SCRA ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14
Changing for children and young people
This report covers the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. It summarises SCRA’s achievements and performance during that period and presents statistical information about children and young people referred to the Reporter.

The report also includes an executive summary of SCRA’s audited accounts for the 12 months to 31 March 2014.

As part of our continued commitment to the environment and to save on paper and postage costs, we have not printed our Annual Report for several years, however, you can still view all our information online, including a full set of our annual accounts, our official statistics and our sustainability report at www.scra.gov.uk

Produced by SCRA’s Press and Communications Team
October 2014
Our commitments

Our vision

Our vision sets out what we want the world to be like for children and young people in Scotland: “Vulnerable children and young people in Scotland are safe, protected and offered positive futures.”

Children and young people’s experiences and opinions guide us. We are approachable and open. We bring the best of the past with us into the future to meet new challenges.

Our outcomes

Our Corporate Plan 2014-17 details our vision and strategic direction over the next three years, based on achieving five key outcomes.

Our standards

These are the promises we make to the children, young people and families we serve, about how we will treat them, and what they can expect from us.
Foreword by Carole Wilkinson, SCRA’s Chair

This Annual Report covers a period of transition, it sees the final months of the 1995 Act and the introduction of the 2011 Act. This is the continuation of a period of change as those working in the system seek to build upon the best of the past and bring about improvements.

The Children’s Hearings System was designed originally to deal with children and young people who offend, but now receives more referrals for children and young people in need of care and protection. What is not in doubt is the system’s ability to adapt and change to reflect different needs and demands - a flexibility it will be capable of maintaining. It must above all, continue to strive to make a difference to the lives of children and young people.

The welcome downward trend in referrals continues - 2013/14 is the seventh consecutive year where there has been a decrease in referrals. There have been reductions in both referrals for care and protection and offence grounds. The decreases reflect progress in rolling out pre-referral screening and its impact, and we are grateful to our partners for continuing to support this process.

The implementation of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFeC) is also part of the success story of decreasing referrals, as agencies work together to support children, young people and their families at an earlier stage. SCRA will be undertaking further work to embed GIRFeC and the legislative requirements of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 into its practices. The reduction in referrals for children and young people on offence grounds is a further welcomed downward trend and reflects positively on the work being undertaken by our partners to deflect young people from offending behaviour.

Whilst we have seen an overall decrease in referrals, there has been a continuing increase in referrals of very young children, and in high numbers of children with Child Protection Orders.

The referrals we do receive tend to be more appropriate than perhaps in the past. Ongoing work with our partners has helped to ensure a recognition of the need for a clear rationale as to why compulsory measures are required, the circumstances of children, young people and their families being more profound, high risk and complex.

SCRA staff have responded positively to implement the changes to the organisation. This key successes have included implementing the new Act, the Case Management System, embedding devolved management and budget responsibilities in each of the nine Localities and integrating equality into their day to day work.

We are fortunate in having a workforce that is dedicated, hardworking, and determined to make a difference to the lives of children and young people. And on behalf of the Board, I would like to thank them for their continued hard work and commitment. All of the changes, when fully completed, will ensure we are working in ways that support the delivery of improvements to the Hearings System. Ensuring the Hearings System works to improve the lives of children, young people and their families is the challenge for all who work in the Hearings System and we will continue to work with our partners to achieve this aim.

Message from SCRA’s Principal Reporter/Chief Executive Neil Hunter

The pace, scale and depth of change this year, with the combined impact of the constrained financial climate, the introduction of new legislation governing the Hearings System and the introduction of new technology changing the way we have operated this year, have really stretched the organisation.

Despite this, SCRA staff have shown - as ever - their professionalism and resilience in the face of significant difficulties and operating pressures. The organisation will continue to acknowledge and show our respect for the staff who work so hard each day in their contribution to the successful delivery of care and support for vulnerable children and young people and the structures of the Hearings System that make this possible.

The 2011 Act brought new provisions, new timelines and procedures which we have all had to learn and adapt to. This hasn’t always been easy. SCRA staff and Reporters in particular have been a huge source of support and guidance to partners in the Hearings System since the Act was introduced. The skill and knowledge of Reporters, our specialist National Practice Team and other support staff has been invaluable as we plotted our way through this key period.

We have been immensely grateful for the experience of and subsequent feedback given by staff working with the Act day to day which has led to some early developments and amendments which will strengthen the legislation further in the next period. We have been pleased to be able to work with the Scottish Government in making such rapid progress on these aspects.

Our engagement and participation strategy for children and young people has developed further with new tools, information and resources. Our Modern Apprentices programme was further developed in 2013/14 and we are so grateful for the energy, enthusiasm and drive of the young people in the programme this year. Through publishing their own research - ‘It’s All about Change’ - they have continued to demand more and quicker improvements of us and we continue to focus on hearing the messages we are given and delivering the fundamental shifts in quality of environment, customer care and service delivery which this requires.

