



First Quarter Organisational Performance Report 2007/08 (1 April 2007 to 30 June 2007) - Executive Summary

Overview

The 2007/08 Quarter 1 data shows a decrease in the number of children referred on both offence and non-offence grounds when compared to the same period last year. It also breaks the trend of increasing numbers of non-offence children referred (up in each of the last 6 quarters). This has mainly been due to decreases in Police referral rates (down 1,935) and is reflected in the lowest number of total referrals since Q2 2005/06. The decrease is most apparent in the East Region with a 21% drop in children referred. While it is hoped that decreases in referral rates should ease some of the pressure on Regions, it needs to be seen in the context of increasingly complex casework requirements.

In summary

	Q1 2006/07	Q1 2007/08	
Referrals to the Reporter	27,245	24,761	Down 9.1%
Non-offence referrals to the Reporter	17,359	15,444	Down 11%
Offence referrals to the Reporter	9,918	9,347	Down 5.8%
Children referred to the Reporter	19,905	18,306	Down 8%
Children referred on non-offence grounds	14,387	13,133	Down 8.7%
Children referred on offence grounds	6,549	6,183	Down 5.6%
Child Protection Orders (CPOs)	191	134	Down 29.8%
Supervision Requirements at 30 June	12,108	12,755	Up 5.3%
The number of Children's Hearings held	10,745	10,661	Down 0.8%
The number of Court Applications	1,039	986	Down 5.1%
The number of Court Applications Led	111	119	Up 7.2%

Context

Pre-referral screening has been highlighted in the East Region as an important factor in the decrease of their referral rates. Once the roll out to all Regions is complete, the effects countrywide will become more apparent. Overall, referral rates remain high and are probably influenced by a number of high profile child protection incidents and the concerns voiced about the number of children living in households of drug-abusing parents/adults.

Forecasts

The data suggests that referral rates peaked at the start of 2006/07, flattened out over the course of the year and are now starting to decrease. We can be hopeful that this is the start of a meaningful long term trend. Before any concrete predictions can be made though, further exploratory work will have to be undertaken, separating benefits of pre-referral screening from other influencing factors. The Information and Research team are currently undertaking analysis of referral grounds and their findings should allow more detailed conclusions to be drawn.

Performance

Despite current workload pressures, performance for the quarter has been good. During Q1 2007/08, SCRA met 8 of the 11 operational (Hearing system and SCRA) performance indicators. Performance across the Regions varies, with Regions facing the greatest workload pressures continuing to face the greatest challenge to improve or even maintain their performance.

In summary

	1 st Qtr
% of Hearings scheduled within 20 working days (<i>target for the year 73%</i>)	64%
% of Hearings scheduled within 30 working days (<i>target for the year 92%</i>)	80%
% of children/families sent notification of outcome of a referral within 5 working days (<i>target for the year 62%</i>)	67%
% of children/families sent notification of outcome of a Hearing within 5 working days (<i>target for the year 88%</i>)	88%
% of non-offence Applications established at Court (<i>target for the year 93%</i>)	93%

Financial Performance

Revenue Grant in Aid (GIA) from the Scottish Executive for 2007/08 is £22,760k. The audit of accounts for 2006/07 has been completed and £1,732k in unexpended budget is to be carried forward. Capital Expenditure GIA amounted to £1,800k for Property and £3,300k for IS development.

Revenue underspend of £1,361k in Q1 was principally due to a £1,115k timing difference on the Logica CMG payment, full year predictions forecast an overspend of £552k. This is primarily attributed to the costs associated with the outsourcing of casework. Capital expenditure for Q1 was £31k and we are forecast to be on budget for this over the financial year.

The revenue account needs to reflect the unexpended funds carried forward from 2006/07 and the additional commitments from Business Plan projects and new budget pressures identified since approval of the 2007/08 revenue budget. Revised budget proposals taking account of all available resources and prevailing Business Plans will be submitted to the September 2007 Board for approval and delegation.

Finance will work with budget holders and Business Plan teams to ensure that spending plans are robust and fully reflected in the revised budget proposals.

Management Response

The Executive Management Team (EMT), in dialogue with senior operational managers, continues to manage operational pressures. The case filtering tool has been effectively introduced across SCRA. All regions show evidence of its use, though a number of pre-referral screening groups have limited the use of the tool in the East Region. It has received positive support from Reporters and Authority Reporters, though evaluation of the impact on processing referrals has been mixed. SCRA appointed consultants continue to advance the significant proposals to modernise case handling systems that should create the flexibility needed to enable SCRA to deal with regional fluctuations in referrals. The focus of 2007/08 Business plan and 2007-10 Corporate plan continue to be on managing down risk at the frontline and increasingly work on improving the quality of our casework.

22 August 2007

