



# Interim Report on the Monitoring of Non-Offence Pre-Referral Activity to the Reporter



## Executive Summary

Recent years have seen ever increasing numbers of children being referred to the Children's Reporter. For some of these children, this was not an appropriate or effective response to their needs, as they did not need compulsory measures of supervision. Government and agencies involved in the Children's Hearings System recognised this and set up initiatives to help address this.

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) is evaluating the impact of these initiatives on referrals to the Reporter. As part of this, the number of referrals on 'c' lack of parental care and 'd' victim of a schedule 1 offence<sup>1</sup> grounds and the total numbers of referrals is being monitored. This interim report gives the results of monitoring from April 2003 to September 2007.

### Pathfinders

#### Highland

Early indications show a 47.7% drop in 'c' ground referrals in August and September 2007, but a 6.8% increase in all referrals over four years.

#### Domestic abuse

Dumfries & Galloway and West Dunbartonshire – no indications of change in referral pattern yet.

Falkirk and Edinburgh - already had police-led pre-referral screening processes which appear to have reduced 'c' and 'd' referrals by over 40%. This makes it difficult to ascertain the contribution from the pathfinders.

### Pre-referral screening

Dundee, Perth & Kinross, Inverclyde, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and Stirling – show reductions across all grounds of referral – ranging from a drop of 36.3% in Dundee to 2.3% in Stirling.

### Issues

This report raises a number of issues for SCRA and the Children's Hearings System:

- It is too early to assess the impact of the Pathfinder projects on referrals. The impact of the Pathfinders should not be considered in isolation from existing practices and processes.
- Pre-referral screening does divert referrals from the Reporter, but there are different approaches with differing impacts. There is little information on outcomes for the children involved - SCRA intends to include this in the next stage of this evaluation.

### Next steps

The research will continue to monitor referrals to the Reporter and will explore more fully how the different processes work and are perceived by their stakeholders. This will help SCRA and partners in the Children's Hearings System identify and develop best practice in delivering services to children. The research will also move onto its second phase to more fully explore how the different screening processes work.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 52(2) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. 'c' and 'd' referrals are the most common non-offence referrals and those used for domestic abuse referrals.

## Introduction

There are currently a number of initiatives proposed or underway which are designed to help deliver services to children in a proportionate and timely way - helping children to receive the appropriate service they need, when they need it. The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) is currently researching the impact of these initiatives in terms of the numbers of referrals made to the Reporter on different non-offence grounds.

There are three main initiatives that will have an effect on some of the non-offence Referrals made to the Reporter once they are fully enacted. They are:

- Getting it Right Highland and Domestic Abuse pathfinders
- Ministerial Task Group on non-offence referrals (including response to SCRA's Case Filtering Tool)
- Pre-existing referral screening groups

Whilst these influences are distinctive in their creation, one of the outcomes that they share is in reducing or possibly reducing the number of referrals to the Reporter where compulsory measures are not considered necessary. Some areas already have or will have a number of these initiatives operating.

## Getting it Right for Every Child

*Getting it right for every child* 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 a better use of resources and help children and families understand what is being done and why.

Where a structured multi-agency approach is needed for a child, then agencies must work together to agree, with the child and family, what the child's needs are, how they are to be addressed and how action is to be taken forward. Agencies will be 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 have been introduced to pilot and put into practice the *Getting it Right* approach. In Highland the pathfinder is being introduced in stages according to child's age. This pathfinder has begun with newborn children. The other four pathfinders are thematic and focus on children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse. These pathfinders are operating in parts of Clydebank, Falkirk, Edinburgh and Dumfries and Galloway.

## Ministerial Task Group on Non-Offence Referrals

The Ministerial Task Group was set up in July 2006 to design a model of working to help agencies meet the needs of children and identify more appropriately those children who may require compulsory measures of supervision. This group was created as there has been an increase in the number of referrals to the Reporter, some of which were inappropriate, but only a small proportion of the overall number of referrals have resulted in Children's Hearings.

A referral framework has been created by the group to assist agencies in their work, though the framework can be adapted to local needs and circumstances. The framework aims to facilitate decision making in agencies and the creation of multi agency screening groups that assess the needs of children and assess what action, if any, needs to be taken. Agencies are asked to produce 'cause for concern' reports which are divided into three categories:

1. Serious concern that requires immediate referral to the Reporter
2. Clearly no requirement for further action
3. A broad range of reports that require further information and assessment to allow an appropriate judgement to be made. Further outcomes here are: no further action, referral to the Reporter, referral to another single agency, referral for multi-agency response.

### Pre-existing referral screening processes

There are a number of pre-referral screening processes that are currently operating in Scotland that were initiated prior to the introduction of the Getting it Right pathfinders and the Ministerial Task Group on non-offence referrals.

The screening processes operate on either a multi-agency group basis or are lead by a single agency (usually the police) in consultation with other agencies.

### Structure of report

This report provides an update on the known activity of agencies in managing the number of non-offence referrals to the Reporter and analyses the change in the number of referrals received by the Reporter in a sample of areas across Scotland. The areas chosen include all of the GIR pathfinder areas, six areas of non-pathfinder activity and five comparison areas of no known activity. Excluding the pathfinder areas, sites were selected to cover the four SCRA regions and also provide some variety in the sizes of local authority areas.

The referral data considered here are on 'c' 'lack of parental care' and 'd' 'victim of a schedule 1 offence' grounds as these are the non-offence grounds most likely to be affected by pre-screening as they include 'domestic abuse' referrals. They are also the most common non-offence referrals. Commonly in the recording of grounds where there are domestic abuse incidents, the Reporter may record the referral under *either* ground due to the consideration as to whether the child is likely to suffer unnecessarily or be impaired seriously due to a lack of parental care (s52 (2)(c)) or whether the child has been the victim of "wilful exposure" (s52 (2)(d) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995). Any pattern of such behaviour will also affect the decision making of the Reporter in terms of registering grounds.

SCRA has produced new guidance on registering non-offence referrals. This was implemented first in some teams and this is shown in the teams discussed below where there is a clear change in pattern of both referral grounds.

The total number of referrals in each area for each full year is also provided in ANNEX1. These totals provide the annual number of referrals across *all grounds* of referral according to the Children in Scotland (1995) Act.

Data are presented from April 2003 to September 2007. This allows four full years of data to be analysed in order to more accurately assess any changes in referral patterns both before and after the introduction of screening processes. The year

2003/04 is therefore used as a baseline year. The first two quarters of referral data from 2007/08 are shown in the charts below in an attempt to capture the more recent changes in referral activity. However, as this is not a complete year of data it is not included in any analysis of change, unless specifically stated. All data is presented as the number of referrals received and is taken from SCRA's Data Warehouse.

