



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

It's all about change

This report covers: Reception areas,
waiting rooms, Hearing rooms and
phone call inspections



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June 2013

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Thank you to: Zoie Montgomery and William Ryan who helped plan, organise and carry out some of the inspections. We would also like to thank the SCRA Information and Research team (Gillian Henderson, Lucy Hanson, Gwen McNiven and Indiya Whitehead) and Maryanne McIntyre (Press and Communications Manager). A special thanks to all the Managers and offices who allowed us to visit.



Inspection steps

The Modern Apprentices (MAs) followed the same steps for the inspections to work effectively:

1. Phone call inspection

2. Office inspection

1. Phone call inspections were crucial to see how members of staff speak to the public when on the phone. This was also to arrange these inspections with the Locality Reporter Managers.

2. Office inspections were the most important part of the project, we got to see different offices and meet different staff throughout SCRA. We shared our opinions on the visits and discussed the outcome of the results.

Inspection Methods

Following the 'Fit for us' report in 2011 we felt that the inspections should be carried out in the same way in which the previous MAs carried them out. This was to be professional and fair. We also used the Survey Monkey tool as did the previous MAs to analyse the results we gathered.

How the inspections were marked

As this was a follow up, we used the same survey that the previous MAs had used. We also added our own questions to the inspection survey. Such as:

- Confidentiality
- The facilities of our offices (including toilets)



Introduction

In 2010 SCRA started a new project - this project requires every core and outreach Hearing centre to be inspected, this looks at each office being improved in any way possible to ensure children and young people receive the best experience possible when coming to a Children's Hearing. In 2011, the previous MAs completed this project and had various recommendations to help make these improvements. Our main focus was to look at the reception, staff in reception's attitude on the phone and also towards young people and families attending Children's Hearings, waiting rooms, Hearing rooms and toilet facilities.

In 2009/2010, there were 43,416 Children's Hearings held in Scotland, this has decreased during 2011/2012 to 40,780. We feel that appearance in the Hearing Centres is very important, more so for the children and young people who need to attend a Children's Hearing.

We feel appearance in our facilities and in our staff is very important as the first thing the child picks up on is body language and staff's attitudes towards them. If the building is dirty and worn out looking with unsuitable facilities, the child or young person may not feel as comfortable as they would going into a clean and modern day building. How the child or young person feels is important to SCRA because it is mainly their suggestions that we want to hear to help improve our facilities as best as we can. In our waiting rooms we have 'Suggestion Boxes', any visitor coming in for a Children's Hearing can put an idea into these boxes, but in particular we want to have suggestions from children and young people as it is their well being we are concerned for.

Staff who work within these offices play the most important part as they are greeting the children, young people and families coming in to the centres. Their attitude and appearance is also very important as the children and young people attending can be very anxious and nervous to why they are at a Children's Hearing and the message we are trying to send across is they are not attending to be punished. We kept the fact that we were doing 'inspections' very discreet - when calling up each office we explained we just wanted to visit and view the office facilities.

In depth, we inspected the Hearing rooms, waiting rooms and the reception, but also we wanted to listen to how the receptionists answered the phone in the main office to listen to their tones of voices and attitudes. We also observed families and young people coming into Children's Hearings to see how they were greeted and made to feel whilst coming in. Last year's MA's managed to see 23 of the offices and this year we have managed 27. These inspections gave us an insight to the recommendations which needed to be made to make further improvements.



Phone Survey

Why did we carry out the phone survey?

We carried out the phone survey because not only did we think this was the best way to get in touch with the offices to arrange the inspections, but also to hear how they answered their phone on a daily basis. Below are our findings;

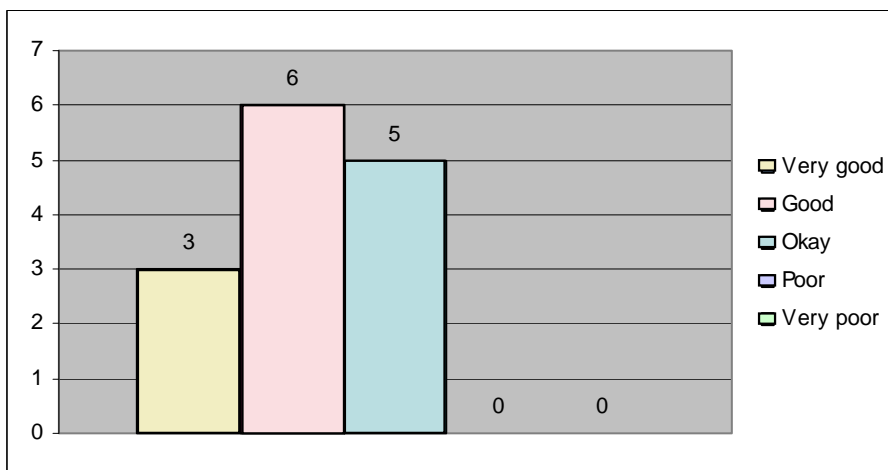
Did the person give their name?

