



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION



Early and Effective Action Screening Groups



SCRA Research Report

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Executive Summary

Until 2006-07, there was a trend of increasing numbers of children being referred to the Reporter on both offence and care and protection grounds. Many of these children did not require compulsory measures of intervention. This resulted in a range of initiatives being introduced to aim to facilitate decision making across agencies to identify appropriate routes of action to take when there are concerns about a child, including whether to refer to the Children's Reporter.

The Scottish Government commissioned an evaluation of some of the interagency screening processes which reported in 2009 - 'Early and Effective Intervention Evaluation Report'. This evaluation reviewed the processes to identify examples of good practice. This research follows on from the previous evaluation and looks at interventions and outcomes for children and the impact of the screening processes on referrals to the Reporter and children requiring compulsory measures of supervision.

The pre-referral screening processes, in this research, are having an impact in reducing referrals to the Reporter - consequently proportionately more of the children referred to the Reporter are those who require compulsory measures of supervision and are referred to Children's Hearings.

The groups meet regularly and frequently and as a result children's cases are discussed very shortly after concerns have been identified and actions are discussed and agreed. All the groups include representation from a range of services, demonstrate inter-agency working and consider the wider needs of the child. In these ways they are operating in line with the *Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)* principles and those of the Children's Hearings System. However, some of the groups noted that it was difficult to get representation and input from education sources in the school holidays.

The police have the primary role in co-ordinating and leading the pre-referral groups – both for offending and for care and protection. This has resource implications for the police.

The groups all operated in different ways to reflect local needs and resources. Some are new and/or are continuing to develop. However, a common theme between the groups was the lack of protocols/processes on how they operated and made decisions.

Information that is available on interventions and outcomes from the children discussed by the groups showed that the groups considered wider aspects of the children's lives, including that of their families, and not just the incident that led to them coming to the attention of agencies. Interventions were identified and implemented, based on this wider assessment, to address the main concerns about the children's welfare and behaviour.

Introduction

Children are referred to the Children's Reporter if there are concerns about their safety and welfare and/or their behaviour. Any agency or any person can refer a child to the Reporter if they consider that compulsory measures of intervention are needed¹. Until 2006-07, there was a trend of increasing numbers of children being referred to the Reporter on both offence and care and protection grounds, with a total of 56,119 children referred in 2006-07². Many of these children did not require compulsory measures of intervention. This raised questions with all those involved in the Children's Hearings System and wider children's services about whether referral to the Reporter was always the most appropriate course of action to deliver services to children in a timely and proportionate way.

A range of initiatives have been introduced by the Scottish Government and at a local level. These aim to facilitate decision making across agencies to identify appropriate routes of action to take when there are concerns about a child, including whether to refer to the Reporter.

These initiatives include:

- Getting it Right for Every Child
- Ministerial Task Group on Non-Offence Referrals
- Preventing Offending by Young People – a Framework for Action
- Local referral screening groups.

These initiatives were created at different times, for different purposes and vary in terms of their processes and practice. However, they all share the overarching objectives of *Getting it Right for Every Child*.

Getting it Right for Every Child

The principles of *Getting it right for every child* were introduced in 2004 and followed the For Scotland's Children report (2001) which highlighted problems caused by lack of joint working across children's services.

Getting it right aims to co-ordinate the working of agencies and improve outcomes for individual children. Agencies are required to work together, where necessary, to make sure that all children and young people get the help they need when they need it. It aims to make better use of resources and help children and families understand what is being done any why.

Where a structured multi-agency approach is needed for a child, agencies must work together to agree, with the child and their family, what the child's needs are, how they are to be addressed and how action is to be taken forward. Agencies are required to work closely together and produce a single integrated plan for the child which all agencies agree upon and where each agency's responsibilities are clearly laid out. Help for the child should be appropriate, proportionate and timely.

Five pathfinders were introduced in 2006 to pilot and put into practice the *Getting it right* approach. These are the main Highland pathfinder and four thematic pathfinders which focus on children who have experienced domestic abuse (these pathfinders are operating in parts of Clydebank, Falkirk, Edinburgh and Dumfries & Galloway). The pathfinders are not covered by this evaluation as they are being evaluated separately by the Scottish Government³.

¹ Section 53 Children (Scotland) Act 1995

² SCRA (2007) Annual Report 2006-07

³ Scottish Government (2009) Changing Professional Practice and Culture to Get it Right for Every Child. An Evaluation of the Development and Early Implementation Phases of Getting it right for every child in Highland: 2006-2009

Referrals to the Reporter

Over the past two to three years, there has been a change in patterns of the numbers of children referred to the Reporter and numbers of children subject to compulsory measures. More Children's Hearings are being held, more children are subject to compulsory measures in the form of Supervision Requirements and emergency measures - Place of Safety Warrants and Child Protection Orders (summarised in Table 1).

Table 1 - Trends in Children's Hearings and children subject to compulsory measures

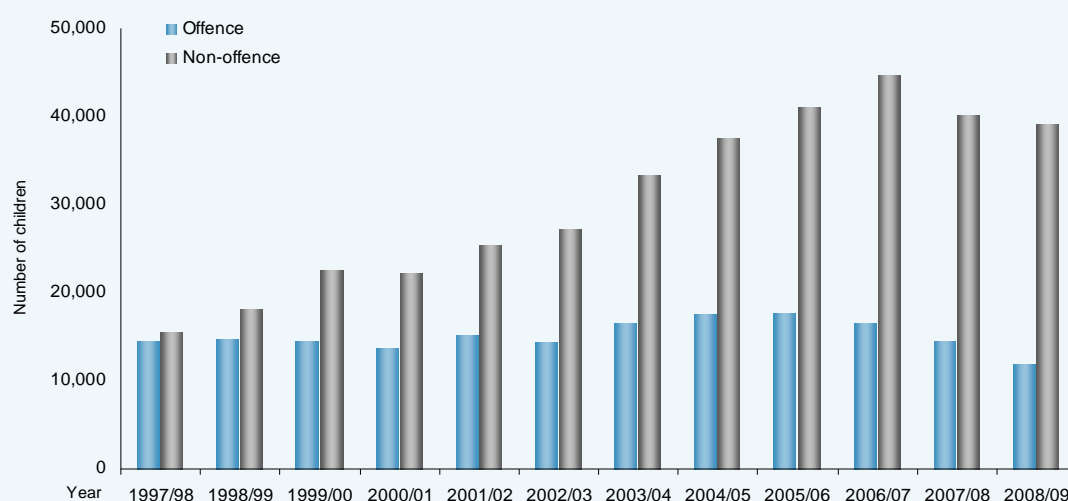
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Children's Hearings held ⁴	41,891	42,302	42,866
Compulsory measure	Number of children		
Supervision Requirements (at 31 March)	12,644	13,219	13,523
Place of Safety Warrants	2,016	1,917	2,078
Child Protection Orders	617	504	661

Additionally, there has been an increase in younger children being referred to the Reporter and being subject to compulsory measures, for example:

- The largest increase in children subject to Supervision Requirements during 2008-09 was for those aged under eight years old.
- Children aged under two years old comprised 12% of all children referred in 2008-09, the majority on the ground of lack of parental care.
- Proportionately, more Child Protection Orders and Place of Safety Warrants were granted for babies under one year old (especially newborn babies), than any other age, reflecting their high risk and vulnerability and requirement for immediate protection.

However, overall, the number of children referred to the Reporter has declined over the past two to three years (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Children referred 1997/98 to 2008/09



The Scottish Government evaluation⁵ has shown that areas which have introduced interagency screening processes have seen reductions in the numbers of children referred to the Reporter.

⁴ Approximately 80% of Hearings are review Hearings or have been continued from previous Hearings

⁵ Scottish Government (2009) Early and Effective Intervention Evaluation Report.