A summary of a response from ACPOS to SCRA on current screening activity in relation to non-offence referrals is also presented here.

## ACPOS SUMMARY

In order to assist the monitoring of referral practice across Scotland, SCRA's Information and Research Manager approached Scotland's police forces for information on their current activity and planned activity for the future. Their commitment to the Getting it Right work and other non-offence referral activity is noted, as is the recognition that a number of other agencies are also tasked and involved in these processes.

Aside from the Getting it Right pathfinders, current and planned activity across Scotland is shown below.

### Central Scotland Police

Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk are operating an ACPOS framework for screening non-offence referrals to the Reporter. This has been in operation since January 2007. The process is lead by Central Scotland Police in consultation with the relevant Social Work Department and local Reporter. Part of Falkirk also operates a domestic abuse pathfinder.

### Tayside Police

There are elements of pre-screening referrals in all 3 divisions which include the three local authorities of Dundee City Council, Angus Council and Perth and Kinross council. A multi-agency group operates in Dundee. Screening is focussed on domestic abuse referrals.

### Lothian and Borders Police

Midlothian and West Lothian have operated a single agency lead screening process since 2006 (October 2006 for Midlothian). Edinburgh is the most recent process to be initiated along similar lines (September 2007). Part of Edinburgh also operates the domestic abuse pathfinder. East Lothian has operated a single agency lead process since October 2006 but has been piloting a multi-agency group since June 2007. The Scottish Borders have been operating a multi-agency group since early 2006.

### Northern Constabulary

Northern Constabulary has been active in the Getting it Right work since June 2007, whereby non-offence referrals are discussed with relevant agencies instead of making a referral to the Reporter. It also plans to take forward this work to all offence referrals in Inverness in the autumn of 2007.

### Strathclyde Police

Pre-Screening Processes operate for Domestic Abuse related referrals within 'K' Division- Renfrewshire (late 2006) and Inverclyde (2005). Both groups are multi-agency groups. In addition, Renfrewshire has a pre-screening process for referrals involving alcohol abuse by young people since 2006. Initial talks have also taken place between the Renfrewshire Council and the police to establish a pre-screening process which would incorporate both offence and non-offence referrals.

The domestic abuse pathfinder is operating in West Dunbartonshire.

Inter agency meetings have been held within 'Q' Division - Lanarkshire where SCRA Reporters for North and South Lanarkshire have raised concerns. Agencies are keen to identify a system of screening and further meetings will be arranged.

### Grampian Police

There are plans to develop systems as per the ACPOS non-offence referral framework and in line with the ongoing work being carried out in relation to the recommendations of a recent internal review of the Family Protection Unit.

### **Fife Constabulary**

Fife Constabulary already has in place an established screening process in relation to Juvenile Warnings - Offence referrals. Work is already underway to implement the non offence process and incorporate it with the youth justice framework. Consultation has taken place with relevant stakeholders and the role of Multi Agency Coordinator is likely to be undertaken by a member of Fife Social Work Dept. It is proposed albeit not yet confirmed, that the existing meetings will also consider non offence referrals and allow incremental monitoring of Vulnerable Persons Reports (or Cause for Concern reports as they are referred to in Fife), with escalation and referral to the Reporter based on screening as described in the framework proposed by the Scottish Executive.

### **Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary**

Meetings with relevant partner agencies are planned to discuss the appointment of Single Points of Contact in Police, Education, Health and Social Work. The purpose of the SPOC is to improve information sharing and enable a fuller and more integrated assessment of risk to take place in relation to child “concern” issues that arise, thus reducing unnecessary referrals to SCRA and trying to ensure that children and families get the help that they need when they need it.

Part of Dumfries and Galloway also operates the domestic abuse pathfinder.

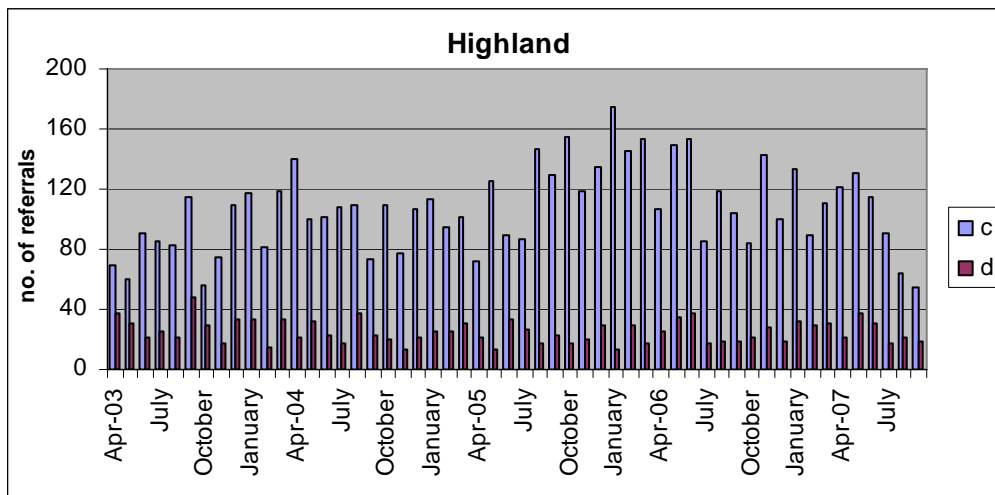
## PATHFINDER AREAS

It was anticipated that the pathfinder areas would come into effect throughout 2007, with Highland coming to effect in June 2007. Areas have been spending time developing their working practices and with the exception of Highland and Falkirk, it is not currently known as to how much change in referral practice has taken place since this point.

It is also important to note that as the pathfinders currently operate within a specific region of a local authority area (and not the whole local authority area), the impact on the number of referrals received by the Reporter in these areas may not be as obvious as other areas with screening activity.

### Highland

Since the beginning of 2003 referrals on 'c' grounds have increased to the end of 2006. The 2005/06 year saw the highest increase on these grounds (an increase of 24% on the previous year). Referrals in 2006/07 slowed down but remained high.