When the MAs phoned the 14 different offices we found that 57.1% of the people answering the phone did give their name, but nearly as many as 42.9% (6 offices) did not. We think it's important in SCRA to give your name when answering the phone as everyone you are speaking to has the right to know they are talking to the correct person and who they got the information from.

Did the person give their location of the office?

The MAs found that only one person when answering the phone gave their location, this means that 13 of the offices did not. The last set of MAs thought it was important to give the location of the office, but the current MAs don't think this is as important as giving your name as children, young people and their families are normally phoning the office in which they go to for Hearings so they already know the location.

Was their tone friendly?

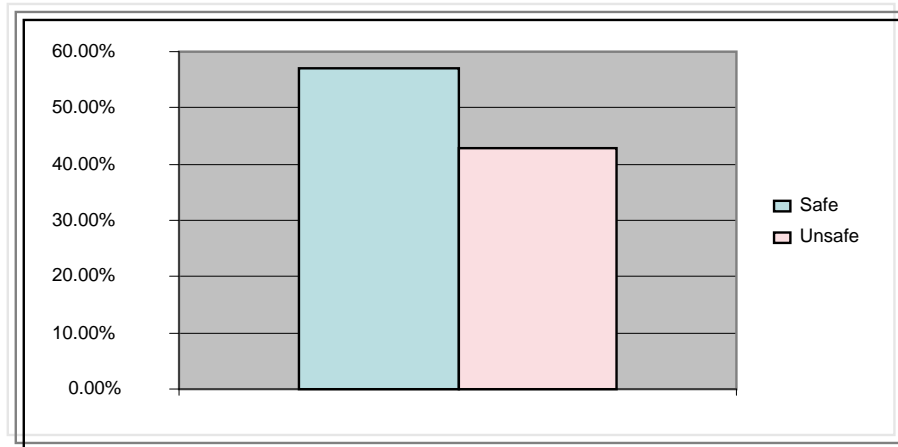


The chart above shows that the majority of staff we spoke to had a friendly voice. The MAs think this is an appropriate question as we feel that everyone phoning the offices should feel comfortable asking questions and feel they are being treated with respect.



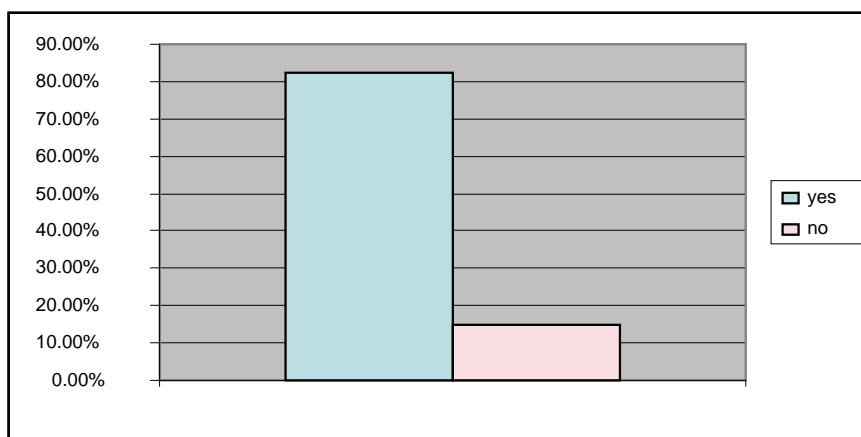
Entrances

How safe is it for families getting to the entrance?



Regarding safety at the entrance of the Hearing offices, 40.7% were deemed unsafe. This is because they were situated on a main road, and families had to walk through a car park to get to the Hearing entrances. Seven of these were found to be core offices and five were outreach centres. This causes risks for children, young people and families travelling for a Children's Hearing.

Is the entrance discreet?