We have continued to place front and centre this year the security of children’s information and data in our work. We have been pleased to work with the Information Commissioner’s Office and our Internal Auditor in making the necessary improvements to safeguard information throughout our service delivery and casework.

Our research and data continued to make a big impact on our understanding of activity, trends, issues, outcomes and quality in the Hearings System. This year we continued to secure our official statistics provider status which gives massive reassurance to our partners and to Government about the quality of our data. Our Research Team’s expertise was in significant demand in the planning and design of programmes of work both internally and externally with a number of reports in the pipeline to be published next year. Our Children and Families Survey, published this year is pivotal evidence helping us focus on purposeful change and improvement driven by the experience of children, young people and their families of our services.
Year at a Glance

Some of the highlights and key developments across SCRA in 2013/14 ...

April
SCRA’s Business Plan 2013/14 is published
The roll out of our new Case Management System is completed
Our first batch of new draft Practice Directions are produced for staff feedback

May
Review of Business Continuity Plan gets underway
New easy read guidance is produced for parents/carers with learning difficulties
The results of our pilot Team Brief survey are published and the system is introduced for the rest of the year
Hearings Management guidance updated for the 2011 Act

June
The Box, our staff suggestion scheme is three years old
The results of our Children and Families Survey 2012 are published
Implementation of the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
Our Victim Information Service is relaunched to become an opt-in service
Board Member Bernadette Docherty awarded MBE for services to social work

July
Publication of The Zone, SCRA’s first magazine for young people
Launch of a new Going to Court film for young people and their parents/carers

August
First workshop with young people held to get their views on some of our information materials
SCRA signs up to participation agreement with Who Cares? Scotland
Your Information feedback survey for children and young people launched

September
Our annual Staff Event is held
Two feedback surveys are issued to our partners and Panel Members
New Benefits Realisation Programme is launched

October
It’s All About Change report by our Modern Apprentices is published
Launch of Official Statistics 2012/13

November
In Touch our new fortnightly communication is launched
New Weekly Locality Caseload Report and Business Activity Monitoring is trialled in Glasgow and Edinburgh

December
Revamped Business Continuity Plan is published
First edition of itech our new IT e-zine is launched
Six members of staff passed the Diploma in Public Service Leadership

January
New Health and Wellbeing Group set up
Updated Management of Delay Strategy published
Workload sub committee created

February
Information sharing protocol between SCRA and COPFs agreed
New phase of Cycle to Work scheme opens

March
Revised Information Security Handbook produced
SCRA’s three year pay deal is agreed
Launch of SCRA’s new look staff intranet
Our stories in 2013/14...

SCRA’s progress and achievements in 2013/14

Throughout the year, our focus has been on delivering our outcomes and objectives as outlined in our Business Plan 2013/14.

Our outcomes 2013/14

Our decisions are proportionate, timely and make a positive impact on the welfare, safety and protection of children, young people and communities.

Our work with partners ensures children and young people are only subject to compulsory supervision if required, and only for as long as it benefits them.

Our service is efficient, responsive, inclusive and continually improving.

Our objectives 2013/14

- Engaging children, young people and families in improving what we do.
- Quality Assuring what we do.
- Driving improvements through partnership working.
- Delivering the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 for children and young people.
- Helping build stronger Localities.

Here are some of our stories from the past 12 months...
Our performance and targets

Our performance and targets for this year have been impacted by the significant organisational changes brought about by the introduction of the new Act and the implementation of a new case management system. This was expected and we believe that as we become more confident in the procedural rules surrounding the Act, our performance will improve.

Of the targets met, the improved performance in ‘percentage of initial Hearings proceeding to disposal’, which has increased to 80%, is particularly important for children, young people, and families as this ensures, that where possible, decisions about compulsory measures are made at the earliest possible opportunity.

The indicators which have experienced the most pressure are ‘percentage of decisions on referrals within 50 working days’ and ‘notification of Hearing outcomes’ which were 16% and 20% below target respectively.

The transition to the new Act and the other wider system changes directly impacted our performance in these two areas. We fully expect to recover our performance within 2014/15. In addition, performance on ‘notification of referral outcomes’ is not reportable due to system issues.

Other targets that were met included the financial targets linked to revenue spends, including meeting the Scottish Government efficiency savings target.

The other target missed in the year ‘variance in annual capital spends’ was due to an anticipated underspend, primarily due to delays in three projects. This underspend has been allocated to balance the 2014/15 capital budget.

The final two targets, ‘scheduling of Hearings within 20 working days’ and ‘core properties comply with SCRA property standards’ were within 1% of target and were therefore amber for 2013/14. SCRA’s performance against targets can be seen in detail in Table 21 of the full statistical analysis.