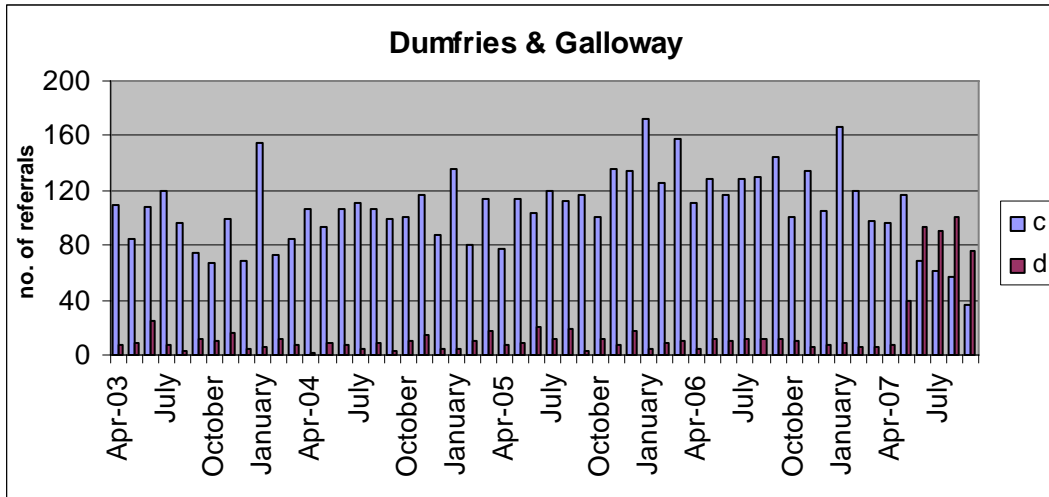


Northern Constabulary Police introduced their 'Child Concern Form' in the pathfinder area (Inverness) in June 2007. Subsequently August and September 2007 show a drop in referrals on 'c' grounds indicating that the pathfinder may now be affecting the number of referrals being received by the Reporter in Highland. Referrals on 'c' grounds for these two months show a decrease of -46.7% on the same two months in the previous year. Over the four full years there has been much less change in referrals on 'd' grounds.

Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 the total number of referrals on *all* grounds has *increased* by 6.8% in Highland.

### Dumfries and Galloway

Referrals on 'c' grounds have increased in Dumfries and Galloway on an annual basis from April 2003 to March 2007. This is an increase of 29.9% on 'c' grounds since the baseline year, with 2005/06 showing the highest increase.

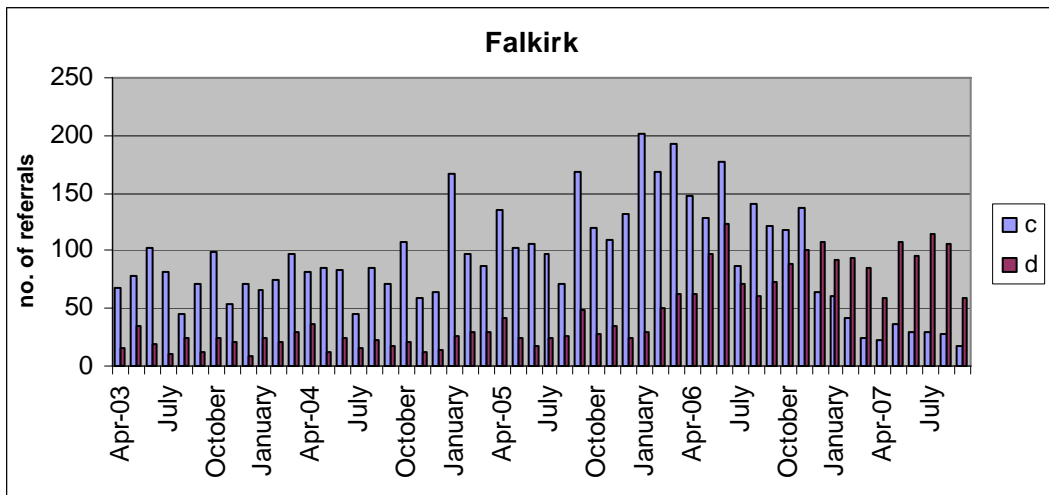


There is *no* indication that the overall rate of referral on these two grounds has decreased in 2007/08 in Dumfries and Galloway.

Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 the total number of referrals on *all* grounds has *increased* by 4.4% in Dumfries and Galloway.

### Falkirk

2005/06 saw the biggest increase of referrals on 'c' grounds in Falkirk - a 55% increase on the previous year. However, Central Scotland Police have introduced a pre-screening referral process in January 2007 which has come into effect. Police 'Vulnerable Person's Reports' are screened by a delegated officer and referred to the Reporter or Social Work or both as appropriate. The domestic abuse pathfinder is likely to be operating in practice in December 2007.



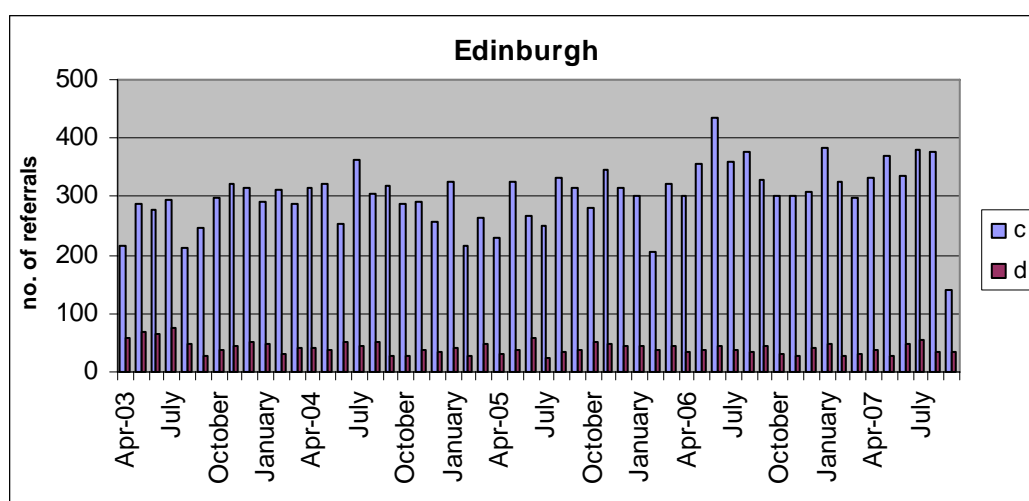
Overall there does appear to be a significant decrease in referrals across these grounds since the pre-screening process was introduced. In considering 'c' and 'd'

grounds together, than has been approximately<sup>2</sup> a -48% decrease in referrals between January and June 2007 in comparison to January and June 2006.

Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 the total number of referrals on *all* grounds has *increased* by 44.5% in Falkirk.

### Edinburgh

Referrals on 'c' grounds in Edinburgh have also been increasing since 2003/4. The largest increase (16.7%) was between 2005/06 and 2006/07. At the same time, although a much lower number of referrals, referrals on 'd' grounds have decreased over the four years.