However, it is not known what the effect of interagency pre-referral screening processes have on delivering early and effective actions and better outcomes for children.

Aims and objectives of the research

The overall aim of the research was to explore the outcomes of early and effective action from interagency pre-referral screening processes. It follows on from the evaluation carried out for the Scottish Government on the processes involved in interagency screening groups, and should be read in conjunction with the report 'Early and Effective Intervention Evaluation'.

More specifically, the objectives of the research were to:

Examine the process outcomes of multi-agency working, in particular:

- Whether the processes are identifying courses of action for children.
- The time taken from the identification of concern to decision made.
- Whether children have received an identified course of action and the impact of action on outcomes for the child.

Examine the outcomes for children where screening activity has taken place, in particular:

- Information held by agencies as to the impact of any early intervention undertaken.
- Any actions recorded in accordance with the child's plan where held.
- Whether children have been re-referred to the multi-agency group or referred to the Reporter at a later date.

Methodology

Pre-referral activity is taking place across a number of different geographical areas in Scotland. Those areas selected for this research are those which have developed interagency screening processes that are in line with the Ministerial Task Group on Non-Offence referrals or the Preventing Offending by Young people – A Framework for Action. However, it should be noted that some of these areas already had existing interagency screening mechanisms.

Four areas took part in this research⁶. One area has interagency processes in place for offence and non-offence cases and both types of processes were included in the research. These areas were also included in the Scottish Government's evaluation of the processes used by interagency screening groups.

- Renfrewshire - offence
- South Glasgow – non-offence
- Edinburgh – offence⁷
- Dundee – offence⁸ and non-offence

Trends

Data from SCRA's Data Warehouse were analysed to examine the impact of the introduction of interagency screening processes on the numbers of children referred to the Reporter, and the proportions of these children who were then referred to Hearings.

Interventions and outcomes for children

Each of the groups provided anonymised lists of children that they had considered. The researchers randomly selected eight or nine children from each area to track their cases through the early intervention process. Information was obtained from each agency involved in the child's case on the actions and interventions identified at the case discussion during the group meeting, and the outcomes for the child up to 12 months later to examine the effects of the group's decisions and subsequent interventions⁸. A pro forma was provided to the groups to gather information on each child (Appendix 1), and all information provided to the researchers was anonymised.

Outcomes for each child were assessed against those from the Scottish Government's Ministerial Vision for Scotland's Children:

- **Safe:** protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community.
- **Healthy:** having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy and safe choices.
- **Achieving:** being supported and guided in their learning and in the development of their skills, confidence and self-esteem at home, at school, and in the community.

⁶ The offence group in Fife had originally indicated that it would take part in the research, as it was involved in the Scottish Government's of the processes used by interagency screening groups . However, it was not possible for them to provide the information required and it was therefore decided not to include this area in the research.

⁷ It was originally intended to include non-offence processes in Edinburgh. The police and other agencies in Edinburgh are developing a new approach to fully implementing *Getting it right*. It is planned that the Edinburgh 'Early and Effective Pathways for Children' approach will start in January 2010. As the new approach is not in place, it was decided not to include Edinburgh non-offence process in this evaluation.

⁸ Although the offence group in Dundee provided lists of children, it was not possible for them to complete and return the pro formas within the timescale of this research. Trends for this area are discussed but no evaluation of the outcomes for children was possible.

- **Nurtured:** having a nurturing place to live, in a family setting with additional help if needed or, where this is not possible, in a suitable care setting.
- **Active:** having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport which contribute to healthy growth and development, both at home and in the community.
- **Respected:** having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions which affect them.
- **Responsible:** having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles in their schools and communities and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision.
- **Included:** having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.

Limitations of this research

Although all the groups agreed to take part in this research, it was not possible for them all to provide the information on interventions and outcomes for the cases selected within the timescale of this research. Of the groups who provided this information, most found it difficult especially in assessing outcomes for children. This research is therefore based on the information available.

Findings

Trends and case studies for each area and group are considered separately. The processes used by each group are described in the Scottish Government's evaluation, and are not considered in detail in this report.

RENFREWSHIRE

Offence

The Renfrewshire Early Intervention Screening Group (EISG) for children involved in offending started on 25 January 2008, and meets once a week. Members of the group represent:

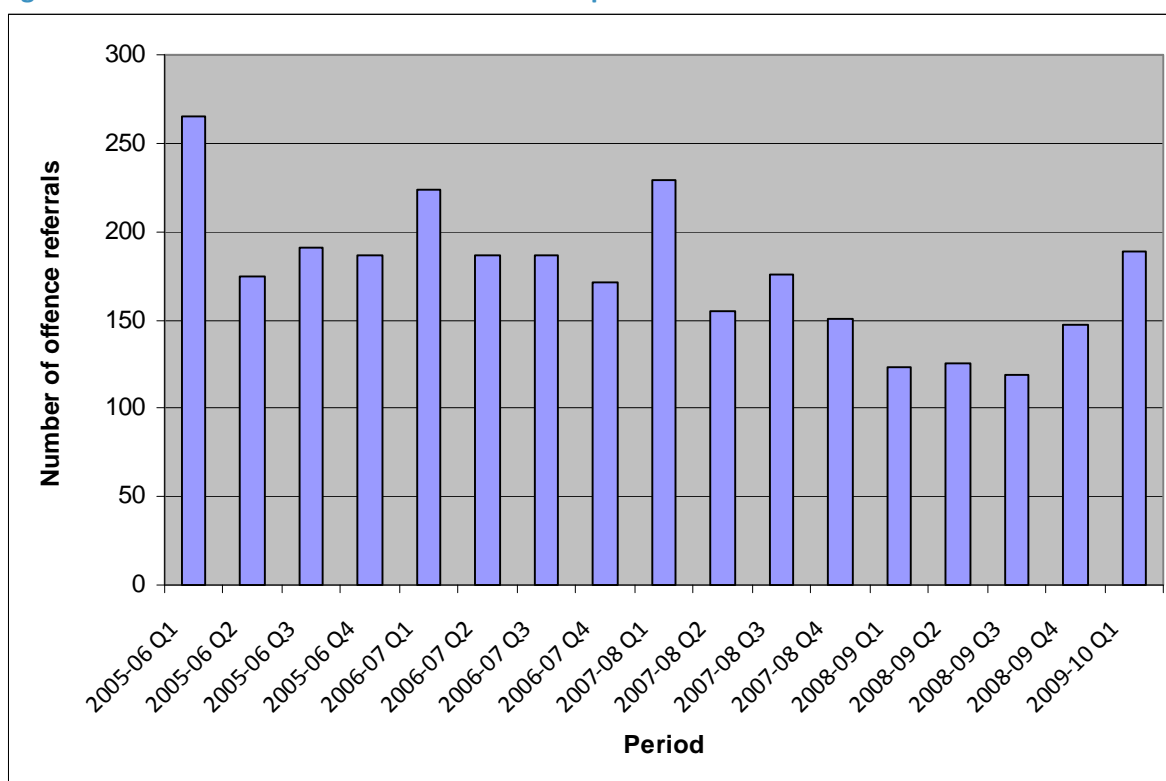
- Strathclyde Police
- Renfrewshire Council Social Work Department – Children's Services
- Renfrewshire Council Education Services
- Renfrewshire Council Housing Services
- Community Health Partnership

Trends

Children referred to the Reporter for offending – Renfrewshire

The EISG began at the start of Q4 in 2007-08. In the first year, there was a reduction in the numbers offence referrals to the Reporter (Figure 2 and Table 2). More recently, levels have risen, but are still lower in general than before the start of the EISG.

