



CARE AND JUSTICE

for Scotland's Children

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration Submission to Finance Committee

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) welcomes the opportunity to give evidence to the Finance Committee as part of its consideration of the Anti-Social Behaviour Etc (Scotland) Bill. We will give more detailed evidence in due course to the Communities Committee which is the lead Committee on this Bill.

We will also engage with the Scottish Executive in its forthcoming review of the Children's Hearing System, taking account of the proposals in the ASB Bill and the wider issues affecting the Children's Hearing System. We believe a major objective of this review should be to strengthen the position and authority of the Hearings themselves – service difficulties are the key challenge facing the Hearings System and require a committed and sustained approach.

The key points in our response to the Scottish Executive's consultation "Putting Our Communities First: a strategy for tackling anti-social behaviour" were:

- ❑ The Children's Hearings System remains the best means of addressing the anti-social behaviour of children and young people because it is integrated, wide-ranging, flexible and community based.
- ❑ The Children's Hearings System, as a community based system, already has the remit and many of the powers to address anti-social behaviour by children and young people, and poor parenting.
- ❑ Virtually all new measures that the Scottish Executive is seeking to address anti-social behaviour by children and young people can be achieved through the Children's Hearings System - as long as service delivery is improved so that existing powers can be used more creatively and fully.

We would make the following initial comments to the Finance Committee relating to the financial aspects of the Bill.

- ❑ We accept that the levels of uptake set out in the Financial Memorandum are inevitably guesstimates at this stage.
- ❑ We are looking at available evidence to support SCRA's assessment of likely uptake and would propose to update Committee members on this in a further short written statement on the 9th.
- ❑ We are currently making an assessment of the workload impact of the new measures on reporters and support staff and again will update Members on the 9th.