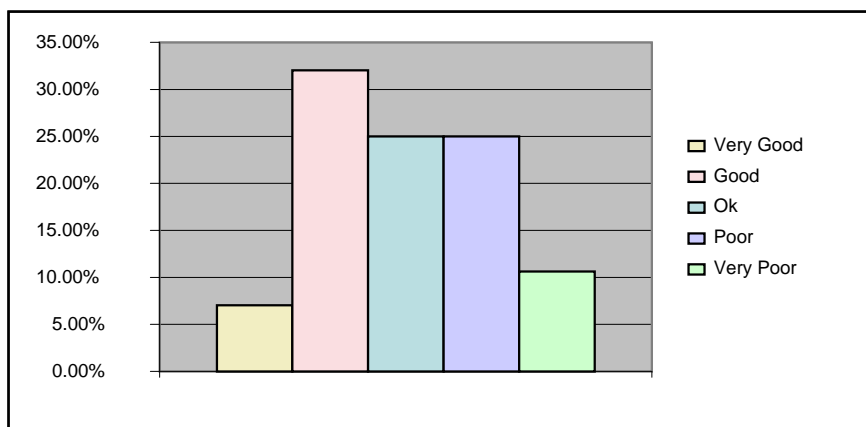


When visiting each office we looked at how discreet each office was, the majority of the offices were discreet but two core offices were found not to be discreet and two outreach offices were also not discreet. This may cause difficulties for families making their own way to a Children's Hearing, but also if the offices are not kept slightly discreet we feel this could cause discomfort to young people and their families.



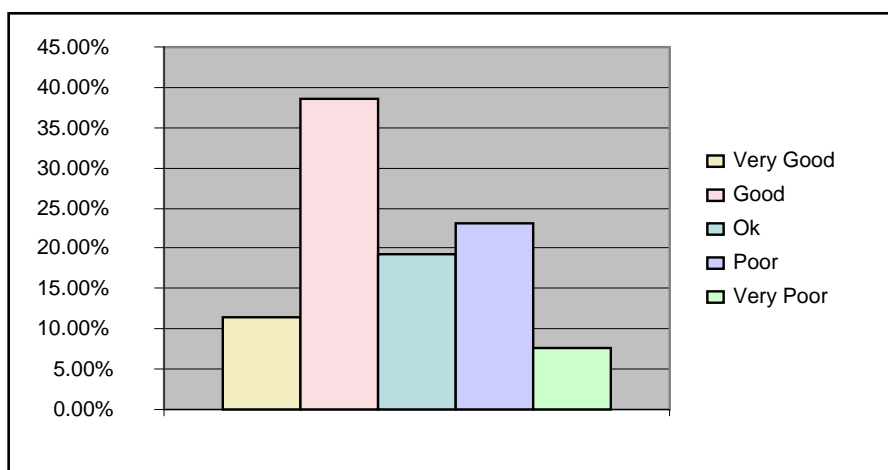
Receptions

Is the reception area colourful?



When the previous MAs did the inspections, an improvement they aimed to make was having colour in all the receptions to make the Hearing Centres more child friendly. Statistics show that the majority of offices that have colour in them were either 'Ok, Good or Very Good' most of these were Good, but also we found 10 of the offices had no colour at all in their receptions. There has been an improvement since the last inspection, many offices now have colour in reception - this is very good compared to last year.

Is the reception child friendly?



Because of the improvement in colour in each office, we found that this improved how child friendly the Hearing Centres were. Looking over our results from the inspections, we did find that roughly the same amount of receptions without colour are not child friendly, 8 offices were deemed to be non child or young person friendly.

89.5% of the offices had clean toilet facilities, and 73.9% of the staff in reception could explain the fire procedure. 74.1% of the reception desks were covered in glass, most receptionists we spoke to feel that the glass is intimidating for families entering the building.