Figure 2 – Numbers of offence referrals to the Reporter – Renfrewshire



Although there has been a reduction in the numbers of offence referrals to the Reporter since the Renfrewshire EISG has been operating, those children who were referred are now more likely to be

referred to Hearings –approximately a third of children referred for offending are now being referred to Children’s Hearings (previously it was less than a fifth) (Table 2). This is a higher proportion than Scotland as a whole, where around 13% of children referred to the Reporter on offence grounds are referred to Hearings. This indicates that the Renfrewshire EISG may be effective in helping to ensure that those children referred to the Reporter for offending are those in need of compulsory measures.

Table 2 – Number of offence referrals to the Reporter, and percentage of children referred on offence grounds where Reporter decision was to arrange a Children’s Hearing - Renfrewshire.

Period	Offence referrals received by the Reporter	% children referred on offence grounds where Reporter decision was to refer to a Hearing	
		Renfrewshire	Scotland
2005-06 Q1	265	13%	12%
2005-06 Q2	175	11%	13%
2005-06 Q3	191	20%	14%
2005-06 Q4	187	20%	13%
2006-07 Q1	224	19%	15%
2006-07 Q2	187	12%	12%
2006-07 Q3	187	15%	14%
2006-07 Q4	171	17%	13%
2007-08 Q1	229	19%	13%
2007-08 Q2	155	19%	13%
2007-08 Q3	176	21%	13%
2007-08 Q4	151	30%	12%
2008-09 Q1	123	34%	14%
2008-09 Q2	126	25%	13%
2008-09 Q3	119	26%	13%
2008-09 Q4	147	17%	13%
2009-10 Q1	189	32%	14%

Shaded area covers the period in which the EISG has been operating.

Interventions and outcomes for children

Eight cases of children involved in offending discussed by the Renfrewshire EISG in August 2008 were followed for up to 10 months to examine interventions put in place and the outcomes from these.

Interventions

The EISG did not only discuss the child’s offending and/or antisocial behaviour but also other concerns in the child’s life, and identified and put in place interventions to address all these aspects.

Child 1 – there were serious concerns over this child’s safety and welfare including abuse by parent, self harming, and on-going domestic violence at home. The EISG decided to refer the child to the Reporter and put in place the Education Home Link Service to provide the child with support.

Child 2 – apart from offending, this child was putting themselves at risk in the community and was not attending school. The EISG decided to refer the child to the Reporter and put in place a mentoring service and arranged a phased introduction to a college placement.

Child 3 – there were serious care and welfare issues for this child, poor conditions in the family home, housing problems, and the child was not attending school. The EISG referred the child to the Reporter, put in place restorative justice services, Education Home Link Service, involvement with

the Antisocial Investigations Team, and housing issues were followed up by the local authority.

Child 4 – the main concerns were about this child’s offending and antisocial behaviour in the community. Parents refused to co-operate with services to address the child’s behaviour. The EISG referred the child to the Reporter and put in place restorative justice services.

Child 5 – the main concerns were about this child’s continual offending and antisocial behaviour. The Antisocial Investigations Team was put in place to work with this child, and a college placement identified.

Child 6 – there were serious care and welfare issues for this child, including substance misuse by parents, poor home conditions, domestic violence, not attending school and being isolated from peers and in the community. The EISG arranged for the child to be provided with a befriender, restorative justice services, Education Home Link Service and Extended Support Team in school and support from Women’s Aid.

Child 7 – had only recently become involved in offending following death of a close relative. Main concerns were about how the child was coping with this bereavement. Education Home Link Service was put in place to support the child, and appropriate agencies were involved to provide wider support to the family.

Child 8 – was part of a gang and engaged in antisocial behaviour in the community. The child had been rejected by his/her parents and was not attending school. The EISG decided to put in place the Antisocial Investigations Team and restorative justice services.

Outcomes

The Renfrewshire EISG was asked to assess if the situations had got ‘better’, ‘same’, or ‘worse’ for the child since the interventions had been identified against the Scottish Government’s outcome measures, as relevant to each child.

Table 3 – Outcomes after nine months for each of the children - Renfrewshire

Outcome	Child							
	1*	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Safe	-	better	better	better	better	better/same	better	better/same
Healthy	-	better	better	better	-	better	-	-
Achieving	-	better	better	better	-	better	better	-
Nurtured	-	better	better	better	-	better	better	better
Active	-	better	-	better	-	better	-	better
Respected	-	-	better	-	-	-	-	-
Responsible	-	better	better	worse	better	better	-	worse
Included	-	-	-	-	-	better	-	-

*Not available, child moved from area

For two children (children 4 and 8) their offending and antisocial behaviour had continued and/or increased, although other aspects of their lives had improved. For the other six children the EISG considered that many aspects of their lives had improved, perhaps most importantly most were safer, better nurtured and achieving through attending school or college than before interventions had been put in place. Four of the eight children now have Supervision Requirements.

Care and protection

There is pre-referral screening pilot in Renfrewshire for cases where there is domestic violence. This began in October 2006, and appears to have had an impact on non-offence referrals to the Reporter. Since the introduction of pre-referral screening on domestic violence cases (i.e. 2006-07 Q3), there have been reductions in children being referred to the Reporter on care and protection grounds and proportionately more of these children being referred to Hearings, at a level considerably higher than Scotland as a whole (Figure 3 and Table 4).

Figure 3 – Numbers of non-offence referrals to the Reporter – Renfrewshire

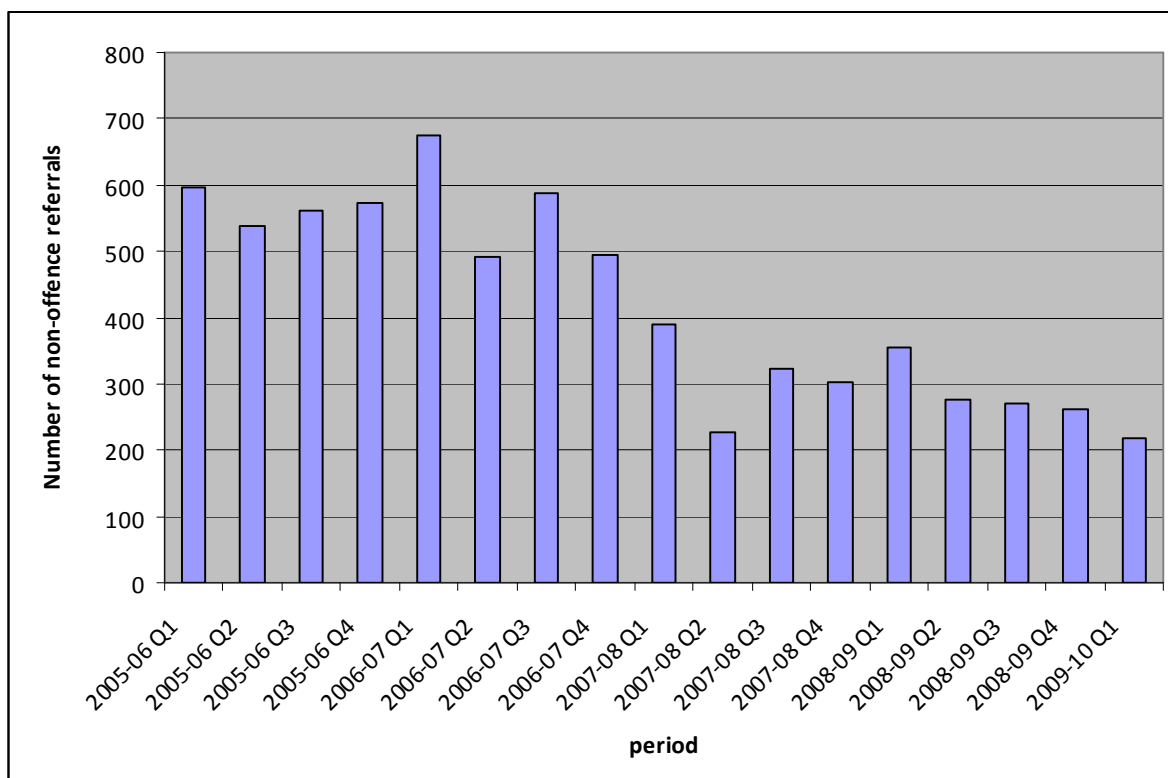


Table 4 – Number of non-offence referrals to the Reporter, and percentage of children referred on non-offence grounds where Reporter decision was to arrange a Children’s Hearing - Renfrewshire.