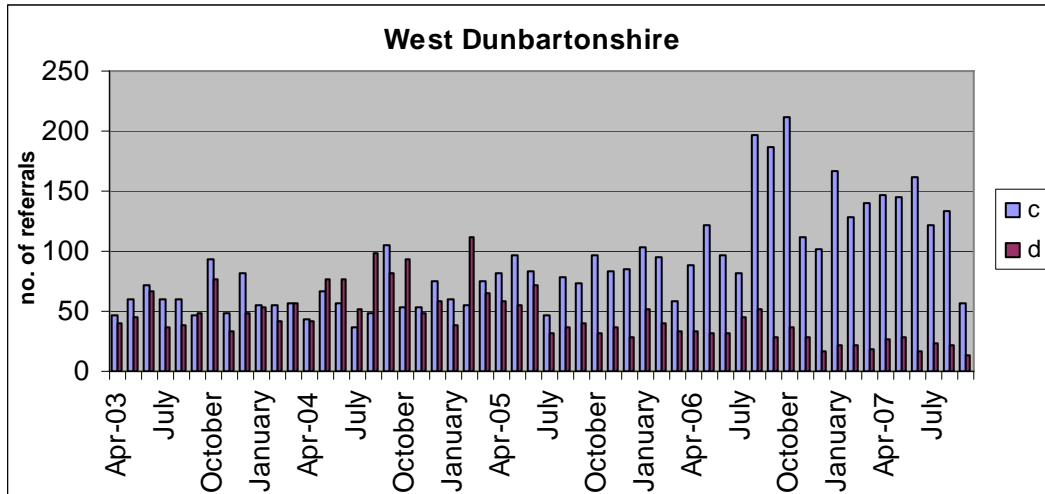
The introduction of a pre-referral screening process in Edinburgh by Lothian and Borders Police is displayed in the significant drop of 'c' ground referrals in September 2007. As this is only one month's data it is hard to estimate the reduction in the referral rate. However, September's referrals on this ground show a -57.6% reduction on this ground in relation to September 2006 and a -43.3% decrease in relation to September 2003.

Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 the total number of referrals on *all* grounds has *increased* by 15.4% in Edinburgh.

### West Dunbartonshire

There has only been a clear divergence on 'c' and 'd' grounds of referral in West Dunbartonshire since July 2005. In 2006/07 there has been a significant increase in referrals to the Reporter in this area across the two grounds.

<sup>2</sup> The sum of 'c' and 'd' referrals used here is not the exact number of the combined referrals as referrals can be made on both grounds simultaneously. Therefore this figure may contain some duplication and has been used for illustrative purposes only.



September 2007 shows a decrease in referrals on 'c' grounds in West Dunbartonshire. However, due to the fluctuations in referrals on this ground in this local authority, it is too early to confirm if this is an impact of the domestic abuse pathfinder.

Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 the total number of referrals on *all* grounds has *increased* by 42.7% in West Dunbartonshire.

### Summary

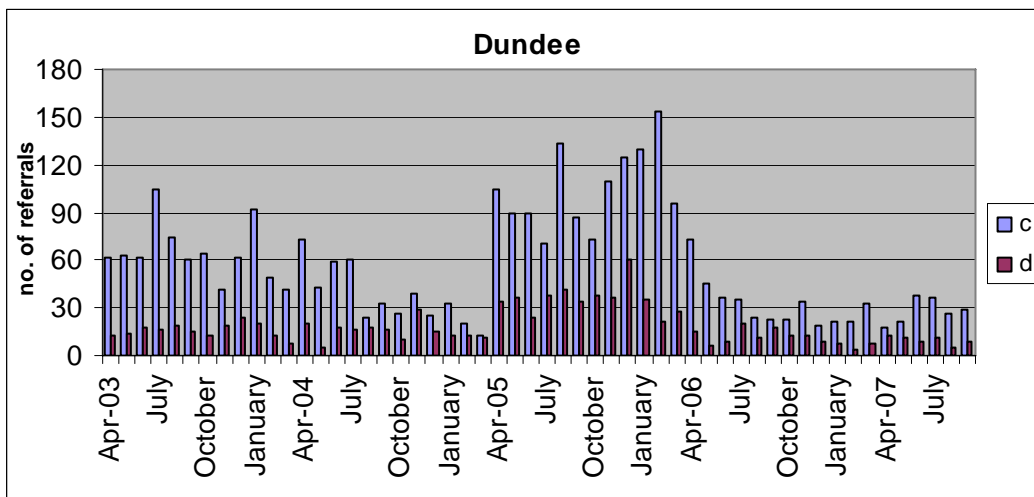
Analysis of referral data on 'c' and 'd' grounds shows that the impact of the Getting it Right pathfinders on the number of referrals to the Reporter is yet to be determined. There is some change in the number of referrals made in September 2007 in Highland, West Dunbartonshire and Edinburgh, however, it is too early to assess if this change will continue. It is also likely that the change in Edinburgh is due to police practice outwith the domestic abuse pathfinder. There has been a significant change in the number of referrals being received in Falkirk, again through Central Scotland Police activity outside of the pathfinder.

## PRE-REFERRAL SCREENING IN NON-PATHFINDER AREAS

As a number of pre-referral screening processes have been introduced in early 2006 or before, it is possible to analyse any change in referral rates in 2006/07 to previous years. Some areas show significant increases in referrals in 2004/05 whilst others show a greater increase in referrals in 2005/06. Change is therefore assessed according to the baseline year (2003/04) as well as the year prior to introduction of the screening process. Areas where the screening process has been introduced at a later date are analysed accordingly.

### Dundee

Referrals on 'c' and 'd' grounds to the Reporter in Dundee show an unusual pattern. The year 2005/06 shows a significant increase in referrals on these grounds. Pre-referral screening came into effect in the summer of Dundee in 2006. The multi-agency group has been formed to screen referrals related to domestic abuse incidents.

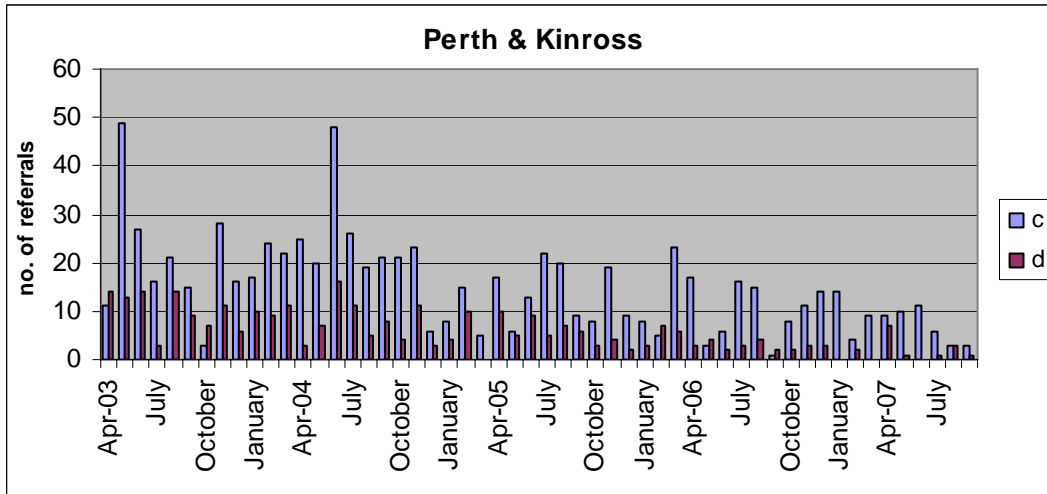


The impact of pre-referral screening is significant in this area as 2006/07 shows a -69% decrease in referrals on 'c' grounds from 2005/06 and a similar decrease in referrals on 'd' grounds. *However, referrals in 2005/06 were particularly high.* In comparison, referrals on 'c' grounds decreased by -49.9% in 2006/07 in relation to the baseline year. There was a decrease of -30.5% in 2006/07 on 'd' grounds in relation to the baseline year.

Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 the total number of referrals on *all* grounds has *decreased by -36.3%* in Dundee.

### Perth & Kinross

In Perth & Kinross, the dedicated police officer within the Family Protection Unit of the police consults the Social Work Department and Barnardo's to discuss the child's circumstances where there are concerns. Referrals to the Reporter are made where considered appropriate. Although a pre-referral screening protocol was introduced in 2006 referrals on 'c' and 'd' grounds have steadily decreased in Perth and Kinross since 2003/04 as the system has been in place for approximately 10 years.

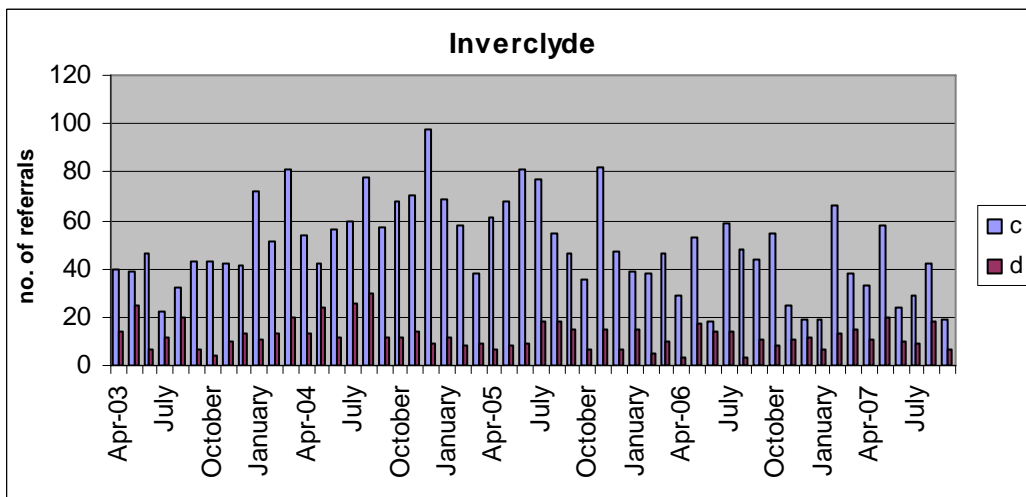


2006/07 shows a -25.8% decrease of referrals on 'c' grounds, and a -58.2% decrease on 'd' grounds from the previous year (though 'd' grounds are a much lower proportion of all referrals). In comparison to the baseline year there has been a reduction in referrals of -65% on 'c' grounds and -76.2% on 'd' grounds. The reduction of referrals on these grounds appears to be continuing into 2007/08.

Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 the total number of referrals on *all* grounds has decreased by -28.7% in Perth and Kinross.

Inverclyde

The pre-referral screening process in Inverclyde has been operating since July 2005. This is a multi-agency group with covers domestic abuse referrals.

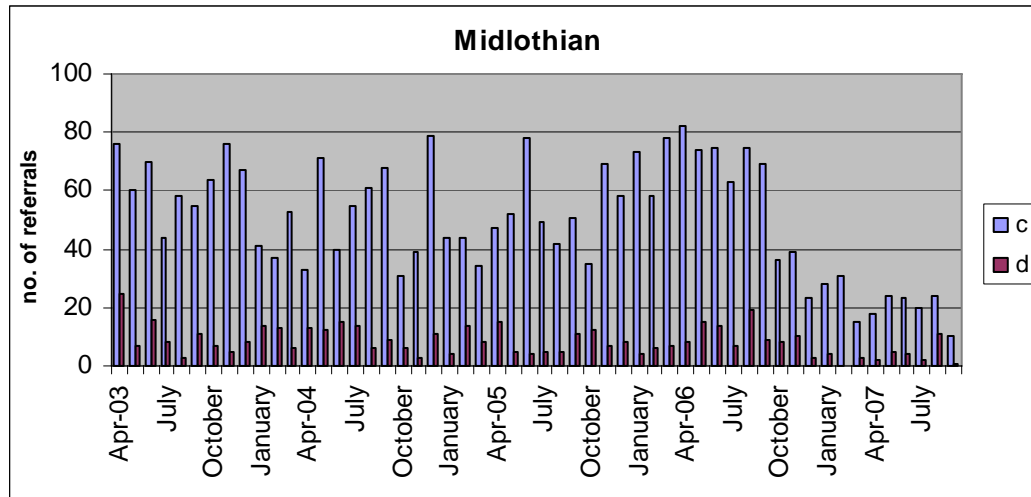


2006/07 shows a -30% decrease of referrals on 'c' grounds, and a -4.5% decrease on 'd' grounds from the previous year. In comparison to the baseline year there has been a -14.3% decrease of referrals on 'c' grounds and a -17.9% decrease on 'd' grounds. The impact of the screening process appears to be continuing into 2007/08.

Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 the total number of referrals on *all* grounds has decreased by -15.2% in Inverclyde.

## Midlothian

Since 2003/04, referrals in Midlothian on 'c' grounds firstly fell by -14.5% in 2004/05 but then increased again in 2005/6 by 15%. Referrals on 'd' grounds have generally decreased since 2003/04. Midlothian's pre-referral screening process has been in place since October 2006. The Police Juvenile Liaison Officer screens non-offence referrals for referral to the Reporter.