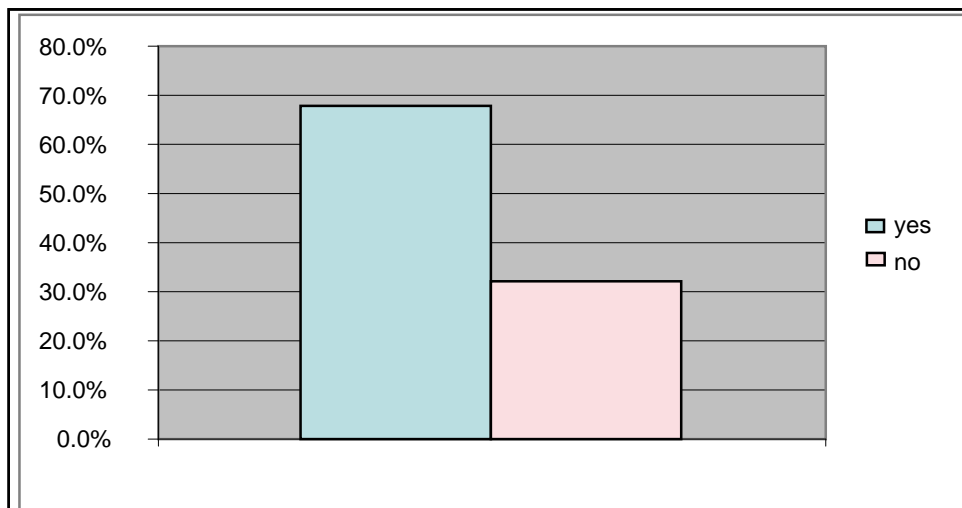


Waiting rooms

Following the last report for the waiting rooms in our SCRA offices, there has been improvement in some areas, but no improvement in others.

The number seems to have decreased for the toys in the waiting rooms. During our research we found 88.9% had toys in their waiting rooms and the last report shows 95.7% had toys. Only 37% of them were age appropriate and 44.4% were gender appropriate showing the number has went down since the last report, this could be due to the difference in opinion from the last set of MAs, for one office we said “there was a huge range of toys – age and gender” there was also a few offices we visited where staff had brought some toys in for the children.

Are the waiting rooms private?

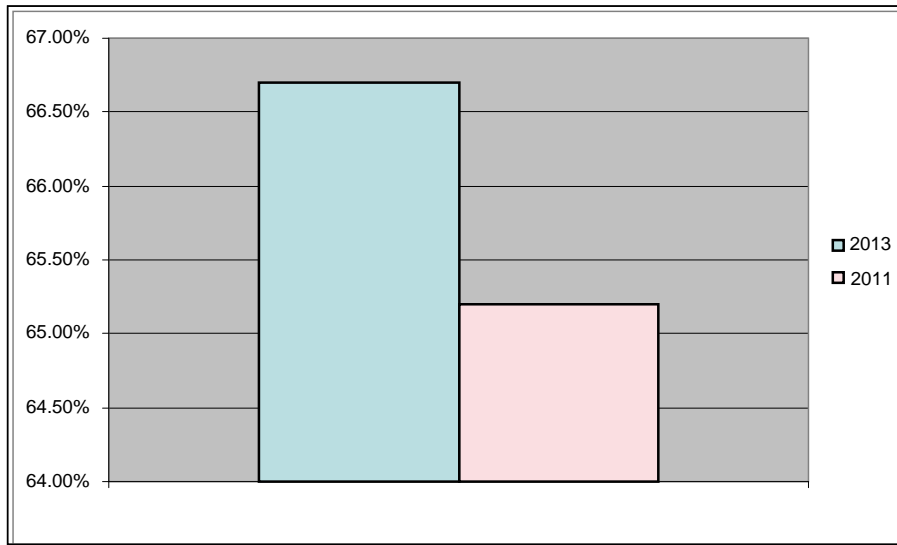


Most of the offices we visited were core, but we did visit 11 outreach offices within the 27 offices we visited. Although it may be difficult for privacy in outreach offices as it could be mixed in with another type of office we did find that the privacy of waiting rooms in the outreaches were particularly poorer than the core offices. There is a high number of offices in which the waiting rooms are private, but 33.3% aren't. All waiting rooms should have privacy to a degree as different families need space before the Hearing begins.

Also, 48.1% of the offices didn't have other rooms available for privacy, this is important as many families might not be on good terms and need a separate room.



Were there leaflets in the waiting rooms?