Period	Non-offence referrals received by the Reporter	% children referred on care & protection grounds where Reporter decision was to refer to a Hearing	
		Renfrewshire	Scotland
2005-06 Q1	595	11%	11%
2005-06 Q2	539	6%	10%
2005-06 Q3	561	16%	11%
2005-06 Q4	572	15%	11%
2006-07 Q1	674	19%	12%
2006-07 Q2	493	13%	9%
2006-07 Q3	589	11%	9%
2006-07 Q4	495	16%	9%
2007-08 Q1	391	22%	12%
2007-08 Q2	227	20%	10%
2007-08 Q3	322	20%	9%
2007-08 Q4	304	29%	11%
2008-09 Q1	356	27%	13%
2008-09 Q2	276	28%	12%
2008-09 Q3	272	27%	11%
2008-09 Q4	263	36%	12%
2009-10 Q1	217	43%	12%

Shaded area covers the period in which pilot for pre-referral screening on domestic violence cases has been operating.

Agencies in Renfrewshire are also looking at how to develop their screening processes to ensure that they consider referrals for young people who could fall between these two processes (i.e. offending and domestic violence pre-referral screening) and plan that these will be incorporated at some point in the near future.

EDINBURGH

Offence

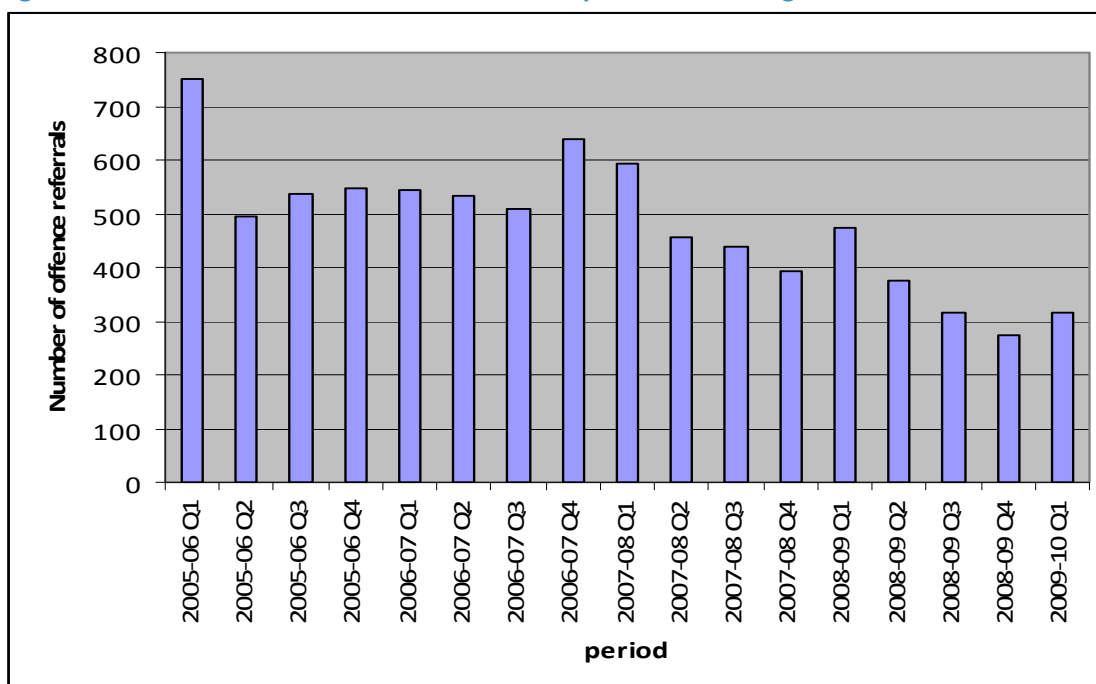
The Edinburgh Pre-referral Screening (PRS) process for children involved in offending started in June 2008, and meets once a week. Members of the PRS group represent:

- Lothian & Borders Police – Juvenile Liaison Officers
- Edinburgh City Council – Social Work, Youth Justice Service
- Edinburgh City Council – Education Department

Trends

The PRS began at the end of Q1 in 2008-09. In the first year, there was a noticeable reduction in the numbers offence referrals to the Reporter (Figure 4 and Table 5).

Figure 4 - Numbers of offence referrals to the Reporter – Edinburgh



Although there has been a reduction in the numbers of offence referrals to the Reporter since the Edinburgh PRS has been operating, those children who were referred are now more likely to be referred to Hearings – approximately a fifth of children referred for offending are now being referred to Children’s Hearings. This is slightly higher than the proportion nationally (Table 5). This indicates that the Edinburgh PRS may be starting to have an effect on increasing the proportion of children referred to the Reporter on offence grounds who are in need of and receive compulsory measures.

Table 5 – Number of offence referrals to the Reporter, and percentage of children referred on offence grounds where Reporter decision was to arrange a Children’s Hearing - Edinburgh.

Period	Offence referrals received by the Reporter	% children referred on offence grounds where Reporter decision was to refer to a Hearing	
		Edinburgh	Scotland
2005-06 Q1	752	14%	12%
2005-06 Q2	493	17%	13%
2005-06 Q3	537	20%	14%
2005-06 Q4	549	15%	13%
2006-07 Q1	545	16%	15%
2006-07 Q2	533	13%	12%
2006-07 Q3	509	12%	14%
2006-07 Q4	637	9%	13%
2007-08 Q1	593	10%	13%
2007-08 Q2	455	7%	13%
2007-08 Q3	440	7%	13%
2007-08 Q4	394	12%	12%
2008-09 Q1	472	15%	14%
2008-09 Q2	374	20%	13%
2008-09 Q3	317	19%	13%
2008-09 Q4	272	21%	13%
2009-10 Q1	315	20%	14%

Shaded area covers the period in which the PRS has been operating.

Interventions and outcomes for children

Nine cases of children involved in offending discussed by the Edinburgh PRS in September 2008 were followed for up to 12 months to examine interventions put in place and the outcomes from these. The PRS's main discussion was around the child's offending and/or antisocial behaviour but they also considered other concerns in the child's life.

For most of the nine children, information against Scottish Government outcomes was not provided. Outcome information that was available is included in discussion below on each case.

Child 1 – one-off offending incident. No other concerns. Received police warning and there have been no further incidences of offending.

Child 2 – Received police warning letter. No social work contact or involvement. Has continued to offend.

Child 3 – Youth Offending Service working with child and family on an on-going basis. Family Group Decision Making involved to support parents. Child referred to the Reporter a month after PRS discussion due to on-going offending and difficulties at school. Child now has Supervision Requirement.

Child 4 - Received police restorative warning. No social work contact or involvement. Not attending school.

Child 5 – Youth Offending Service put in place. Child excluded from school due to aggressive behaviour. Continuing offending and concerns about alcohol misuse lead to child being referred to the Reporter three months after PRS discussion.

Child 6 – Child was referred to Youth Offending Service by social work. Intervention was successful and child has stopped offending. In terms of the outcome 'responsible', the PRS considered that this had got better for this child.

Child 7 – Child and family would not engage with the Youth Offending Service, and child referred to the Reporter. However, child has since stopped offending and now involved in training and employment.

