



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Corporate Plan

2001-2003

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION		3
KEY PRINCIPLES		4
OUR CHANGING CONTEXT		5
OBJECTIVE 1:	<i>Improving the Quality and Speed of our Casework for Children</i>	7
OBJECTIVE 2:	<i>Developing Services for Children that meet their Needs</i>	8
OBJECTIVE 3:	<i>Supporting our Staff to Deliver for Children</i>	9
OBJECTIVE 4:	<i>Providing Good Quality Facilities for Children's Hearings</i>	10
OBJECTIVE 5:	<i>Delivering our Service Effectively and Efficiently</i>	11
OBJECTIVE 6:	<i>Promoting the Value of the Children's Hearings System</i>	12

Appendix 1: Allocation of Resources 2002-03

Appendix 2: Staff in Post at 31 March 2002

Appendix 3: SCRA Board Members

Appendix 4: Contact Numbers (Local and National)

INTRODUCTION

This Corporate Plan sets out SCRA's core objectives through to the end of March 2003.

The plan identifies SCRA's key strategic actions for the next 12 months under our six core objectives:

- **IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND SPEED OF OUR CASEWORK FOR CHILDREN**
- **DEVELOPING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN THAT MEET THEIR NEEDS**
- **SUPPORTING OUR STAFF TO DELIVER FOR CHILDREN**
- **PROVIDING GOOD QUALITY FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN'S HEARINGS**
- **DELIVERING OUR SERVICE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY**
- **PROMOTING THE VALUE OF THE CHILDREN'S HEARING SYSTEM**

It is important to view the plan in its entirety and to understand the critical co-dependence between all six core objectives.

The key performance measures (KPMs) set out in the plan and a more detailed Operational Plan which underpins the Corporate Plan, are the basis for reporting SCRA's organisational performance throughout the coming 12 months. A number of the KPMs remain "under development".

SCRA's budget for 2002/03 incorporates the priorities set out in this plan and the allocation of our resources is identified in Appendix 1.

The plan is published at an important time for SCRA responding as it does to the recommendations of its first five-year review conducted by the Scottish Executive. In many ways this Corporate Plan signs-off SCRA's "foundation period" since it was established in 1996.

The Board and the senior management team are committed to putting in place a much more rigorous corporate planning approach that will cover the period 2003-2006. Activity on the future planning exercise will commence soon and it will be vital to ensure that all staff and our partner agencies become much more involved in shaping our future plans.

KEY UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

A number of key principles underpin the development of this revised Corporate Plan. These principles are identified here to explain the main influences that have shaped the revision of the plan for the year 2002-03.

OUR FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE

SCRA was established in 1996 under the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994 and its fundamental purpose is rooted in the legislative framework of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and the Children's (Scotland) Act 1995.

*"To pursue with care and creativity
the best interests of children, within the framework of
Scotland's child welfare and justice systems."*

This plan strikes a necessary balance between our requirement as an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) to carry out our statutory responsibilities on behalf of children and the need also, to bring forward service development initiatives that explore new ways of delivering an even more effective service on behalf of Scotland's vulnerable children and their families.

RESOURCING SERVICES TO CHILDREN

Our twin-track approach of service-delivery and service-development has been enhanced by the welcome addition of significant new resources from the Scottish Executive throughout 2001-02 and again in 2002-03. Scottish Ministers approved an increase of £3.2m to SCRA over this two-year period to address a range of service-delivery pressures and service-development initiatives. This Corporate Plan has been prepared within the context of this revised financial position. The broad allocation of our resources against the key objectives of this plan is set out in summary in Appendix 1.

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

This Corporate Plan builds on SCRA's strategic planning process established last year and is, in the main, an update of the plan produced last year. In that context, this revised plan should be viewed as the final chapter in SCRA's foundation period. A more aspirational plan covering the period 2003-06 will be developed in the next 12 months as SCRA and the Scottish Executive seek jointly to secure the full resources needed to deliver an integrated and sustained programme of services to Scotland's vulnerable children. The outcome of the Spending Review 2002 will be a critical determinant in this respect.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

SCRA is clear that greatest progress is made where effective partnerships exist both locally and nationally. The success of our joint effort on behalf of Scotland's vulnerable children, their families and the victims of crime is dependent on the strength of our joint working. SCRA's partnership with the Scottish Executive is key in this regard while the strength of our local partnerships with local authorities, members of Children's Panels, the health service and voluntary groups is equally vital. The views of SCRA's stakeholders – including children and our own staff – will be actively sought as part of the planning for 2003-06 over the next 12 months.

MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE

The revision of this Corporate Plan was informed by a risk management analysis introduced to SCRA by its internal auditors. The risk management approach identifies and prioritises resources against "high risk" activities in our diverse programme of work. A detailed Operational Plan, that underpins this Corporate Plan, will be used as the key monitoring tool to assess progress in implementing the plan throughout 2002-03.

The next section in this plan sets out the changing context in which SCRA is now operating. Taken together with the key principles identified here, they combine to deliver a challenging and realistic platform upon which this Corporate Plan has been revised

OUR CHANGING CONTEXT

This Corporate Plan is brought forward as the Scottish Executive completes its first five-year review of SCRA's performance since it was established in 1996.

LOOKING AHEAD

The report of the Quinquennial Review will inform consideration by the Scottish Executive and SCRA of the agenda for future service delivery and for developing more effective ways to improve outcomes for Scotland's vulnerable children. The resources required to deliver this agenda will also be assessed.

A more aspirational plan will be developed for the 3-year period 2003-06 as the outcome of the Spending Review 2002 becomes known in the autumn.

DEMANDING WORKLOADS

Since SCRA was established in 1996 there has been a 50% increase in the number of referrals to Reporters. In addition, and for the second year running (2000-01), the number of referrals on non-offence grounds has overtaken referrals on offence grounds. The management of non-offence referrals is more time-intensive and, increasingly, cases of this nature are becoming more complex and challenging often involving SCRA staff in lengthy court work.

The additional financial resources committed by the Scottish Executive to SCRA have allowed the recruitment and deployment of new staff to the front-line. Undoubtedly, this has relieved pressure in a number of hot-spot areas. A new level of resource will be needed if SCRA is to continue to manage the front-line service and develop the service in a range of ways that will maximise efficiencies and deliver the best possible outcomes for children across Scotland.

A CLEAR AND CHALLENGING POLICY FRAMEWORK

This plan has been developed within the context of a very dynamic policy framework in Scotland. Of central influence is the Scottish Executive's policy document *For Scotland's Children: Better Integrated Children's Services* and the now published *Youth Justice Action Programme 2002*. The plan also recognises the range of related policy initiatives that have come forward in the last 12 months. Initiatives including the Child Protection Review, the programme for tackling Domestic Abuse, better support for Child Witnesses and Victims of youth crime and the work being taken forward by Audit Scotland to assess the effectiveness of the Children's Hearings System on youth offending. Each one of these policy initiatives is significant in its own right but, taken collectively, they represent a challenging and demanding agenda of change to which SCRA must adapt.

A CHANGING LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

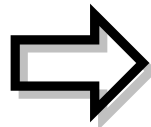
The Human Rights era is now firmly established and this plan accommodates SCRA's commitment to provide papers for children at Hearings. In addition, and less certain, are the demands arising from the introduction of legal representation at Hearings. Further change can be anticipated as SCRA responds to the demands of the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Bill for Scotland. Equally demanding and considered in this plan are the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act on SCRA's ageing property portfolio.

A COMMITMENT TO MODERNISE

SCRA now has in place the first element of its programme to modernise its pay arrangements – performance appraisal. This revised plan acknowledges the importance of the second stage – negotiating a link to pay – and SCRA understands the expectation of Ministers in this regard. Our modernising programme is best evidenced by our commitment to the application of IT in all areas of our work, in partnership with our PFI partner Logica UK Ltd. The next 12 months will deliver a new IT platform and infrastructure preparing SCRA to join the wider child welfare and criminal justice information communities.