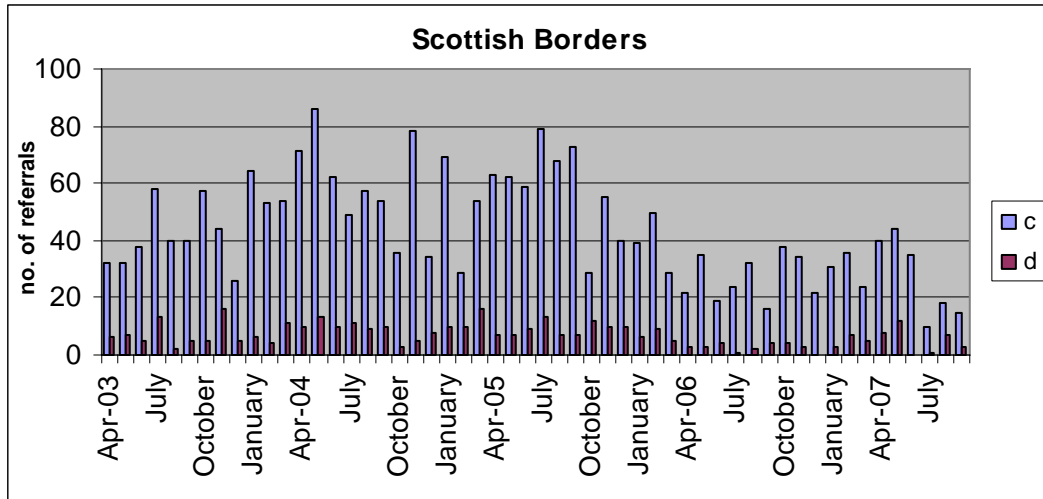


The six months following the introduction of the screening process show a decrease of -53.6% in referrals on 'c' grounds in comparison to the same six months of the previous year. There has been a -36.4% reduction in referrals on 'd' grounds over the same period. In comparison to the same period in the baseline year, there has been a -49.1% reduction on 'c' grounds and a -47.2% reduction on 'd' grounds.

Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 the total number of referrals on *all* grounds has *increased* by 8.3%.

## Scottish Borders

Between 2003/04 and 2004/05 referrals on 'c' grounds increased by 26% in the Scottish Borders. The following year then saw a decrease of -4%. Referrals on 'd' grounds show a similar pattern but with a higher increase and a higher drop.

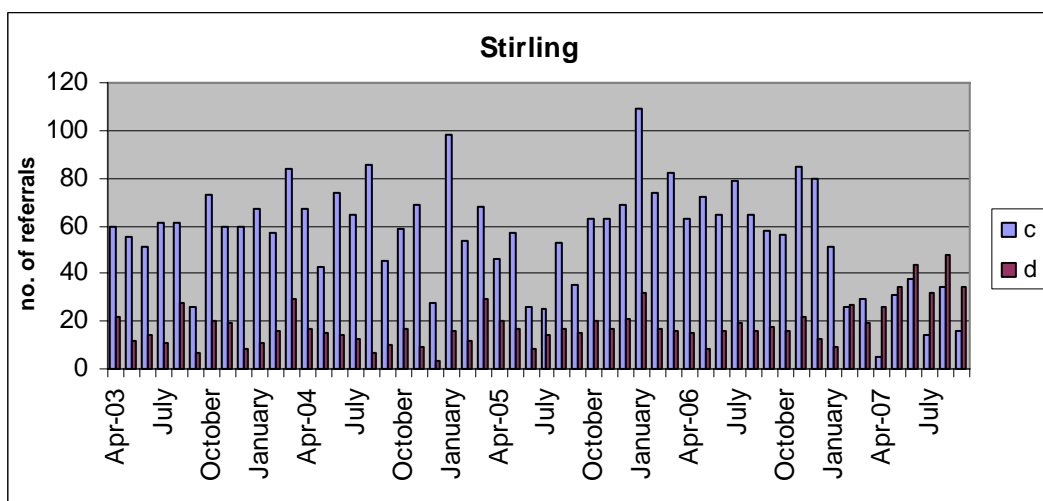


Pre referral screening was introduced in the Scottish Borders in early 2006. A multi-agency forum meets on a weekly basis to consider all submitted non-offence referrals. Data shows that there is a -48.5% decrease in 'c' ground referrals in 2006/07 from 2005/06. This is a -38% decrease on the baseline year. 'D' grounds of referral are a much lower number, but show a -61.8% decrease between 2005/06 and 2006/07 and a -54% decrease on the baseline year.

Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 the total number of referrals on *all* grounds has decreased by -17.5% in the Scottish Borders.

### Stirling

The total number of referrals on 'c' grounds have not varied as much across the years in Stirling as they have in other places. 2004/05 showed an increase of 5.7% from 2003/04. 2005/06 then decreased by -7%, with 2006/07 increasing again at 3.8%. Referrals on 'd' grounds have fluctuated more with a decrease in 2004/05 of -17.8% then an increase of 32% in 2005/06. 2006/07 then increased again but at a slower rate of 7.5%.



As in Falkirk, pre-referral screening was introduced in January 2007 in Stirling. This has reduced the number of referrals received by the Reporter in the Stirling area.

Across 'c' and 'd' grounds together, there has been a reduction in approximately<sup>3</sup> - 40% of referrals between January and June 2007 in comparison to the same time period in 2006.

Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 the total number of referrals on *all* grounds has *decreased* by -2.3% in Stirling.

## Summary

Dundee, Perth & Kinross and the Scottish Borders have all had a pre-referral screening process in place since 2006 and Inverclyde since 2005. 2006/07 shows a reduction in 'c' and 'd' grounds of referral for all areas in relation to the baseline year.

The far greater proportion of the two grounds in these teams is '*c*' grounds. Since the baseline year, Dundee shows a reduction of -49.9%, Perth & Kinross has a reduction of -65%, Scottish Borders a reduction of -48.5% and Inverclyde a reduction of -14.3%.

The screening process in Midlothian was introduced in October 2006. A 6 month comparison of 2006/07 to the baseline shows a reduction of -53.6% on 'c' grounds. Following the introduction of new processes within Central Scotland Police in January 2007, there has been a significant reduction in referrals in Stirling (approximately -40%).

Whilst the reduction in referrals on 'c' and 'd' grounds is significant, it is also important to examine the overall effect of this on the total reduction of referrals on all grounds for each area between 2003/04 and 2006/07. *Across all grounds of referral* Dundee shows a reduction of -36.3%, Perth & Kinross a reduction of -28.7%, Scottish Borders a reduction of -17.5%, Inverclyde a reduction of -15.2%, Midlothian an increase of 8.3% and Stirling a reduction of -2.3%.

Furthermore, the referrals that have not been made to the Reporter but addressed directly through other agencies where necessary, are those where the need for compulsory measures of supervision is highly unlikely. Therefore, although the overall decrease in referrals is significant in some areas, it is important to note that this does not equate with a proportionate decrease in workload within these teams.