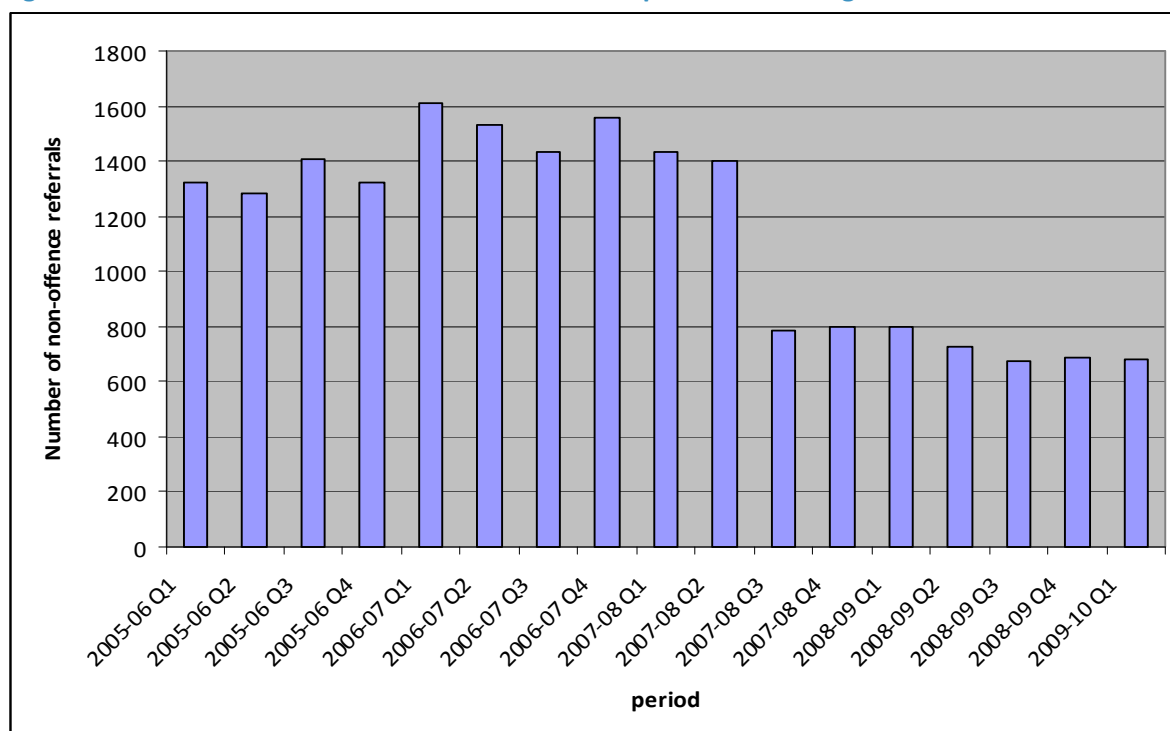
Child 8 – Case diverted to education to be addressed by guidance teacher. Youth Offending Service also involved. One further offence and allegation of an offence which is being investigated.

Child 9 – Diverted to Early Intervention Team and Youth Offending Service. However, offending has continued and become more serious. Child now also without a school placement. Child subsequently referred to the Reporter. In terms of the outcomes 'achieving' and 'responsible', the PRS considered that these had got worse for this child.

Care and protection

Over the past two years in Edinburgh, there have been marked reductions in children being referred to the Reporter on care and protection grounds and proportionately more of these children being referred to Hearings (Figure 5).

Figure 5 - Numbers of non-offence referrals to the Reporter – Edinburgh



However the proportion of children referred to Hearings is only slightly higher than Scotland as a whole (Table 6).

Table 6 – Number of non-offence referrals to the Reporter, and percentage of children referred on non-offence grounds where Reporter decision was to arrange a Children’s Hearing - Edinburgh

Period	Non-offence referrals received by the Reporter	% children referred on care & protection grounds where Reporter decision was to refer to a Hearing	
		Edinburgh	Scotland
2005-06 Q1	1,323	6%	11%
2005-06 Q2	1,283	10%	10%
2005-06 Q3	1,404	11%	11%
2005-06 Q4	1,322	10%	11%
2006-07 Q1	1,609	7%	12%
2006-07 Q2	1,533	7%	9%
2006-07 Q3	1,435	5%	9%
2006-07 Q4	1,555	6%	9%
2007-08 Q1	1,433	10%	12%
2007-08 Q2	1,402	9%	10%
2007-08 Q3	783	6%	9%
2007-08 Q4	798	14%	11%
2008-09 Q1	796	15%	13%
2008-09 Q2	724	14%	12%
2008-09 Q3	675	12%	11%
2008-09 Q4	684	13%	12%
2009-10 Q1	680	21%	12%

Shaded area covers the period in which the police in Edinburgh have been screening non-offence cases

This marked decrease in non-offence referrals from end of 2007 was the result of an agreement between the Reporter and the police in which the police screened non-offence cases. This meant

that instead of referring all children to the Reporter, the police exercised their discretion and low tariff cases were diverted directly to social work. However, there have been concerns that not all children who were diverted from referral to the Reporter by the police were receiving interventions. For this reason a multi-agency pre-referral screening process is being developed in Edinburgh for care and protection cases and it is planned that it will begin in one part of the city in early 2010.

GLASGOW SOUTH

Care and protection

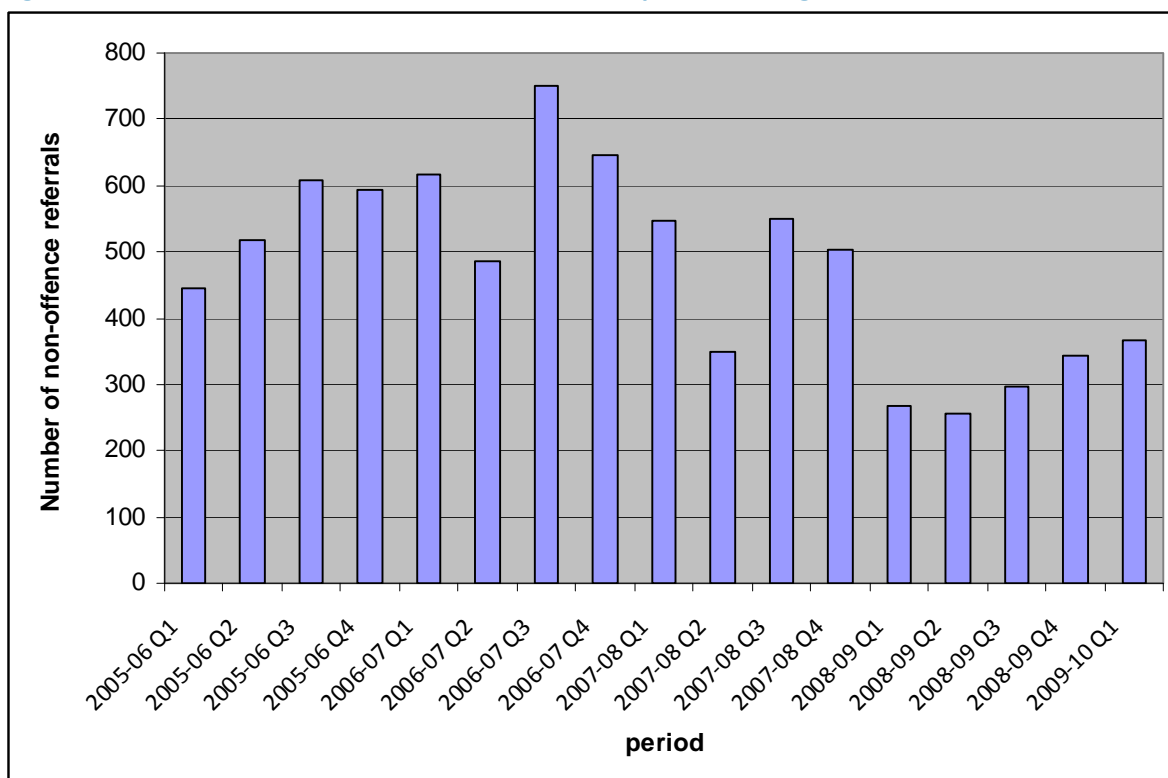
The Glasgow South Non-Offence Referral Management (NORM) group meets fortnightly. Members of the NORM group represent:

- Referral Manager – Strathclyde Police
- Glasgow City Council Social work Department – Children’s Services
- Glasgow City Council Education Department
- Health – school nurses/health visitors

Trends

The NORM group was set up in March 2008 and was fully established in April 2008. The group had an immediate impact on the numbers of non-offence referrals to the Reporter, halving the numbers of such referrals (Figure 6 and Table 7).