Our Practice

In June 2013 we saw the implementation of the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. Throughout the lead up to go-live and beyond, SCRA worked closely with Children’s Hearings Scotland (CHS) and other partners on common approaches to practice elements of the new Act, including reviewing Hearings management standards throughout Scotland.

We also continued our close engagement with the Scottish Government on the drafting of secondary legislation, amendments to primary legislation and the development of guidance on particular issues, lending our professional experience and practical knowledge to the process.

We also worked closely with other agencies at national level to help ensure a smooth transition to operating under the 2011 Act. Particular examples are the development of a Protocol with Scottish Legal Aid Board in relation to the operation of the duty Legal Aid scheme, and ongoing liaison to ensure correct application of the transitional provisions, and the publication of an Information Sharing Protocol with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), published in February 2014.

While the externally facing work was important, it was critical to prepare our own staff for the Act’s commencement. A two day programme of training was delivered to all Reporters during May and June 2013 and a suite of Practice Directions were published in advance of implementation. In addition, significant pieces of work were done to prepare our new Case Management System for the transition and to ensure that letters and forms were ready for use by Reporters in time for the go-live date.

On the operational side, Reporters, Panel Members, Safeguarders, Social Workers and others worked hard to ensure that those children, young people, and families already in the system experienced a smooth transition to the new arrangements and that new referrals were made and dealt with appropriately.

Post implementation we dealt with practice enquiries arising from the Act and successfully responded to an early Judicial Review to the Court of Session relating to our application of the transitional provisions. The Practice Network proved to be a valuable route to considering and disseminating practice information.

A further one day of training was delivered to all Reporters in November, informed by our experience of operating under the 2011 Act, while an Information Pack for support staff was published in October. A plan for further training for support staff was developed early in 2014, with delivery of training scheduled to take place later in the year to fit operational priorities.

The passage of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 provided an early opportunity to address practice issues that had arisen in the first few months following “go-live”. A number of amendments were introduced by colleagues in the Scottish Government with SCRA’s full support and co-operation. These are intended to be implemented by the end of 2014 and will make improvements to the way in which the Act operates.

Although a significant focus of the Practice Team in 2013/14 was on the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, there was a considerable amount of other business. Core Practice Training modules, updated where necessary to reflect the 2011 Act, were delivered on Child Development, Decision-making, the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, Drafting Statements of Grounds, Role of Reporter, Hearing Procedures and all core Court Training, to ensure all reporters had access to essential training. The Practice Team also supported local practice events and discussions within Localities throughout the year. In addition, the Practice Team provided operational cover to Localities during February and March 2014 to support management of casework.

We continued to work in partnership with the Scottish Government and other agencies in relation to other significant areas of work, such as young people who offend, and permanence planning and contact. We also continued direct liaison with Children’s Hearings Scotland in relation to practice issues and engaged in multi-agency liaison between SCRA, CHS and Social Work Scotland.

In addition, in June 2013 our Victim Information Service was re-launched to become an opt-in service.
Our people

During 2013/14 our efforts to improve staff communication and engagement continued. In May, the results of our pilot Team Brief survey were published and the pilot was extended for the rest of the year. In September, our annual Staff Event was held and in November, In Touch, a new fortnightly communication for staff absent from the organisation was launched.

We welcomed two new Board members this year – Douglas Yates was appointed in July 2013 and Catherine Robertson was appointed in November 2013. While in June, our Board Member Bernadette Docherty was awarded the MBE for services to social work.

In terms of new developments, in June 2013, SCRA was listed as a recognised body under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups 2013 Order, while in January 2014 a new organisational Health and Wellbeing Group was set up.

In August 2013, a year-long Transformational Leadership Programme aimed at all managers in the organisation got underway.

SCRA developed a new appraisal scheme during 2013/14 which was due to be launched at the beginning of April 2014.

In December 2013 we launched a round of voluntary redundancy/voluntary early retirement. Our commitment to no compulsory redundancies remains in place. Also in December a further six members of staff successfully passed the Diploma in Public Service Leadership run through the University of the West of Scotland.

In January, we said a sad farewell to pioneer Reporter Alan Finlayson who died on 16 January.

In March 2014, SCRA’s three year pay deal was agreed following discussions with staff union UNISON. Also in March, SCRA welcomed a new full time UNISON Branch Secretary - Reporter Joe McKeown took over the role from Diane Harvey, who moved back to her role of Assistant Reporter.

During 2013/14, our Equalities Network continued to make inroads to ensure that we meet and exceed the equalities duties placed on SCRA as a public body. The work of the network ensures that SCRA is at the forefront of recognising diversity, promoting equality and justice, and constantly aware of the impact of our equality commitments.

Our property

SCRA is responsible for providing suitable and sufficient facilities to accommodate Children’s Hearings. The continuing economic and budgetary pressures have resulted in a continuing drive to manage our property assets more effectively and efficiently, with an ongoing challenge from the organisation to reduce costs wherever possible, whilst maintaining service levels.