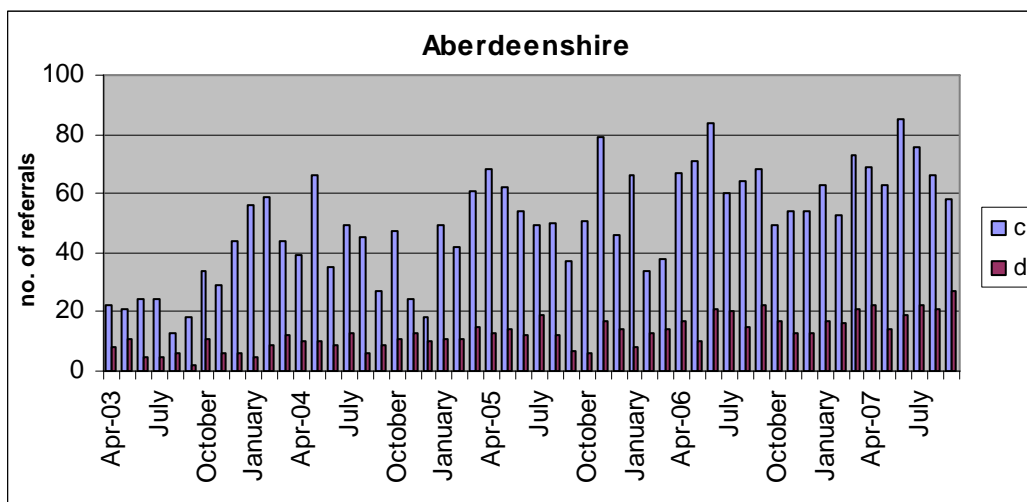
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<sup>3</sup> The sum of 'c' and 'd' referrals used here is not the exact number of the combined referrals as referrals can be made on both grounds simultaneously. Therefore this figure may contain some duplication and has been used for illustrative purposes only.

## COMPARISON AREAS

### Aberdeenshire

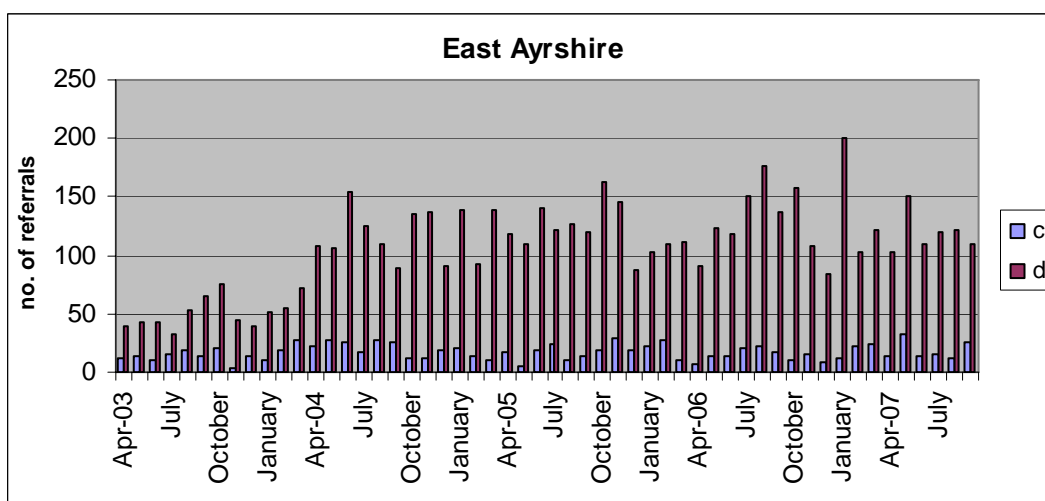
Referrals on 'c' and 'd' grounds have increased in Aberdeenshire each year since 2003/4. The year with the highest increases was 2004/05, with an increase of 29.4% on 'c' grounds and 48.8% on 'd' grounds. Since the baseline year and 2006/07, 'c' ground referrals have increased by 95.9%. There is no indication of any change in the rate of referral for 2007/08.



Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 referrals on *all* grounds to the Reporter have increased by 88.9% in Aberdeenshire.

### East Ayrshire

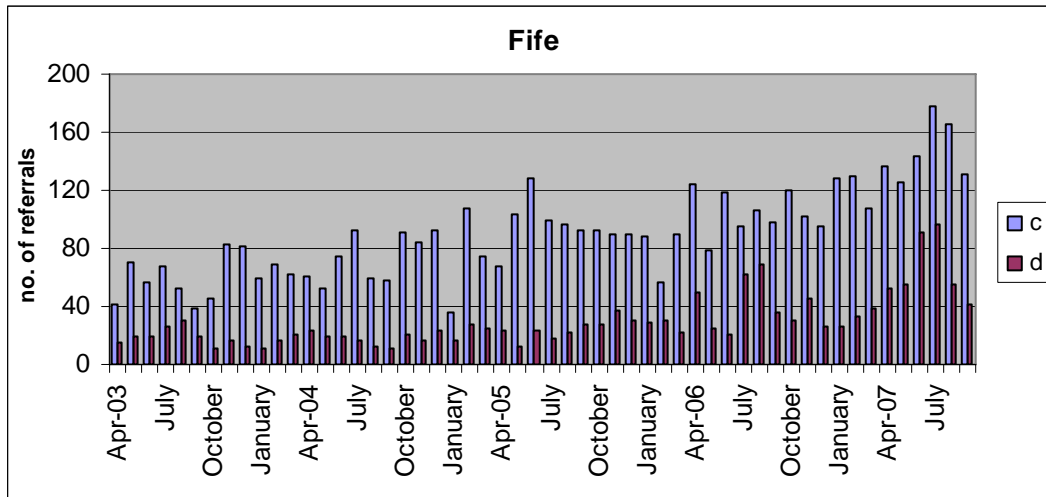
There is a greater proportion of referrals in East Ayrshire on 'd' grounds than on 'c' grounds. 'D' ground referrals have increased each year. By far the most significant increase on this ground was between 2003/04 and 2004/05 whereby 'd' ground referrals increased by 132.5%. Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 'd' ground referrals have increased by 156.4%.



Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 referrals on *all grounds* to the Reporter have *increased* by 84.5% in East Ayrshire.