**OUR
FUNDAMENTAL
PURPOSE**

**“TO PURSUE WITH
CARE AND CREATIVITY
THE BEST INTERESTS
OF CHILDREN, WITHIN
THE FRAMEWORK OF
SCOTLAND’S CHILD
WELFARE AND JUSTICE
SYSTEMS.”**



OUR SIX CORE OBJECTIVES

*Improving the Quality and Speed
of our Casework for Children*

*Developing Services for Children
that Meet their Needs*

*Supporting our Staff to Deliver
for Children*

*Providing Good Quality Facilities
for Children’s Hearings*

*Delivering our Service Effectively
and Efficiently*

*Promoting the Value of the
Children’s Hearing System*

OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND SPEED OF OUR CASEWORK FOR CHILDREN

Key Strategic Actions for 2002/03

- 1.1 Maintain an effective frontline service across Scotland.
- 1.2 Manage acute service delivery pressures.
- 1.3 Complete the full rollout of the Referral Administration Database (RAD) throughout all offices.
- 1.4 Plan and assess the impact of the RAD on the management and processing of casework.
- 1.5 Strengthen local strategic partnerships and alliances.
- 1.6 Revise the collection, analysis and presentation of casework statistics.
- 1.7 Complete phase one of the Technology Refresh programme

Key Performance Measures

- 1(a) Complete the rollout of the RAD throughout SCRA by 31 December 2002.
(Last years performance: RAD rolled out to 65% of teams throughout Scotland.)
- 1(b) No Supervision Requirements to lapse.
(Last years performance: Two Supervision Requirements lapsed out of 10,000 in force)
- 1(c) 60% of decisions on referrals to be made within 10 weeks.
(2001/02: 62% of decisions made within 10 weeks)
- 1(d) 80% of enquiries to the Practice Helpline answered within 24 hours.
(Last years performance: 92% of enquiries to the Practice Helpline answered within 24 hours.)

OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOPING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN THAT MEET THEIR NEEDS	
Key Strategic Actions for 2002/03	<p>2.1 Support the implementation of the Scottish Executive's Youth Offending Action Plan.</p> <p>2.2 Identify and participate in key priority national initiatives (<i>Child Witness Pack, Child Protection Review, Audit - Scotland Review and Domestic Abuse initiatives</i>).</p> <p>2.3 Facilitate Legal Representation throughout the Children's Hearings System.</p> <p>2.4 Complete the pilot on the provision of Papers for Children and rollout nationally.</p> <p>2.5 Participate in local initiatives to promote better-integrated services for children.</p> <p>2.6 Develop and promote SCRA's programme of Research.</p> <p>2.7 Modernise SCRA's Customer Service Charter and revise and publish SCRA's Complaints Procedure.</p> <p>2.8 Develop and introduce a Customer Consultation process.</p>
Key Performance Measures	<p>2(a) Identification of "outcome for children" measures as a basis for measurement in subsequent years. <i>(Awaiting outcome of Youth Justice Action Programme in Oct 2002)</i></p> <p>2(b) Participating in all 32 local authority Children's Service Plans. <i>(Last years performance: Authority Reporters continue involvement at local level. Involvement varies across Scotland.)</i></p> <p>2(c) Reporting growing participation in local inter-agency projects and initiatives. <i>(Last years performance: Growing involvement in local programmes/initiatives - Youth Justice initiatives, SACRO and a range of voluntary sector initiatives.)</i></p> <p>2(d) 90% of complaints to be resolved by Stage 2 of the formal complaints process. <i>(Last years performance: 100% of complaints resolved by Stage 2 of the formal complaints process.)</i></p>

OBJECTIVE 3: SUPPORTING OUR STAFF TO DELIVER FOR CHILDREN	
Key Strategic Actions for 2002/03	<p>3.1 Implement Staff Training and Development Programme.</p> <p>3.2 Implement fully the Performance Appraisal Scheme.</p> <p>3.3 Establish a progressive partnership approach with UNISON.</p> <p>3.4 Negotiate an effective link between pay and performance for all staff in SCRA.</p> <p>3.5 Implement the in-service/pre-service qualification for Reporters.</p> <p>3.6 Review and strengthen internal communications.</p> <p>3.7 Undertake a second Staff Survey.</p>
Key Performance Measures	<p>3(a) All staff in SCRA participating in revised Performance Management Scheme. <i>(Last years performance: Training for all staff complete; new scheme now in place and all staff participating.)</i></p> <p>3(b) All staff in SCRA subject to performance related pay by 31 March 2003. <i>(new target for 2002/03)</i></p> <p>3(b) Reporting progress in the management of sickness absence. <i>(Last years performance: Active management of sickness absence now in place; benchmark reduction targets included in performance management scheme for each team manager.)</i></p>