Following a procurement exercise, a new integrated Facilities Management contract was awarded to an external company to provide a wide range of services to SCRA. This contract brings together a number of services that were previously provided under separate contracts. New helpdesk and management arrangements have been put in place, which include property maintenance and repair, office cleaning, confidential shredding and waste management.

As the Locality framework has bedded in, there is now regular dialogue with local management to ensure that we are providing the right facilities for the organisation. We have this year been able to dispose of our old office in Ayr, generating a capital receipt for SCRA which was used to fund further capital projects. The lease of our existing Hearing Centre in East Kilbride expired and, when required, Hearings are now held in a local outreach centre. The disposal of our East Kilbride premises has provided a significant revenue saving.

The lease of our Glasgow office was due to expire in February, and agreement was reached with our landlord to remain in the building but occupying a smaller area. By giving up a floor in the building, SCRA is able to make a significant saving over the duration of the lease. A refurbishment project on the fourth floor was completed to provide a new training room for the organisation, together with additional meeting rooms. Working closely with the locality and colleagues from the File Retention Project, we were able to reduce our filing footprint by a third, freeing up space for staff.

Work on our Fraserburgh office has now been completed and SCRA now has a fully accessible, ground floor Hearings Centre that provides a high quality, permanent facility in Aberdeenshire. The refurbishment created space on the upper floors which will be marketed with a view to securing a tenant. Works have also been completed in Falkirk providing improved file storage for the Locality and creating the ability to separately lease the first floor office at a later date. In Glenrothes, a tenant has now been secured for the vacant first floor office enabling a significant reduction in our annual running costs.

Our research

Two research reports were published in 2013/14 both of which concerned the experiences of children, young people and families attending Children’s Hearings.

SCRA’s National Survey of Children and Families in the Children’s Hearings System was published in April 2013. This reported the findings from interviews with 745 individuals (456 adults, 158 young people and 131 children, including 45 four to six year olds), who attended Hearings between November 2012 and January 2013.

In 2012/13, SCRA’s Modern Apprentices carried out inspections of 27 Children’s Hearings Centres, and their report ‘It’s all About Change’ was published in June 2013. The findings from both these reports are being taken forward by SCRA’s Participation Group to improve the service received and the experience of those coming to Hearings.

SCRA carried out two further research projects in 2013/14, both of which were published in June 2014. The factors that influence Reporter decision-making were examined through case file analysis and focus groups with Reporters.
The second reports on an analysis of SCRA data on children whose first Supervision Requirement/Order is at home with their parents.

The Scottish Government commissioned SCRA to carry out a follow up to its 2011 research report on permanence and adoption. The research has begun and is examining 200 cases of looked after children who had Permanence Orders (including those with Authority to Adopt) and Adoption Orders made in 2013/14.

Information Governance

In October 2013 SCRA agreed to a consensual audit by the Information Commissioner (ICO). The audit was carried out in March 2014 and covered three areas: Data protection governance; records management and data sharing; and training and awareness. The Executive Summary of the audit was published on the ICO’s web site in June 2014.

SCRA has continued to embed good information governance across the organisation. Information Governance leads have been established in each Locality, with regular meetings to share and build on good practice.

In addition, SCRA continues to work with partners to protect the security and confidentiality of children’s case information. At a national level, information sharing agreements have been developed with key partners in the Children’s Hearings System including Children’s Hearings Scotland (CHS), Children 1st, Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), etc. At a local level, SCRA Localities have been working with partner agencies on multi-agency information sharing agreements.

SCRA continues to monitor the numbers of cases with Non-Disclosure conditions and breaches of these. There were 42 incidents where Non-Disclosure Orders were breached. These 42 incidents involved 65 Orders. This is very similar to 2012/13 when there were 46 incidents that involved 65 Non-Disclosure Orders. The most common source of breaches of Non-Disclosure Orders in 2013/14 was SCRA with 16 incidents, followed by foster carers with six incidents and local authorities with five incidents.

SCRA received 30 requests under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) in 2013/14, and took on average eight working days to respond to these against a statutory time limit of 20 working days. There were two requests to review how SCRA had dealt with FOISA requests and no appeals to the Scottish Information Commissioner.

Fifty six requests for personal data were made to SCRA in 2013/14. These were dealt with as Subject Access Requests under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. SCRA took on average 34 days to respond to these requests against a statutory time limit of 40 calendar days.

Participation and engagement

Throughout 2013/2014, SCRA’s commitment to participation and engagement with children and young people continued.

In January 2013, four new Modern Apprentices were appointed, three of whom remain in the organisation, two as Modern Apprentices and one as a full time member of staff.

In June, a revised suite of information materials was launched for children and young people to ensure it was compliant with the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.

In July, the first copy of ‘The Zone’ (our new magazine for young people) was introduced into waiting areas and online.

