

# Executive Summary

## Second Quarter Organisational Performance Report 2007/08 (1 July 2007 to 30 September 2007)

### Summary:

The data for the second quarter of 2007/08 shows that the decrease in referral rates identified in first quarter of 2007/08 has continued into this second quarter. When compared to the same quarter in the previous year (Q2 in 2006/07) the number of both offence and non-offence referrals have decreased significantly. This is now the third consecutive quarter in which the total number of referrals to the Reporter has fallen.

In contrast to the drop in referrals, the number of children on Supervision continues to increase as does the number of Hearings held. The number of court applications and Child Protection Orders (CPOs) also remain high. This suggests that more children, who meet the threshold for compulsory measures of supervision, are beginning to be referred to the Children's Reporter.

|  | Q2<br>2006/07 | Q2<br>2007/08 |         |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------|
| Referrals to the Reporter                | 24,965        | 21,496        | ↓ 13.9% |
| Non-offence referrals to the Reporter    | 16,301        | 14,136        | ↓ 13.3% |
| Offence referrals to the Reporter        | 8,702         | 7,382         | ↓ 15.2% |
| Children referred to the Reporter        | 18,575        | 16,361        | ↓ 11.9% |
| Children referred on non-offence grounds | 13,592        | 12,082        | ↓ 11.1% |
| Children referred on offence grounds     | 5,844         | 5,038         | ↓ 13.8% |
| Child Protection Orders (CPOs)           | 119           | 130           | ↑ 9.2%  |
| Supervision Requirements at 30 September | 12,064        | 12,909        | ↑ 7.0%  |
| The number of Children's Hearings held   | 10,142        | 10,793        | ↑ 6.4%  |
| The number of Court Applications         | 1,052         | 992           | ↓ 5.7%  |
| The number of Court Applications Led     | 131           | 88            | ↓ 32.8% |

### Analysis and forecast

Pre-referral screening and pathfinder projects have been identified as an important factor influencing the decrease in referrals in some regions. Despite the decreases, the referral rates remain high in

comparison to previous years however. This is particularly so when considering the number of children referred on care and protection grounds; these children continue to outnumber offence referrals by more than 2:1.

The decreases in referral activity are not yet sustained over a significant enough period to suggest with confidence that a new trend has now emerged. The decrease is also in contrast to the notable increases in the levels of complex and resource intensive tasks such as CPOs, Appeals and Warrants.

## Organisational Performance

Despite continuing workload pressures, SCRA has commenced 2007/08 with a strong organisational performance. At 30 September 2007, SCRA was on target to meet or exceed five of its eleven targets for the year. Of the remaining six targets, four are only just off target at this point while two targets will require management action to bring them back on line. Performances vary across the regions, reflecting the variations in referral activity, workloads and staffing profiles.

| <b>SCRA Targets :</b>   | <b>Q2<br/>2007/08</b> | <b>Q2<br/>2007/08</b> |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| The percentage of Hearings scheduled to take place within 20 working days from Reporter decision (Target for the year: 73%)                     | 63%                   | 65%                   |
| The percentage of Hearings scheduled to take place within 30 working days from Reporter decision (Target for the year: 92%)                     | 78%                   | 79%                   |
| The percentage of written notifications of referral outcomes sent to children and families within five working days (Target for the year: 62%)  | 62%                   | 68%                   |
| The percentage of written notifications of referral outcomes sent to children and families within eight working days (Target for the year: 75%) | 72%                   | 76%                   |
| The percentage of written notifications of Hearing decisions sent to children and families within five working days (Target for the year: 88%)  | 88%                   | 87%                   |
| The percentage of written notifications of Hearing decisions sent to children and families within eight working days (Target for the year: 93%) | 93%                   | 92%                   |
| The percentage of non-offence applications established at court (Target for the year: 93%)  | 92%                   | 92%                   |
| The degree to which SCRA core properties comply with SCRA property standards (Target for the year: 76%)   | 75%                   | 78%                   |
| The percentage of staff attendance (Target for the year: 95%)   | 95%                   | 96%                   |
| The average number of training days per member of staff (Target for the year: 4.5 days)   | 0.5                   | 1.0                   |
| The percentage of expenditure that is within budget (Target for the year: 97%)  | 97%                   | 100%                  |

## Financial Performance

Revenue expenditure in the period to September 2007 was £12,849k, £693k less than budget. This underspend is primarily as a result of HQ vacancies and the phasing of the IS Programme. These under-spends are partly offset by expenditure on outsourced court costs for which additional funding has only recently been approved.

The revenue forecast for the year is for a net underspend of £175k. Finance is critically reviewing the forecasts to support the strategic objective of maximising revenue carry forward to sustain 2008/09 plans, given that a further year of standstill funding is anticipated.

Capital expenditure in the period to September 2007 was £153k. With projects under consideration still to be fully developed, the potential underspend on the capital budget for 2007/08 is in the order of £1.1m. The Sponsor Team have been alerted to this situation with a view to ensuring that budget funds not expended in the current year can be carried forward to 2008/09. At the same time opportunities to accelerate capital projects are being explored.

## Management Response

The Executive Management Team (EMT) has completed a re-prioritisation of the Business Plan and identified re-focused priorities (key projects and core business activity) through to 31 March 2008. This has now been agreed with all senior operational managers and revisions to the Business Plan for 2007/08 have been prepared.

EMT has initiated a challenging planning process to identify further significant efficiency savings to be accrued in 2007/08 and carried forward into 2008/09 to meet the essential costs of maintaining an effective frontline service. In addition, an equally challenging modernisation agenda is being pursued with a view to examining and re-engineering SCRA's core business processes to deliver improved effectiveness in terms of decision making and managing casework.

Further analysis of the data is underway focusing on referral practice with a view to identifying the significant reductions that could potentially be seen in some localities, if pre-referral activity was to be introduced. The analysis is also examining more closely the rise in the number of children on supervision and work is also underway to analyse the conversion rates between referrals received and Hearings organised. Finally, a systematic examination will be commissioned shortly to examine the differentials in data between localities linked to any differentials in local practice.

Maintaining a focus on practice quality within SCRA, a five day programme of intensive practice training has commenced and will reach all teams and all staff throughout SCRA by June 2008, ensuring that the quality of practice is consistent and continually improving.

EMT is examining the recently announced spending review outcome and flexing its short and medium term planning approach to ensure that full advantage is taken of the significant uplift in capital funds within a context of a standstill, reducing revenue line.