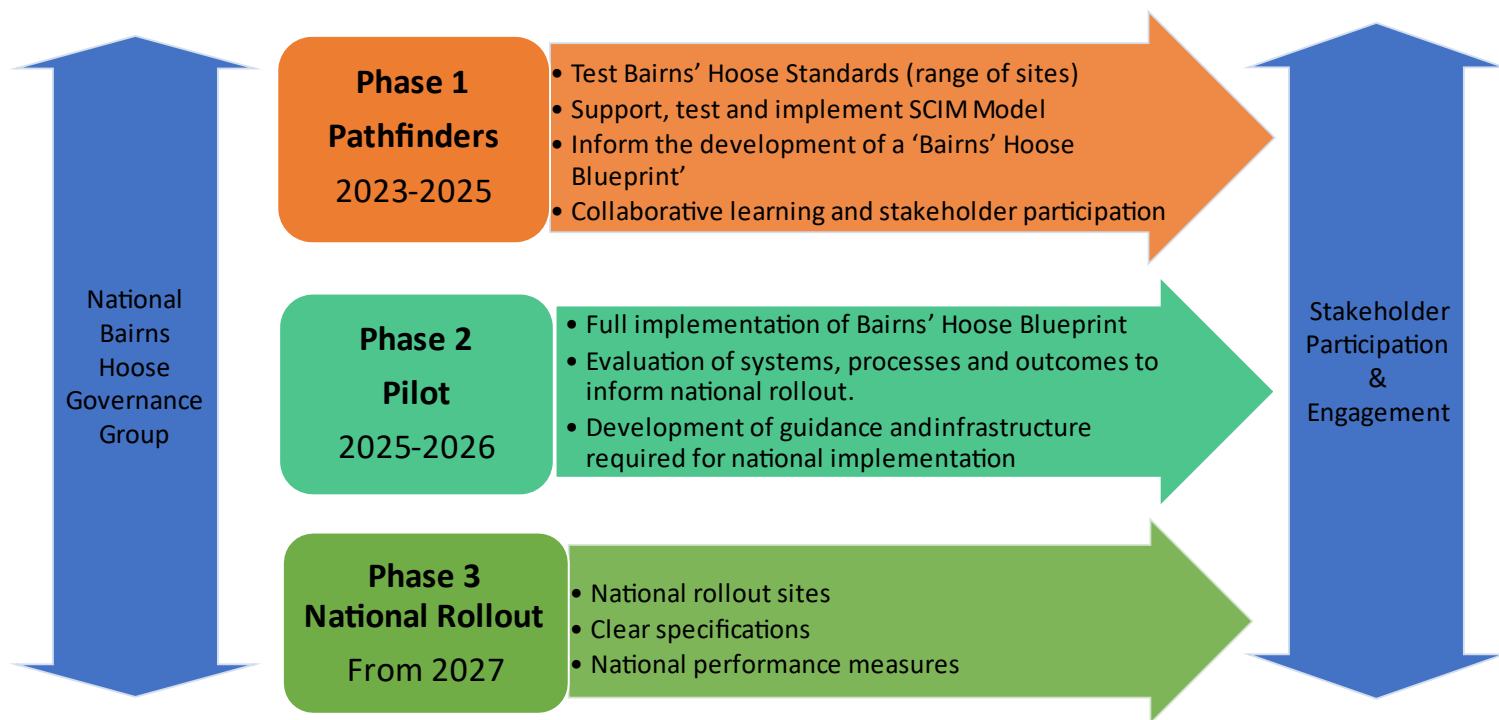
Pathfinder Delivery Plan and Timeline

In the 2022 Bairns' Hoose Project Plan, the Scottish Government committed to develop test sites for delivery of Bairns' Hoose in Scotland, before scaling up nationally. After extensive engagement with stakeholders, we have further developed and refined our plans for development of the Bairns' Hoose model in Scotland, including these test sites and building in necessary time for learning and evaluation ahead of national rollout.

Bairns Hoose – Three-Phased Approach

We will develop Bairns' Hoose over a three-phased approach to ensure an informed and collaborative rollout, alignment with other key policy objectives, and to allow for the appropriate workforce development where required.

This approach will begin in 2023 and will be underpinned by stakeholder participation and iterative learning together through three key stages.