Also in July, the new ‘Going To Court’ film was also launched at this time and has been positively received by young people and partner agencies supporting children and young people involved in the court process.

Another successful SCRA toy drive took place in December 2013/January 2014 to furnish waiting areas for children and young people with age appropriate toys, games and reading materials. Thank you to all of the staff and partners who so generously donated.

In August 2013 SCRA signed up to a partnership agreement with Who Cares? Scotland and in February 2014, the National Participation Forum (NPF) was formally created in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland, SCRA, Children’s Hearings Scotland and CELCIS. The NPF is a group of young people and staff from partner agencies focussed on improving children and young people’s lives who have been through or are still in the Hearings System.

Also in August, the first in a series of workshops was held with young people to get their views on some of our information materials.

Throughout 2013/14, our partnership working with bodies including Children’s Hearings Scotland, Education Scotland and Social Work Scotland continued – all with an aim to continue to improve the participation of children and young people in the Hearings System. We created a guide to the Hearings System e-book for new and trainee social workers and another aimed at teachers and education staff – both are available on our website.
By the end of April 2013, our new Case Management System had been rolled out across the country. This is our new electronic records and casework processing system for all children’s case files. Every operational member of staff received five days training in the new system just before system go-live.

The system was then updated for the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 which came into force on 24 June. As the system continues to bed in, new developments and improvements continue to be made. As with any new system, it takes time to adjust, but staff are finding their feet with using the system and beginning to report positive benefits to the new functions and features it offers now and for the future.

Going forward, we will continue to improve the usability of the system by way of a systematic review of all the key screens and forms that staff interact with; engaging with staff throughout the organisation to improve the layout, feel and responsiveness of the system.

We will also continue our programme of work to develop and deliver user supports, including a wider menu of training courses to meet the needs of the full range of staff roles and support staff to keep pace with new functionality.

At the end of March 2013, our new look staff intranet Connect went live. The site was migrated to a more up to date version of Sharepoint software providing additional functionality and a more interactive site for all staff to use.

SCRA remains committed to working with our partners in the Hearings System to improve our processes and services to children, young people and families. During 2013/14 a significant amount of progress was made.

In June 2013 SCRA started a new electronic exchange with the Scottish Court Service. This means SCRA can submit the following types of documents electronically: Advice from a Children’s Hearing, Answers to Appeals and List of Witnesses. In addition, we now receive the following types of electronic documents from the courts: Advice Request, Appeal, Interlocutor and Warrant to Cite.

In November 2013 work started to replace information sharing protocols with Local Authority partners with Memorandums of Understanding. This was to support the introduction of the Public Services Network (PSN) which will improve our information sharing capabilities.

Also in November, some of our Modern Apprentices met with young people from Cafcass (England’s Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service). The aim was to learn from each other and share best practice regarding participation of children and young people.

In September we distributed our biennial partner’s survey. We created two surveys – one aimed specifically at Panel Members and another at partners such as social work, police and education. We received 619 responses - 436 to the general partner’s survey and 183 to the Panel Member’s survey. An action plan was developed and Localities are now working to deliver the plan.

In January 2014, SCRA organised a Working Together event. Representatives from SCRA were joined by guests from Police Scotland, the Crown office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) to improve collaborative working.

Also in January 2014, a new SCRA Locality/Area Support Team (AST) framework was published. The AST/Locality Operating Framework is made up of a set of core expectations which sets out the terms of the engagement between Localities and ASTs as seen by the Principal Reporter and the National Convener of Children’s Hearings Scotland.

During 2013/14 we continued to provide shared services to Children’s Hearings Scotland. The supports include: Human Resources, Finance, Planning and Organisational Development.
Our statistics in 2013/14 ...

SCRA transitioned to its new Case Management System during late 2012 and early 2013. In addition, the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 was implemented during June 2013.

These changes have impacted on the types of information that we are able to gather and have affected the ability to provide historical comparisons in some cases.

Estimated error margins are available through our Statistical Analysis Report which is available on our website.

This section of our Annual Report includes:

- The number of children and young people referred to the Reporter
- The grounds on which children and young people are referred
- Reporter decisions
- Children’s Hearing decisions
Children and young people referred to the Reporter

In 2013/14, 19,077 children and young people in Scotland were referred\(^1\) to the Reporter:

- 17,476 on non-offence (care and protection) grounds.
- 2,764 on offence grounds\(^2\).

The figure of 19,077 represents 2.1% of all children and young people in Scotland\(^3\). Within this, 1.9% of all children and young people were referred on care and protection grounds and 0.6% of all children and young people aged between eight\(^4\) and 16 years were referred on offence grounds.

The number of children and young people referred to the Reporter has decreased for the seventh consecutive year and is at its lowest level since 1982. The 14.8% decrease from 2012/13 levels was due to reductions in the numbers of both children and young people referred on care and protection grounds (down 13.9%) and children and young people referred on offence grounds (down 20.4%).