Figure 6 - Numbers of non-offence referrals to the Reporter – Glasgow South



The NORM process appears to be having an impact on not only reducing the number of non-offence referrals to the Reporter, but also helping to ensure that those children who are referred are more likely to require compulsory measures of intervention as evidenced by the increase in the proportions of children who are being referred to Children’s Hearings (Table 7).

Table 7 – Number of non-offence referrals to the Reporter, and percentage of children referred on non-offence grounds where Reporter decision was to arrange a Children’s Hearing – Glasgow South.

Period	Non-offence referrals received by the Reporter	% children referred on care & protection grounds where Reporter decision was to refer to a Hearing	
		Glasgow South	Scotland
2005-06 Q1	446	14%	11%
2005-06 Q2	517	17%	10%
2005-06 Q3	608	19%	11%
2005-06 Q4	593	15%	11%
2006-07 Q1	617	17%	12%
2006-07 Q2	486	11%	9%
2006-07 Q3	750	13%	9%
2006-07 Q4	647	6%	9%
2007-08 Q1	546	13%	12%
2007-08 Q2	349	11%	10%
2007-08 Q3	549	12%	9%
2007-08 Q4	503	8%	11%
2008-09 Q1	267	14%	13%
2008-09 Q2	256	30%	12%
2008-09 Q3	297	15%	11%
2008-09 Q4	342	19%	12%
2009-10 Q1	368	21%	12%

Shaded area covers the period in which the NORM group has been operating.

Interventions and outcomes for children

Seven cases of children discussed by the NORM group in September 2008 were followed for up to 11 months to examine interventions put in place and the outcomes from these.

For most of the children, information against Scottish Government outcomes was not provided. Outcome information that was available is included in discussion below on each case.

Child 1 – Child present during parent’s suicide attempt and soon after family presented as homeless. Community Psychiatric Nurse contacted. Health Visitor working with the family. No further concerns or referrals and case closed.

Child 2 – Concerns raised about parent’s use of alcohol and cannabis, but no concerns about their care of child. Health Visitor working with family. No further concerns received and case closed.

Child 3 – Health concerns about child. Concerns about poor parenting and parents’ use of alcohol. Child referred to Child Protection Case Conference and put on Child protection Register and referred to the Reporter. Child now on Supervision Requirement. Child now receiving medical care and health has improved, child taking part in school activities, parents are in programmes to address alcohol misuse and for parenting. Child no longer on Child Protection Register.

Child 4 – First came to attention when reported to police as a missing person. Later was involved in offending incident with sibling. Referred to the Reporter for this offence.

Child 5 – NORM group decided to refer to the Reporter because of number of concerns including school attendance, poor care of child by parents, domestic violence. Social work involvement with family to address concerns.

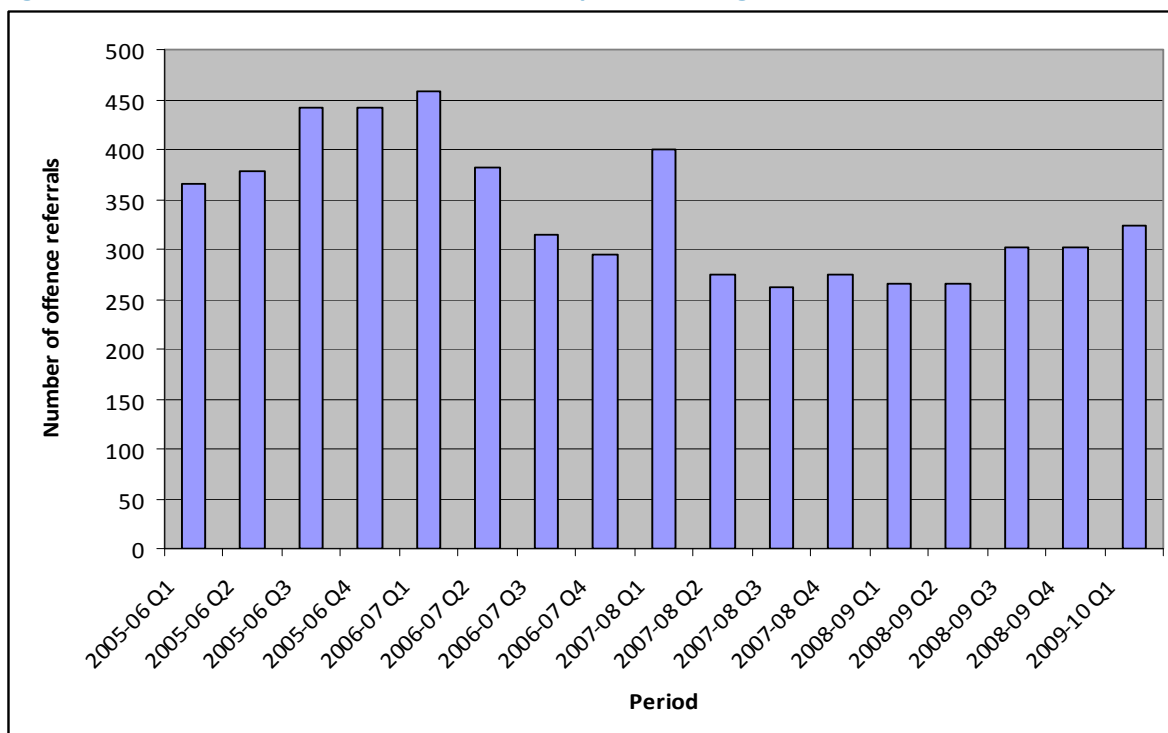
Child 6 – From a different social work area. NORM group automatically referred to the Reporter as child moving to another area.

Child 7 – Incident at school. No concerns about home or family. No action taken by school nurse – but NORM group consider that school nurse should have been involved and have discussed incident with family. No other action.

Offence

There is no pre-referral screening process for offence cases in this part of Glasgow. However, the numbers of offence referrals to the Reporter, which, although subject to some fluctuations, have declined slightly over the past two years (Figure 7).

Figure 7 – Number of offence referrals to the Reporter – Glasgow South



The past year or so has seen more children referred to the Reporter for offending being referred to Children’s Hearings, at levels higher than those nationally (Table 8).

