

SCRA response to Children's Hearings Scotland's consultation

Background

The Children's Hearings System is Scotland's distinct system of child protection and youth justice. Among its fundamental principles are:

- whether concerns relate to their welfare or behaviour, the needs of children or young people in trouble should be met through a single holistic and integrated system
- a preventative approach, involving early identification and diagnosis of problems, is essential
- the welfare of the child remains at the centre of all decision making and the child's best interests are paramount throughout
- the child's engagement and participation is crucial to good decision making

SCRA operates the Reporter service which sits at the heart of the system. SCRA employs Children's Reporters who are located throughout Scotland, working in close partnership with panel members and other professionals such as social work, education, the police, the health service and the courts system.

SCRA's vision is that vulnerable children and young people in Scotland are safe, protected and offered positive futures. We will seek to achieve this by adhering to the following key values:

- The voice of the child must be heard
- Our hopes and dreams for the children of Scotland are what unite us
- 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.

Response

SCRA welcomes the opportunity to comment on Children's Hearings Scotland's Business Plan for 2016/17. The strategic partnership between CHS and SCRA is a critical one for the ongoing success of the children's hearings system. While the independent statutory functions of both organisations are respected, our underpinning visions and values are closely aligned, enabling us to work together constructively in many different areas. We have for instance undertaken joint board meetings to address issues of common interest and produced agreed policy positions on topics such as GIRFEC that reflect our shared expertise and views.

We look forward to the 2016/17 plan reflecting that ongoing and ever developing relationship and in particular highlighting significant work in the following areas:



- Participation of children and young people in the system, including the institution of a Young People's Board for the hearings system;
- The development of both organisations' understanding of their responsibilities as corporate parents;
- Efficient and effective management of hearings with the best interests and needs of children and families at their heart;
- A shared research programme focused on a common understanding of priority areas
- An agreement to make the best use of resources via a programme of shared services
- A jointly owned Digital Strategy for the children's hearings system aimed at modernising and improving the service we deliver

SCRA

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