Recent years have seen proportional increases in very young children referred. In 2013/14, 14.5% of all children and young people referred were aged under two (14.0% in 2012/13). 2013/14 also saw a continuation in the high numbers of children and young people with Child Protection Orders (CPOs) received, with 734 having CPOs in the year (743 in 2012/13).

Grounds on which children and young people were referred to the Reporter

Due to the transition to the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 in June 2013, children and young people have been referred under this Act and the previous Act (Children (Scotland) Act 1995) during 2013/14. The five most common reasons for referral for each Act are outlined in Table 1 - full details can be found in the online statistical analysis.

Table 1. Number of children and young people referred in 2013/14 by grounds of referral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grounds of Referral</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under the 1995 Act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Lack of parental care</td>
<td>1,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Victim of a Schedule 1 offence(^*)</td>
<td>1,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Allegedly committed an offence</td>
<td>834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Beyond control of any relevant person</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Bad associations or moral danger</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under the 2011 Act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Lack of parental care</td>
<td>6,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Close connection with a person who has carried out domestic abuse</td>
<td>3,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Victim of a Schedule 1 offence</td>
<td>2,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(j) Offence</td>
<td>2,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n) Beyond control of a relevant person</td>
<td>1,569</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^*\)Any of the offences mentioned in Schedule 1 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 (offences against children to which special provisions apply).
Under the 2011 Act, ‘lack of parental care’ was the most common ground of referral followed by ‘close connection with person who has carried out domestic abuse’, ‘victim of a Schedule 1 offence’ and ‘offence’.

In total, the 2,764 children and young people referred on offence grounds in 2013/14 were referred for 11,593 alleged offences on 6,818 referrals. The most common types of alleged offences were assault, vandalism and threatening or abusive behaviour.

The age breakdown of children and young people referred on both offence and care and protection grounds is shown in Figure 2. Fourteen and fifteen were the most common ages of referral for both care and protection and offence grounds.

Reporter decisions on children and young people referred

The Reporter investigates the child or young person’s case by requesting information from different sources: social work, police, school, health and voluntary organisations. The Reporter evaluates the information and decides whether there is a need for compulsory intervention.

Where the Reporter decides that the child or young person requires compulsory measures of supervision, and there is sufficient evidence to support one or more grounds of referral, the child or young person will be referred to a Children’s Hearing.

Reporters have other options available to them to find the right help for children and young people such as asking the local authority to provide voluntary advice, guidance and assistance to the child, or to take no formal action because other intervention is more appropriate.

Table 2 shows that 20.4% of children and young people (3,915) with cases decided in the year had a Reporter decision to arrange a Children’s Hearing on at least one referral.

Table 2. Children and young people with Reporter decisions in 2013/14*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporter decision</th>
<th>Non-offence</th>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrange Children’s Hearing (on new grounds)</td>
<td>3,739</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>3,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No indication of a need for compulsory measures</td>
<td>6,855</td>
<td>1,145</td>
<td>7,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Hearing - measures already in place</td>
<td>2,962</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>3,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Hearing - refer to local authority</td>
<td>3,363</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>3,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Hearing - insufficient evidence to proceed</td>
<td>1,777</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>1,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Hearing - family have taken action</td>
<td>1,134</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1,194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Hearing - diversion to other measures</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total children and young people referred**</td>
<td>17,521</td>
<td>2,843</td>
<td>19,153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data in this table relates to cases decided in 2013/14 as opposed to referrals received in 2013/14. ** The totals do not equal the sums as children and young people can be referred more than once in the year and may have multiple Reporter decisions. The totals count each child/young person once.

Number of Children’s Hearings held

A new feature of the 2011 Act is the introduction of Pre-Hearing Panels (PHPs). These are convened before some Hearings to consider any special arrangements needed for the Hearing. Pre-Hearing Panels have been combined with Business Meetings (BM) from the 1995 Act to provide an overall figure for 2013/14, with BM numbers from prior years provided to allow comparison.

Table 3. Number of Pre-Hearing Panels and Children’s Hearings held

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of PHPs/BMs</td>
<td>3,555</td>
<td>3,576</td>
<td>3,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children’s Hearings</td>
<td>41,825</td>
<td>40,708</td>
<td>38,316</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2013/14, 5,601 PHPs and 36,200 Children’s Hearings were held. The most common reason for holding a PHP was to notify an individual as a relevant person, with 52.1% of PHPs having this for at least one reason in a meeting. For Hearings, two-thirds (66.4%) included a review of a Compulsory Supervision Order.

Applications to the Sheriff for proof

If not all the grounds which form the basis of the Children’s Hearing are accepted by children, young people or relevant persons, or the child does not or cannot understand the grounds, the Children’s Hearing may direct the Reporter to apply to the Sheriff to establish the grounds for referral.*

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5. *Young people aged 16 and 17 years can be referred to the Reporter if they are still subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders, are remitted by a court or have an open case which started prior to their sixteenth birthday.