OBJECTIVE 4: PROVIDING GOOD QUALITY FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN'S HEARINGS	
Key Strategic Actions for 2002/03	<p>4.1 Explore partnership opportunities with local and national agencies.</p> <p>4.2 Confirm long-term Property Strategy for SCRA as part of the forthcoming Spending Review.</p> <p>4.3 Progress improvements for Elgin and Arbroath.</p> <p>4.4 Initiate programme of work for DDA compliance.</p> <p>4.5 Implement an Environmental Policy for SCRA.</p>
Key Performance Measures	<p>4(a) 70% of Hearings Centres to comply with Property Standards. <i>(Last years performance: Achieved)</i></p> <p>4(b) Complete all planned capital developments in time and to specification. <i>(Last years performance: New builds in Tranent and Falkirk opened and fully operational)</i></p>

OBJECTIVE 5: DELIVERING OUR SERVICE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY	
Key Strategic Actions for 2002/03	<p>5.1 Undertake a joint strategic planning exercise with the Scottish Executive in preparation for the Spending Review opportunity in Autumn 2002.</p> <p>5.2 Complete the refresh of the ChRIS Contract and confirm a new partnership approach with Logica UK Ltd.</p> <p>5.3 Initiate phase two of Technology Refresh to deliver external connectivity for SCRA.</p> <p>5.4 Plan and initiate a Business Process Analysis exercise to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of ChRIS on all aspects of SCRA work.</p> <p>5.5 Develop and introduce an integrated Management Information System.</p> <p>5.6 Implement Data Protection Policy and IT Security Procedures throughout SCRA.</p> <p>5.7 Consider and action the recommendations of the Scottish Executive's PFMR of SCRA</p>
Key Performance Measures	<p>5(a) Expenditure to be within 98% to 100% of budget. <i>(Last years performance: Final Cash Expenditure under by 1.5%.)</i></p> <p>5(b) Demonstrate progress against agreed ChRIS Effectiveness and Efficiency Plan. <i>(Last years performance: replaced by major programme of technology refresh.)</i></p> <p>5(c) Complete Full Service Reviews of each of the systems in ChRIS. <i>(Last years performance: All Systems reviewed at regular intervals and Client Status Report published monthly.)</i></p>

OBJECTIVE 6: PROMOTING THE VALUE OF THE CHILDREN'S HEARING SYSTEM	
Key Strategic Actions for 2002/03	<p>6.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive Communications and Media Strategy.</p> <p>6.2 Establish effective links with MSPs and the Scottish Parliament.</p> <p>6.3 Develop and launch an SCRA web site.</p> <p>6.4 Participate in wider child welfare and criminal justice networks.</p> <p>6.5 Facilitate ongoing visits from the international community interested in the work of Scotland's Children's Hearings system.</p> <p>6.6 Improve the quality and accessibility of information held by SCRA.</p>
Key Performance Measures	<p>6(a) Reporting increased awareness, with key audiences, of the role and contribution of the Children's Reporter. <i>(Last years performance: Current awareness levels still to be established)</i></p> <p>6(b) Reporting a year on year increase in the level of enquiries received by SCRA <i>(Last years performance: Anecdotal evidence suggests increasing demands made on SCRA – baseline figure to be established)</i></p>

Allocation of Resources 2002-03

Our planned spend of £16.5m in 2002-03 is as follows:

Planned Expenditure	2002/03 £m
Staff Costs	10.24
Property	1.64
Transport	0.23
Supplies and Services	2.47
Capital Financing	0.46
Capital Items	1.50
Income	(0.03)
Total	£16.51m

Staff in Post as at 31 March 2002

Category of Staff	Headquarters	Regions	Totals
Senior Managers	5	4	9
Function Managers/ Authority Reporters	7	31	38
Reporters	2	127.5	129.5
Administrative and Support Staff	28	184	212
TOTAL	42	346.5	388.5

Location	Staff in Post (FTE)	Temporary Posts	Sessional Staff
Central West Region	80	0	5
East Region	72	25	5
West Region	90	14	7
North Region	40	2.5	5
Headquarters	41	2	0
TOTAL	323	43.5	22

SCRA Board Members

Chairman

Douglas Bulloch

Deputy Chairman

Sheriff J Douglas Allan

Principal Reporter

Alan D Miller

Members

Councillor Harry McGuigan

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Mr Ian Smith

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