Table 8 – Number of offence referrals to the Reporter, and percentage of children referred on offence grounds where Reporter decision was to arrange a Children’s Hearing – Glasgow South

Period	Offence referrals received by the Reporter	% children referred on offence grounds where Reporter decision was to refer to a Hearing	
		Glasgow South	Scotland
2005-06 Q1	366	11%	12%
2005-06 Q2	379	14%	13%
2005-06 Q3	441	22%	14%
2005-06 Q4	441	15%	13%
2006-07 Q1	459	13%	15%
2006-07 Q2	381	17%	12%
2006-07 Q3	314	19%	14%
2006-07 Q4	295	10%	13%
2007-08 Q1	400	14%	13%
2007-08 Q2	275	20%	13%
2007-08 Q3	261	16%	13%
2007-08 Q4	275	10%	12%
2008-09 Q1	266	21%	14%
2008-09 Q2	266	22%	13%
2008-08 Q3	302	23%	13%
2008-09 Q4	302	21%	13%
2009-10 Q1	324	20%	14%

DUNDEE

Care and protection

The multi-agency pre-referral screening group for care and protection cases in Dundee is well established. However, the role of the group has developed over this period, and continues to do so. When the group was first established it considered all cases. Since the start of 2009-10, the group has refined its purpose to looking in more detail at higher tariff cases to ensure that children who require interventions receive them. This has been made possible by the police taking responsibility to screen out low tariff cases. Very serious incidents are not considered by the group (child at immediate risk e.g. because of parental drug abuse and/or prostitution) and instead the police act immediately referring the child to social work and/or SCRA or if necessary, using their own powers under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

The Dundee group meets weekly and its members represent:

- Tayside police (group co-ordinator)
- NHS Tayside
- Dundee Education Department – School Community Support Service
- Dundee City Council – Social Work Department
- Dundee City Council - Housing

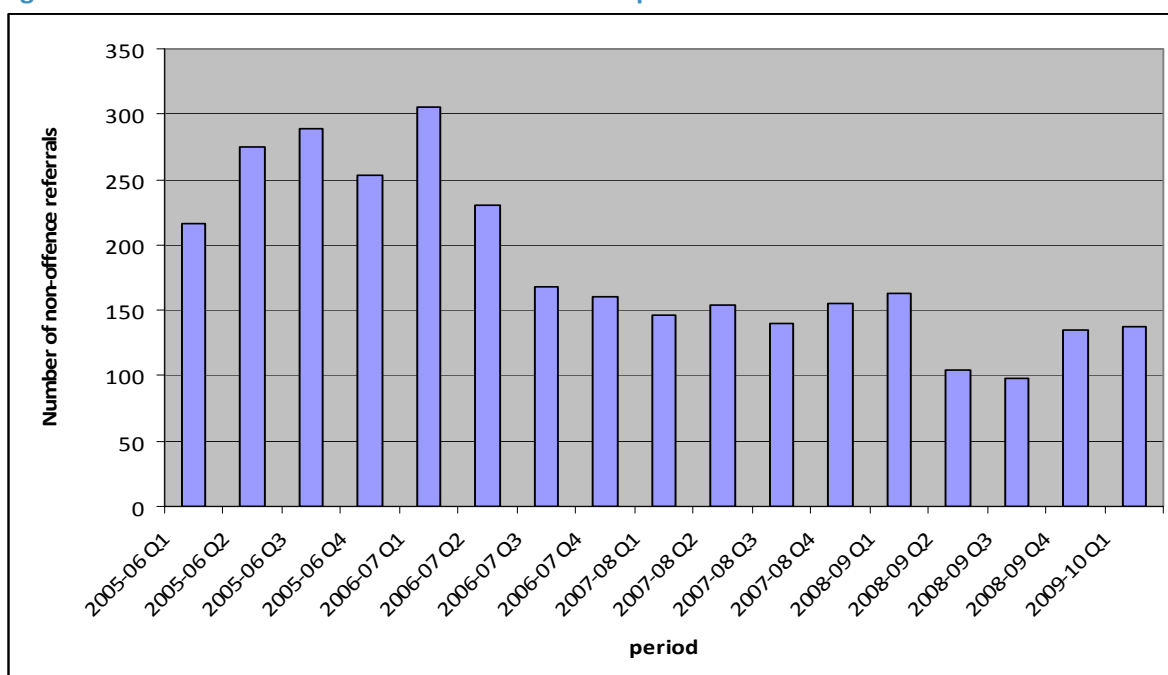
The Reporter in Dundee provides information for the weekly meetings on whether a child is known to SCRA either in Dundee or nationally.

Trends

Pre-referral screening is well established in Dundee, although the process continues to evolve. This has had impact on the numbers of non-offence referrals to the Reporter – reducing numbers by up

to a half (Figure 8).

Figure 8 - Number of non-offence referrals to the Reporter – Dundee



Pre-referral screening also appears to have resulted in proportionately more children referred to the Reporter on care and protection grounds being referred to Hearings – over a third of such referrals. The proportions of children referred to Hearings on care and protection grounds has been higher in Dundee than nationally for four years, and the introduction of pre-referral screening appears to have increased this still further (Table 9).

Table 9 – Number of non-offence referrals to the Reporter, and percentage of children referred on non-offence grounds where Reporter decision was to arrange a Children’s Hearing – Dundee.

Period	Non-offence referrals received by the Reporter	% children referred on care & protection grounds where Reporter decision was to refer to a Hearing	
		Dundee	Scotland
2005-06 Q1	217	21%	11%
2005-06 Q2	275	24%	10%
2005-06 Q3	289	27%	11%
2005-06 Q4	253	20%	11%
2006-07 Q1	305	25%	12%
2006-07 Q2	230	32%	9%
2006-07 Q3	168	16%	9%
2006-07 Q4	160	31%	9%
2007-08 Q1	146	45%	12%
2007-08 Q2	154	35%	10%
2007-08 Q3	140	41%	9%
2007-08 Q4	155	42%	11%
2008-09 Q1	163	35%	13%
2008-09 Q2	105	26%	12%
2008-09 Q3	98	33%	11%
2008-09 Q4	135	38%	12%
2009-10 Q1	138	42%	12%

Shaded area covers the period in which the group has been operating in its revised role.

Interventions and outcomes for children

Eight cases of children discussed by the Dundee group in April 2009 were followed for seven months to examine interventions put in place and the outcomes from these. This shorter period was used so that children's cases considered by the group in its newly revised role could be followed.

For some of the children, information against Scottish Government outcomes was not provided. Outcome information that was available is included in discussion below on each case.

Child 1 – concerns over child's poor school attendance, aggressive behaviour to staff and pupils in school and alcohol misuse. Group decide to refer child to School Community Support Service (SCSS). Child has now left school.

Child 2 – concerns about use of internet and webcam, truancy and poor behaviour in school, and shoplifting. Parents have taken action and removed webcam. Child already receiving intervention from SCSS. Police have already followed up other concerns. Decided that no action required by group. The group considered that the actions taken have improved the child's 'safety' outcome.

Child 3 – Concerns about frequent domestic violence in home often witnessed by child, and child's aggressive behaviour in school. Child referred to social work, school has taken action to address behaviour problems, and mother doing all she can to get support for her and her children. The group considered that the child's outcomes for 'safety', 'achieving' and 'nurtured' are the same from the actions taken.

Child 4 – Very unkempt, requires support for learning, and long history of parental drug misuse and domestic violence resulting in a direct referral of the family to the police regarding concerns about the children. School nurse providing child with support with their appearance and educational psychologist working with the child in school. Mother is seeking appropriate support from services. The group considered that the child's outcomes for 'safety', 'healthy' and 'achieving' have got better from the actions taken.

Child 5 – Concerns from school about child's general cleanliness and not wearing full school uniform. Group decide that no action is required.

Child 6 – Concerns about school attendance. SCSS was involved but this has now stopped as child's attendance has improved.

Child 7 – Witnessed domestic violence between parents. Child referred to social work. Health Visitor to provide support to family. The group considered that the child's outcomes for 'safety', 'achieving' and 'nurtured' are the same from the actions taken.

Child 8 – Suspected pregnancy of a woman who is a drug user and working as a prostitute. Group decided to alert GP and, if pregnancy confirmed, to initiate unborn baby protocol. Later found that no pregnancy.