Pathfinder – The Pathfinders will act as proof of concept for the Bairns’ Hoose model in Scotland. Learning from the implementation of the Standards, alongside the rollout of the Scottish Child Interview Model, will help provide a blueprint for a pilot of a national Bairns’ Hoose model in Scotland.

Pilot - The pilots will test the full implementation of the Bairns’ Hoose model blueprint. They will be formally evaluated to identify any issues and to evidence impacts, including impacts on outcomes for children and young people. This will provide a basis to refine the Bairns’ Hoose model in Scotland before being rolled out nationally.

National Rollout – Implementation of the Bairns’ Hoose model across Scotland.

Phase 1 - Pathfinder (2023-2025)

The Pathfinders will form part of a quality improvement and service design process to identify how the Bairns’ Hoose Standards may be applied in different contexts, including remote or islands areas. Learning from the implementation of the Standards, alongside the continued rollout of the Scottish Child Interview Model, will help provide a blueprint for a national Bairns’ Hoose model in Scotland.

The Bairns Hoose Pathfinder phase will have 2 key stages: Pathfinder partnership identification and blueprint for the Bairns’ Hoose model.

Pathfinder Partnership Identification (Summer 2023 – to Autumn 2023)

The Pathfinder partnership identification will begin with the launch of a Pathfinder Application Pack, supported by Pathfinder application information sessions to take place during summer 2023. This will be informed by the launch of the national Bairns’ Hoose Standards and provide an outline for the expectations of Pathfinder areas. All Pathfinder applications will then be evaluated through a fair and equitable process, with input from children and young people, to identify a small number of Pathfinder partnerships to help develop the blueprint for the Bairns’ Hoose model in Scotland.

In order to achieve this, we will:

- open invitations for Pathfinder applications
- involve children and young people in the assessment, development and review processes of Pathfinders
- procure an independent fund manager and agree a Pathfinder funding model
- launch the Pathfinder phase.

Developing a Blueprint for the Bairns’ Hoose Model (Summer 2023 – Spring 2025)

The blueprint will capture the capability we want the Bairns’ Hoose model to have by the end of the Pathfinder phase, with all the key functions and features. The blueprint will provide the foundation that considers the infrastructure, information,

processes, resources, governance and technology required to ensure a coherent and holistic Bairns' Hoose model for Scotland, both locally and nationally.

This will include, but not exclusively, exploring processes around:

Governance and Accountability

- Delegated Accountability
- Strategy and Planning
- Alignment with Clinical and Care Governance
- Escalation Points Locally/Nationally
- Risk and Assurance
- Learning and Case Reviews
- Regulation and Inspection

Delivery Models

- Quality Improvement and Service Design
- Review and alignment of Bairns' Hoose Standards
- Review and Alignment of Scottish Child Interview Model
- Development of Therapeutic Support and Recovery model
- Local and National Infrastructure
- Reporting Processes
- Functions and Processes

Resource

- Roles and Responsibilities of Key Individuals
- Additional Staffing/Support Requirements
- Skill-sets, Training and Education
- Ongoing Learning and Development

Data / Performance and Technology

- Data Requirements
- Performance and Insight
- Quality Assurance
- Technology – Hardware/Software

Cross-Cutting

- Finance Models/Fund Management
- Participation and Engagement with Stakeholders – including Children and Young People, Families and Staff

The steps towards developing a blueprint are detailed in the following Pathfinder actions:

- establish a forum to share emerging learning and good practice across Pathfinder partnerships and more widely
- scope the capacity of partners and options for service design/quality improvement support for Pathfinders

- produce a logic model for the delivery of the Bairns' Hoose approach to act a framework for data and evidence collection
- carry out formative research, working closely with Pathfinders, to understand their starting position, plans and progress in moving towards operating as a Bairns' Hoose
- co-produce and agree performance indicators to support internal quality assurance against the Standards with a view to informing external quality assurance
- develop an implementation toolkit which will include cost modelling
- gather performance indicator data at end of the Pathfinder phase to act as a baseline for the Pilot phase.
- publish a Pathfinder findings report with a set of conclusions to act as the blueprint to take forward into the Pilot phase
- commence development of a Pilot delivery plan and process
- develop an evaluation approach for the Pilot phase and commission an external research contractor
- consider information governance requirements to inform potential mechanisms for a national Bairns' Hoose Model

By spring 2025, we will have an initial blueprint for the Bairns' Hoose model in Scotland and will develop a Delivery Plan for the Pilot Programme.



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