Fife

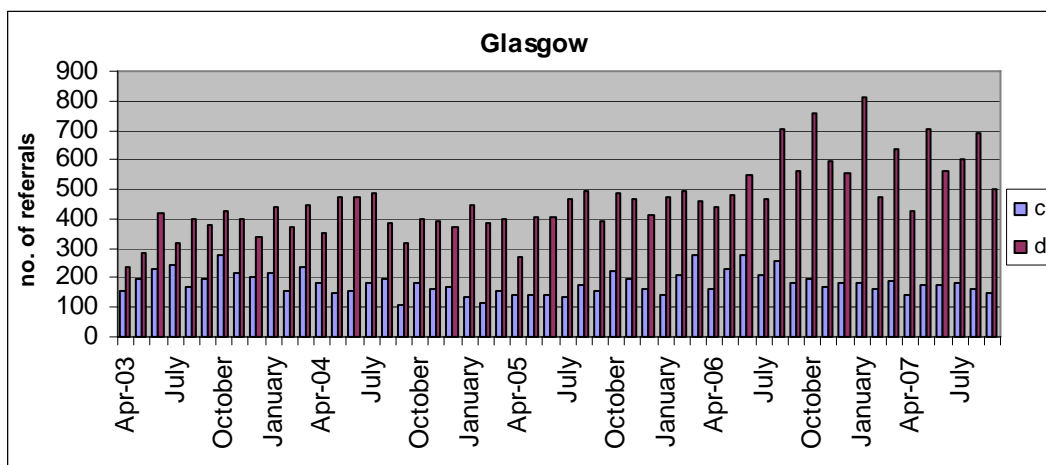
Referrals across the two grounds have also increased each year in Fife since 2003/04. The greatest increase of 'c' ground referrals was 23.8% between 2004/5 and 2005/06. 'D' ground referrals increased the most between 2005/06 and 2006/07 by 51.6%. Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 there has been a 78.3% increase of 'c' ground referrals and a 112.4% increase of 'd' ground referrals.



Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 referrals on *all grounds* to the Reporter have *increased* by 67.9% in Fife.

Glasgow

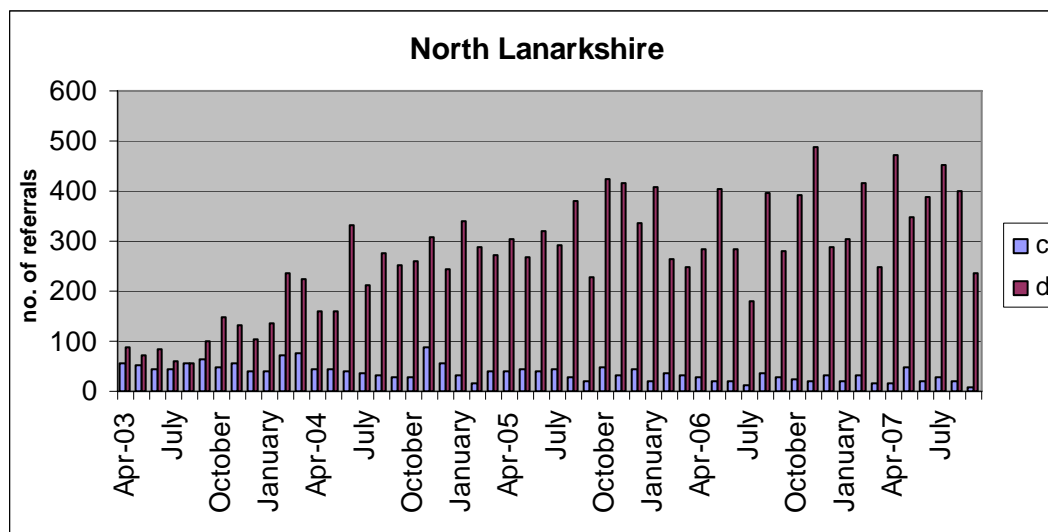
Referrals on 'c' grounds decreased by -24% in 2004/05 in Glasgow but have then increased each year by 10.9% and 13.6% respectively. The greater proportion of referrals, however, are on 'd' grounds. Since 2003/04 these have increased by 9.4%, 6.8% and in 2006/07 by 34.9%. Overall this is an increase of 57.7% since the baseline year.



Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 referrals on *all grounds* to the Reporter have *increased* by 23.1% in Glasgow.

### North Lanarkshire

There is a far greater proportion of referrals in North Lanarkshire on 'd' grounds than on 'c' grounds. The biggest increase of 'd' ground referrals was between 2003/04 and 2004/05 with an increase of 116.4%. The following year saw an increase of 25% and between 2005/06 and 2006/07 there was an increase of just 1.9%. Overall there has been an increase of 176% since the baseline. 'C' ground referrals have decreased overall by -54.8% since the baseline.



Between 2003/04 and 2006/07 referrals on *all grounds* to the Reporter have *increased* by 68.7% in North Lanarkshire.

### Summary

The comparison areas show that referrals to the Reporter have increased considerably on the two grounds since 2003/04.

Aberdeenshire and Fife show a high number of referrals under 'c' grounds. In these two areas, 'c' ground referrals have increased by 95.9% and 78.3% respectively since 2003/04.

East Ayrshire, Glasgow and North Lanarkshire have a higher proportion of referrals under 'd' grounds. For these areas, 'd' ground referrals have increased by 156.4%, 57.7%, and 176.0% respectively.

When looking at all grounds of referral since 2003/04 to 2006/07, Aberdeenshire has increased by 88.9%, East Ayrshire by 84.5%, Fife by 67.9%, Glasgow by 23.1% and North Lanarkshire by 68.7%.

## CONCLUSION

This report has presented interim findings on the monitoring of pre-referral activity to SCRA for non-offence referrals. This is part of a wider evaluation that seeks to:-

- Continue monitoring referrals received by the Reporter in the local authorities to examine any trends in referral practice.
- Look at how pre-referral screening processes and pathfinders work in practice and how these impact on the number of referrals to the Reporter.
- Examine outcomes for children by following a sample of cases that have been dealt with through pre-referral screening.

The information presented here clearly shows that pre-referral screening is having an impact on the number of referrals received by the Reporter. This is shown both by the reduction of referrals in areas of activity and the extent of the increase of referrals in areas where there is currently no pre-referral activity.

There are early indications of an impact on referrals to the Reporter in the pathfinder areas, mainly in Highland, West Dunbartonshire and Falkirk (where there is Central Scotland Police screening). However, it is too early to draw any conclusions on the extent of their impact at this time or how they relate to other practices in the areas that are making an impact on referral rates.

This research will continue to more fully explore how the different screening processes work and how they are perceived and managed by the different stakeholders involved. This will enable new areas to develop best practice and identify lessons learnt.

**Total Number of Referrals \***

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>
Aberdeenshire	1,051	1,392	1,578	1,985
Dumfries & Galloway	2,904	3,082	3,085	3,032
Dundee	3,639	2,994	2,995	2,319
East Ayrshire	1,987	3,400	3,438	3,666
Edinburgh	7,238	7,392	7,659	8,353
Falkirk	2,966	3,480	4,188	4,287
Glasgow	14,710	14,080	15,696	18,105
Highland	3,546	4,134	4,107	3,788
Inverclyde	1,471	1,569	1,502	1,247
Midlothian	1,550	1,487	1,735	1,678
North Lanarkshire	4,775	6,825	8,216	8,057
Perth & Kinross	1,276	1,223	1,081	911
Scottish Borders	1,372	1,530	1,636	1,132
Stirling	2,139	2,085	2,083	2,090
West Dunbartonshire	2,429	2,671	2,752	3,465

\* source SCRA Data Warehouse

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