In 2013/14, 2,903 applications were concluded, of which 91.5% were held to be established by the Sheriff. When an application to the Sheriff for proof has been established, the grounds are referred back to a Children’s Hearing to decide if compulsory measures are necessary.

Compulsory measures of intervention

Children’s Hearings decide whether compulsory measures of intervention are necessary (in respect of the child or young person) to protect them and/or address their behaviour.

Child Protection Orders and Place of Safety Warrants

Children’s Hearings can make short-term decisions to address emergency and/or high risk situations where measures have to be put in place immediately to protect children and young people or address their behaviour. This may include Hearings arranged as a result of the Sheriff granting a Child Protection Order (CPO).

In 2013/14, Children’s Hearings:

- Considered the cases of 734 children and young people with Cpos under sections 45 or 46 of the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011; and
- Made 2,418 children and young people subject to place of Safety Warrants under sections 66(1) and 69(7) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 or interim orders as defined under sections 86 and 140 of the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.

As with CPOs, interim order numbers are highest for very young children (aged under one), but they are also common for older children and young people.

Compulsory Supervision Orders

Compulsory Supervision Orders (CSOs) are the most common form of compulsory intervention made by Children’s Hearings. They are also the only longer-term option available to Hearings. It is the statutory responsibility of local authorities to implement CSOs.

In 2013/14, 3,100 children and young people had a new CSO made on grounds referred, with 11,420 children and young people subject to CSOs at 31 March 2014. This amounts to 1.3% of all children and young people in Scotland. See Table 4.

Table 4. Children and young people subject to Supervision Requirements at 31 March

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children and young people</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13,474</td>
<td>13,093</td>
<td>12,514</td>
<td>11,420</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of children and young people subject to CSOs has decreased for a fourth consecutive year. The most common ages of children and young people subject to CSOs continue to be 14 and 15 years. The types of CSOs in place at 31 March 2014 are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. CSOs in place at 31 March 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of CSO</th>
<th>Number of children and young people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With parent/relevant person</td>
<td>5,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With other approved foster parent</td>
<td>3,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With relative/friend - other</td>
<td>1,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With relative/friend - approved foster parent</td>
<td>681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s unit</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential school</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other residential placement</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None recorded</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secure Authorisations made by Children’s Hearings

Secure Authorisations can be made as conditions of interim orders or CSOs where the child or young person presents a risk to themselves or others. In 2013/14, 124 children and young people had Secure Authorisations made as a condition of CSOs. The number of children and young people with Secure Authorisations made as a condition of interim orders is not available due to a system recording issue in the early part of 2013/14.

Appeals

Children and young people and/or their relevant persons can appeal to the Sheriff against decisions made by Children’s Hearings. In 2013/14, 805 children and young people had appeals concluded, with 62% having Hearings’ decisions upheld by the Sheriff on at least one appeal in the year. Where a Hearing decision wasn’t upheld, the most common outcome was for the Sheriff to remit the case back to a Children’s Hearing for reconsideration.

In addition, applications can be made to the Sheriff to recall or vary the conditions on a CPO. 23 children and young people had applications to recall or vary CPOs in the year.
Our accounts in 2013/14 ...

The financial information in this document does not comprise the statutory financial statements of the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration for the financial period ended 31 March 2014 which were approved on 25 September 2014, but represents extracts from them.

These extracts do not provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, or financial and investing activities, as the complete financial statements.

The statutory financial statements have been reported on by SCRA’s external auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, and delivered to the Board, the Scottish Parliament and the Auditor General for Scotland.

The report of the auditors was unmodified.

The statutory financial statements can be obtained on SCRA’s website - www.scra.gov.uk or on request from:

SCRA
Ochil House
Springkerse Business Park
Stirling
FK7 7XE
**Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure**

For the year ended 31 March 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014 £000</th>
<th>2013 (restated) £000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff costs</td>
<td>17,015</td>
<td>14,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenditure</td>
<td>5,968</td>
<td>8,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and amortisation</td>
<td>2,706</td>
<td>1,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td>25,689</td>
<td>24,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>636</td>
<td>474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net expenditure</strong></td>
<td>25,053</td>
<td>23,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest payable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest receivable</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension scheme finance cost</td>
<td>1,205</td>
<td>1,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net expenditure before Scottish Government funding</strong></td>
<td>26,257</td>
<td>24,780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The 2013 comparative has been restated in accordance with IAS 19 (revised) “Employee Benefits” and to adjust for an overstatement in the unfunded pension liability.