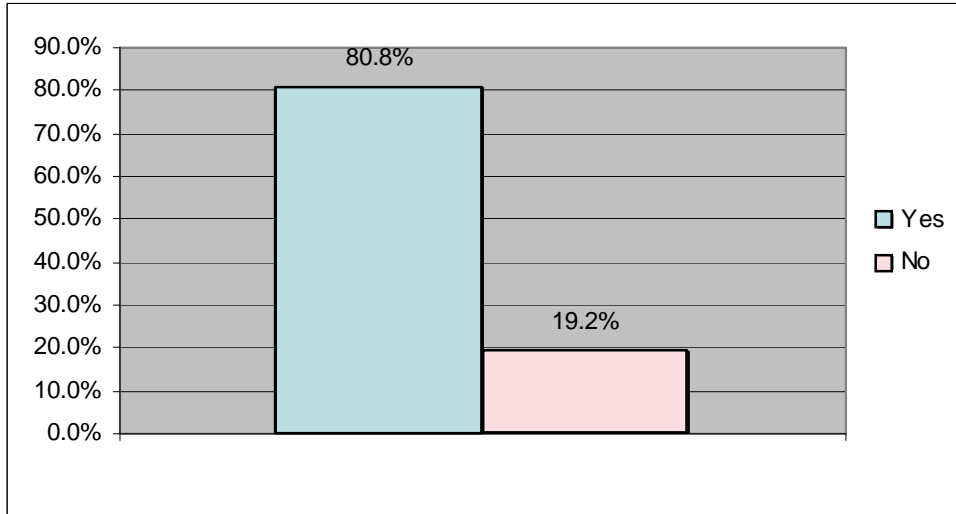
We found that in some of the offices there was lack of leaflets with 66.7% of the offices having relevant leaflets to attending a Hearing in their waiting rooms. In comparison to the last report 65.2% had leaflets in their waiting rooms, but we have looked at more offices than last time showing there hasn't been an improvement in the lack of leaflets in the waiting rooms.

The recommendations for the last round of MAs suggested TVs in waiting rooms, there was several offices which had invested in a TV, but most of the offices didn't even have the TV on during the time we visited. More colour was also suggested and most of the offices had bright coloured walls in the waiting rooms – this was a huge improvement since last time.



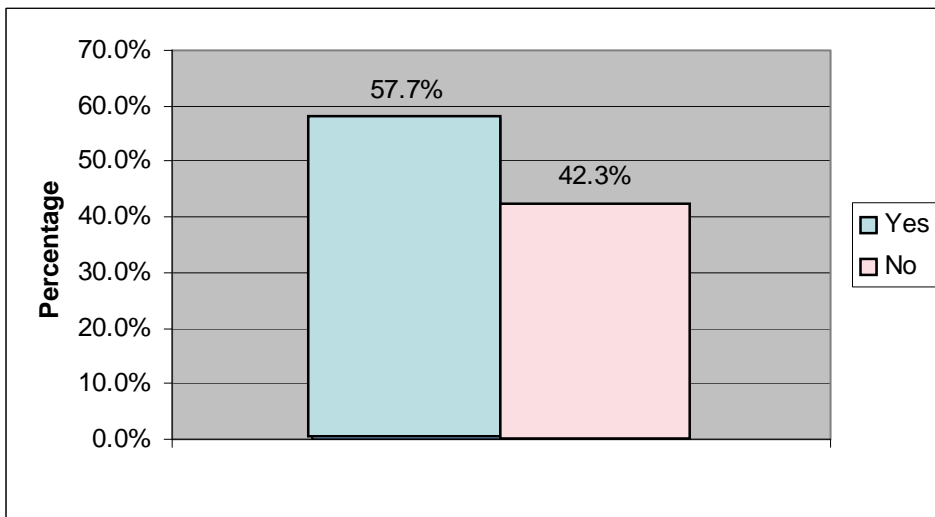
Hearing Rooms

Is the Hearing Room private?



The MAs thought this was a good question, as all children and young people should feel able to talk to the Panel Members in their Hearing knowing that everything that they say will not be overheard by someone else. The chart above shows out of all 26 offices, 21 (one office was not counted) of them did have a private Hearing room, although 5 offices did not, this is worrying as all Children's Hearings should be private. 4 of these were outreach centres.

Is the room appropriate for a Hearing?