Offence

The pre-referral screening group for offence cases has been in place in Dundee since October 2006, and meets weekly. Its membership consists of:

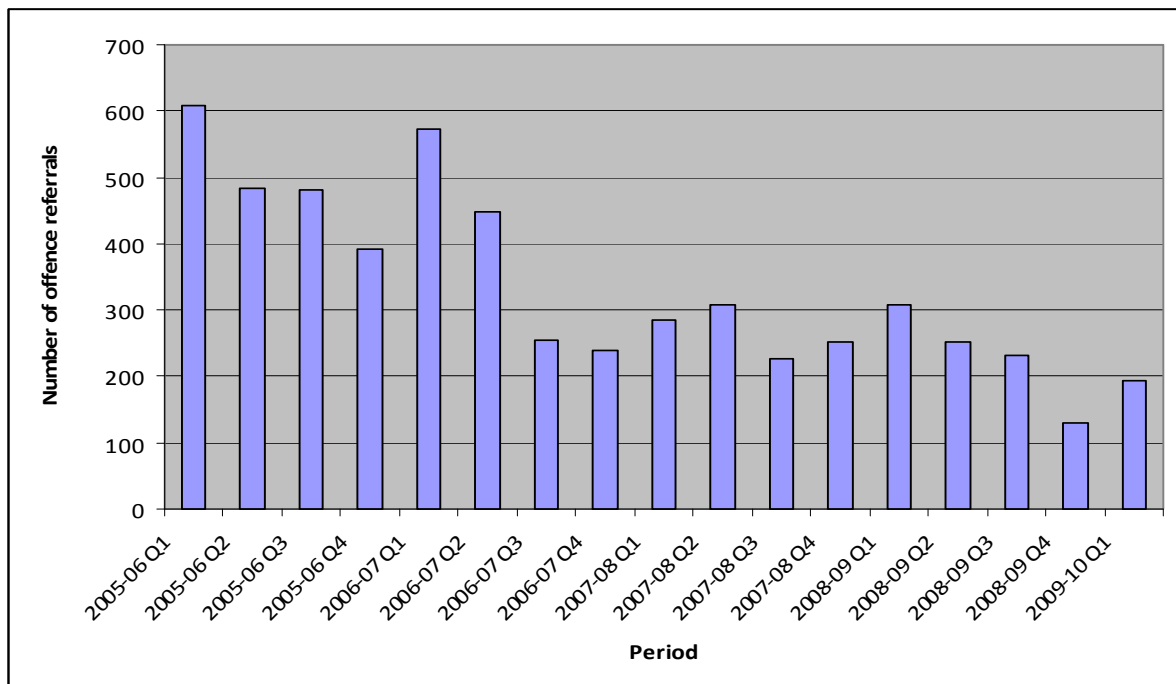
- Tayside Police – Crime Reduction Unit
- Tayside Police - Youth Justice Assessor
- Dundee City Council Social Work Department (Children's Services)
- Dundee City Council – Education Department
- SACRO

- SCRA
- Youth Justice Co-ordinator
- Dundee City Council – Housing Department

The Reporter in Dundee provides information for the weekly meetings on whether a child is known to SCRA either in Dundee or nationally, but does not attend the meetings.

It has resulted in fewer children being referred to the Reporter on offence grounds (Figure 9).

Figure 9 - Number of offence referrals to the Reporter – Dundee



Proportionately more of these children have been referred to Hearings by the Reporter (Table 10). Before the introduction of pre-referral screening, the proportions of children being referred to Hearings on offence grounds were similar to those nationally. Since the start of pre-referral screening this has been higher in Dundee.

Table 10 – Number of offence referrals to the Reporter, and percentage of children referred on offence grounds where Reporter decision was to arrange a Children’s Hearing – Dundee

Period	Offence referrals received by the Reporter	% children referred on offence grounds where Reporter decision was to refer to a Hearing	
		Dundee	Scotland
2005-06 Q1	609	18%	12%
2005-06 Q2	484	16%	13%
2005-06 Q3	482	14%	14%
2005-06 Q4	392	11%	13%
2006-07 Q1	527	13%	15%
2006-07 Q2	447	12%	12%
2006-07 Q3	254	13%	14%
2006-07 Q4	239	21%	13%
2007-08 Q1	284	22%	13%
2007-08 Q2	308	21%	13%
2007-08 Q3	226	21%	13%
2007-08 Q4	253	29%	12%
2008-09 Q1	309	43%	14%
2008-09 Q2	251	28%	13%
2008-08 Q3	231	22%	13%
2008-09 Q4	129	22%	13%
2009-10 Q1	194	18%	14%

Shaded area covers the period in which the offence screening group has been operating.

Conclusions

The pre-referral screening processes looked at in this research are having an impact in reducing referrals to the Reporter – consequently, proportionately more of the children referred to the Reporter are those who require compulsory measures of supervision and are referred to Hearings. However, the extent to which referrals to the Reporter are reduced and proportions of children referred to Hearings vary between the groups. This is perhaps not surprising when each group is unique in its membership, the types of cases it considers and its operation.

The groups meet regularly and frequently and as a result children's cases are discussed very shortly after concerns have been identified, and, for those observed, actions are discussed and agreed. All the groups include representation from a range of services, demonstrate inter-agency working and consider the wider needs of the child. In these ways they are operating in line with the *Getting it Right for Every Child* principles and those of the Children's Hearings System. However, some of the groups noted that it was difficult to get representation and input from education sources in the school holidays. This is a shortcoming given the importance of schools in identifying concerns about children and putting supports in place for them.

The police have the primary role in co-ordinating and leading the pre-referral groups – both for offending and for care and protection. This has considerable resource implications for the police. It also raises questions about greater collective responsibility amongst agencies for how these groups operate.

The groups all operated in different ways to reflect local needs and resources. Some are new and/or are continuing to develop. However, a common theme between the groups was the lack of protocols/processes on how they operated and make decisions.

Most of the groups found it difficult to provide information on outcomes for the children they had discussed. This was because no formal records of the meetings are taken, instead each agency keeps its own records of actions agreed and implemented. As each agency has different systems which are not accessible to each other, it was difficult for the co-ordinators of the groups to follow the children's cases to assess outcomes. The need for pre-referral groups to have systems to record information was also identified in the Scottish Government's evaluation⁹. This again has resource implications especially for the police who are largely responsible for co-ordinating the groups. The Edinburgh PRS group is currently looking at its recording procedures to put in place a system to do this through obtaining additional resources from the Scottish Government.

Information that is available on interventions and outcomes for the children discussed by the groups showed that the groups considered wider aspects of the children's lives, including that of their families, and not just the incident that led to them coming to the attention of agencies. Interventions were identified and implemented, based on this wider assessment, to address the main concerns about the children's welfare and behaviour.

⁹ Scottish Government (2009) Early and Effective Intervention Evaluation Report

Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration Outcomes Evaluation – Early and Effective Intervention
Recording of service interventions for cases discussed at Early Intervention Groups/Processes

Local Authority and service

Child Initials and Date of Birth

Date Information circulated about child

Date of case discussion at group meeting

Action / Intervention Identified	Action / Intervention Undertaken			Date & Comments / Reasons
1)	Y	N	N/A	
2)	Y	N	N/A	
3)	Y	N	N/A	
4)	Y	N	N/A	
5)	Y	N	N/A	
6)	Y	N	N/A	

Date of last contact with child

CHILD OUTCOMES	CONCERN AT DISCUSSION	CHANGE BETTER/SAME/WORSE	OUTCOME (Record any changes, re-occurrence of issues or new problems)
Safe		B S W	
Healthy		B S W	
Achieving		B S W	
Nurtured		B S W	
Active		B S W	
Respected		B S W	
Responsible (include offences)		B S W	
Included		B S W	

Subsequent referrals to the Reporter

Please detail any referrals in relation to concern and dates of referral

DATE	REFERRAL DETAILS

Return form to:

Gillian Henderson, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, Ochil House, Springkerse Business Park, Stirling FK7 7XE

Tel 01786 459531

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Ochil House
Springkerse Business Park
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***December 2009
Gillian Henderson, Donald Lamb & Lucy Hanson
Scottish Children's Reporter Administration***