**Statement of Financial Position**

As at 31 March 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014 £000</th>
<th>2013 £000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-current assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property, plant and equipment</td>
<td>8,681</td>
<td>9,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment properties</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intangible assets</td>
<td>3,151</td>
<td>3,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total non-current assets</strong></td>
<td>11,857</td>
<td>13,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and other receivables</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assets held for sale</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total current assets</strong></td>
<td>771</td>
<td>1,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
<td>12,628</td>
<td>14,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and other payables</td>
<td>1,944</td>
<td>2,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance lease</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total current liabilities</strong></td>
<td>1,980</td>
<td>2,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-current assets less/net current liabilities</strong></td>
<td>10,648</td>
<td>12,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-current liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payables</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension liability</td>
<td>28,499</td>
<td>24,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for unfunded pensions</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance lease</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td>1,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total non-current liabilities</strong></td>
<td>30,568</td>
<td>26,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assets less liabilities</strong></td>
<td>(19,920)</td>
<td>(14,042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taxpayers’ deficit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General fund</td>
<td>11,177</td>
<td>14,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension reserve</td>
<td>(31,828)</td>
<td>(29,223)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revaluation reserve</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total taxpayers’ deficit</strong></td>
<td>(19,920)</td>
<td>(14,042)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The 2013 comparative has been restated in accordance with IAS 19 (revised) “Employee Benefits” and to adjust for an overstatement in the unfunded pension liability.
Our Board in 2013/14

SCRA operates under the direction of an eight person Board. As a Non-Departmental Public Body, SCRA’s Board - although acting independently - is ultimately accountable to Scottish Ministers, and Board Members are appointed by Ministers.

Our Board Members reflect a wide range of experiences and backgrounds in relation to children and young people. The Board plays a significant role in setting the strategic direction of SCRA, and in challenging the organisation to ensure we deliver our plans.

More information about our Board, including a full Register of Board Members’ Interests, can be found on our website at www.scra.gov.uk

Chair:
Carole Wilkinson (re-appointed 2014)

Board Members:
Malcolm Dickson (re-appointed 2012)
Andrew Miller (re-appointed 2012)
Bernadette Docherty MBE (appointed 2010)
Louise Macdonald (appointed 2010)
Joseph Hughes (appointed 2010, resigned September 2013)
Andrew Menzies (appointed March 2013)
Douglas Yates (appointed July 2013)
Catherine Robertson (appointed November 2013)
Looking ahead – reflecting on 2014/15 so far…

If 2013/14 was a year of significant change and challenges for SCRA and the Hearings System, then 2014/15 needs to be a year of consolidation and deliver relative stability.

In 2014/15 we will publish our Corporate Plan for the next three years. Already it is clear our emphasis needs to be on sustainability, quality and supporting our workforce. The financial challenges for SCRA will not diminish in the next 12 months. However, we are confident that we have the right plans in place to deliver a more stable and sustainable operating environment for our staff in order to help them deliver the kind of quality services, experience and outcomes that we really want to see in the Hearings System.

We will continue with our organisational culture change, which is aimed at further supporting devolved decision making to our Localities across Scotland, so that they can more effectively engage in local partnerships, innovate and develop ways of improving local design of services, and delivery of care and support to children and young people.

The need to improve and fully embed our core systems – particularly our Case Management System (CMS) – so that it can truly contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of our work day to day, and become a streamlined, integrated, enabling tool helping our staff with the immensely difficult tasks they tackle each day.

We will continue to design and deliver comprehensive training to all of our staff and act, as we have to date, as a key reference point to other partners in the Hearings System seeking advice and support on the 2011 Act. The range of partnerships we are involved in at local and national level will continue to grow and strengthen, reflecting the truly inter-agency approach to the delivery of the Hearings System in Scotland. Within this, we will continue to use every opportunity to promote the understanding of the work of SCRA and in particular the skilled expertise and role of the Children’s Reporter.

We will formalise this in our contribution to the re-launched Children’s Hearings Improvement Partnership and in particular through our work in 2014/15 to ensure that the Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) framework is central to the work of the Reporter and the wider Hearings System.

SCRA has taken a leading role in promoting the voice of children and young people in the Hearings System. Our work, with others has included developing tools, support material and methods to enhance the engagement and participation of children and young people in decisions about their future care and support. In 2014/15 we will attempt to take this work further and develop ways we can bring children and young people’s voices and experience to have a direct bearing on how the Hearings System develops and improves.

This will be a challenging and difficult step up in our approach – and we won’t necessarily get it right first time – but we are much more likely to achieve this if we build in co-production with and direct participation of children and young people into our work from the outset and next year we will commit ourselves to finding ways of doing this.

Our data and research will continue to help drive reflection and improvement across the country. We are part of a wider movement committed to bringing evidence of effectiveness and demonstration of what makes good outcomes for children and young people, to the core of our day to day work.

Some of this is very difficult and challenging for us all, much of it is immensely exciting and, if we keep our focus, can really make a tangible, positive and constructive difference.

Carole Wilkinson, SCRA Chair

Neil Hunter, SCRA Principal Reporter/Chief Executive