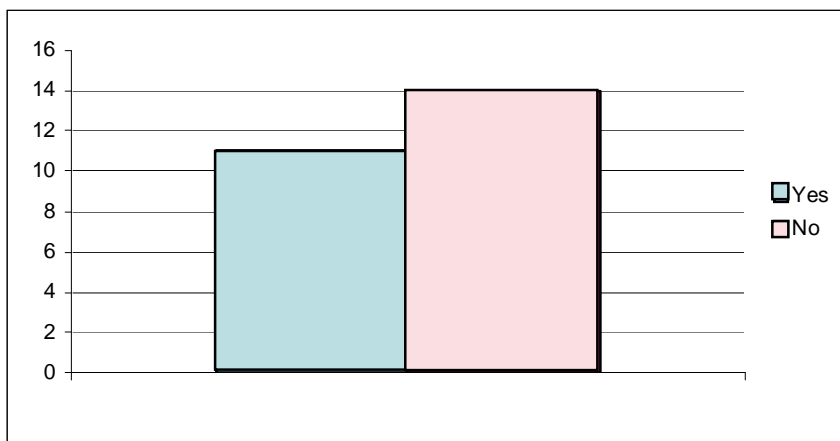
The MAs felt that this question should be asked as young people and children have the right to feel comfortable and at ease in their Hearing. As the chart shows, almost half of all the offices we visited were not appropriate for a Hearing. This is a large number of offices who do not have an appropriate room for a Children's Hearing. We decided if the room was appropriate by judging the size of the table, if it was private and the general layout of the room.



Is the table small or a coffee table?

Last year's MAs felt this was an important question, as they felt that it would make the Hearing feel "less daunting, less formal and for the children and young people to feel more comfortable and empowered to speak out"¹ This year's MAs feel that this was not the case, we feel that having a smaller table was not a beneficial thing, we feel that being too close to the Panel Members would be more intimidating and uncomfortable. Compared to 2011 findings (which had no offices using small tables for their Hearings) 8 offices have now used a smaller table for their Hearings.

Are the Children's Rights displayed on the wall?



In 2011, MAs found that only 3 offices they inspected had children's rights information displayed on the walls. This year we have found that there has been an increase in 8, this means there was only 11 out of all 25 offices (2 were not counted) we inspected had children's rights displayed on the Hearing walls. We find this shocking as when children and young people go to Hearings they may not know what their rights are, all children and young people coming to a Hearing should have the right to know what their rights are.

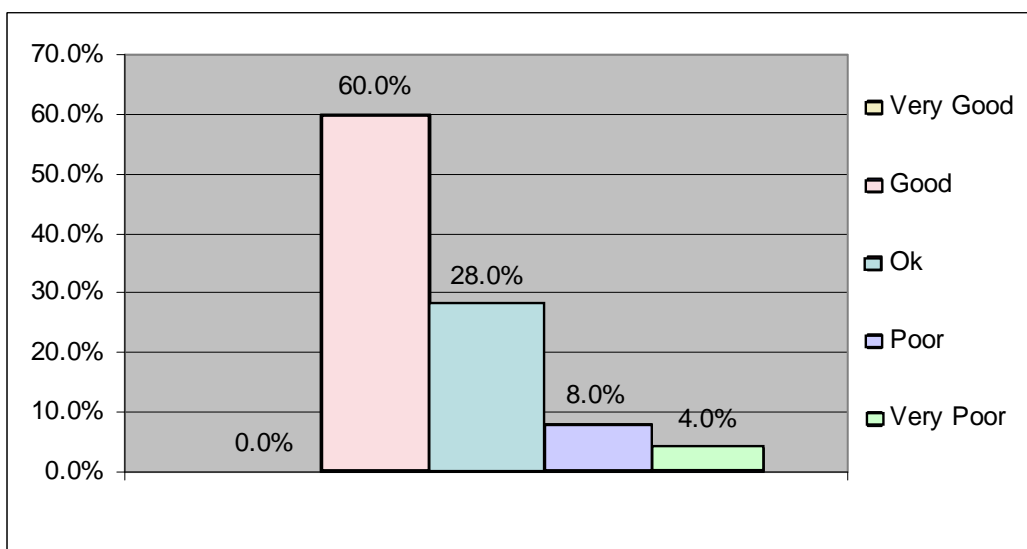
Are there other information posters on the walls?

Looking back at the 'Fit for us' 2011 report, the 2013 MAs can see that there has been an slight increase in how many offices now display other posters on the Hearing room walls. In 2011 there was only 5 offices, while after the latest inspections there was an increase of 2 offices. Although the fact that there has been an increase is great, it is still surprising to see that it was only by 2 and that means there are still 14 offices in SCRA that are not putting up posters in the Hearing rooms. The MAs think this is a good question because all children and young people coming for a Hearing - especially if its their first one - are going to feel uneasy and uncomfortable so we think that having posters on the walls will make them feel more at ease and make them talk more freely to the panel members. We also think that this would give the child or young person a distraction if they feel uncomfortable or upset by what is being discussed at the Hearing.

¹ As stated in 'Fit for Us' 2011



Are the Hearing Rooms quiet ?

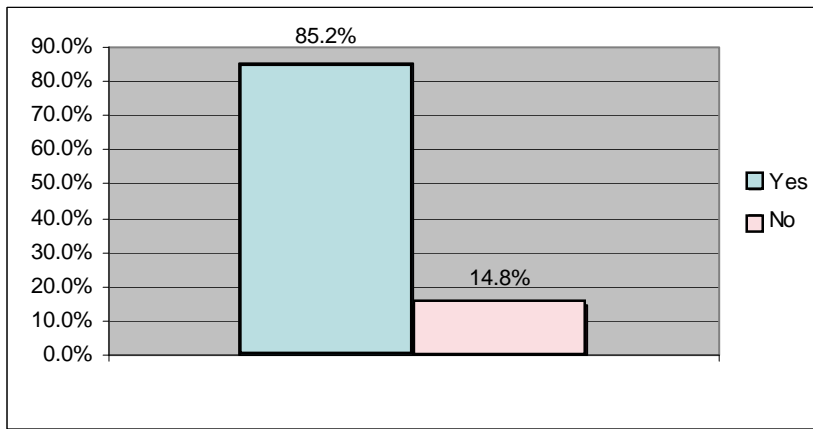


The chart above shows that 60% (15 offices) had quiet Hearing rooms this is a good improvement on the last inspections but none of the offices scored a 'Very good' this means that while we were in the Hearing room we heard things going on outside, or that while waiting to go into the Hearing room we had heard what was being said in a Hearing.



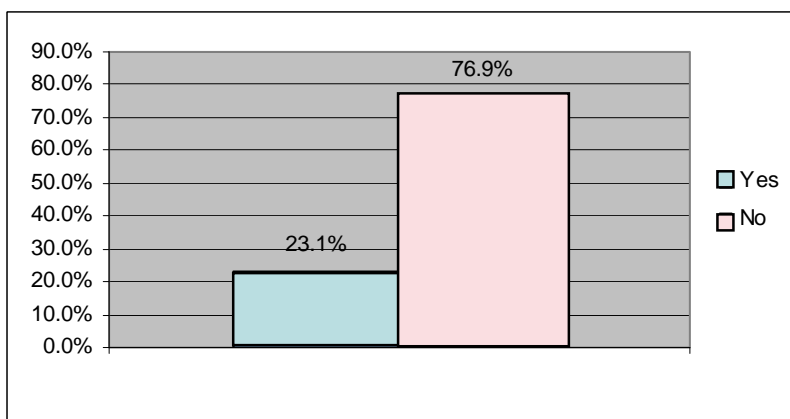
Welcoming the Modern Apprentices

Were staff welcoming and friendly to the Modern Apprentices?



While doing the inspections, the MAs found that 23 out of 27 offices were friendly and welcoming to us, but in 4 of the offices we found that staff were not so welcoming and friendly. We think this is a useful question to find the answer to as the staff are the first person that the child or young person meets when they come for a Hearing. Their attitude can affect the attitude of the child. If the staff are friendly and welcoming to the child or young person then they will feel more at ease and less scared, whereas if the staff are rude and grumpy with the child or young person, then they will feel uncomfortable and uneasy.

Were they asked for their SCRA badge?



The MAs found while doing inspections, that 79.9% (20 offices), did not ask them for their SCRA badge before allowing them in to do the inspection. This is worrying as the staff were not allowed to be aware that the MAs were coming, so therefore the staff were just taking our word for it and we could have been anyone.



Confidentiality

Confidentiality in SCRA is really important, therefore we also looked at how secure the offices kept files and information etc.

Every office we visited had the information in the shred it bins secure, this is really important as a lot of information in SCRA is strictly confidential and the shred it bins should be secure at all times.

We also found that 86.4% of the offices didn't have unnecessary files lying around, this is good but this means in 3 offices we did find unnecessary files lying around, all files should be locked away in the offices.

It is also important to have all keys locked away if not in use, we found that 94.7% of the offices had the key safes secure.

Every office we visited had all the passwords and codes locked away so none were visible for us to see.



List of offices inspected

<u>Core</u>	<u>Outreach</u>
Ayr	Falkirk
Dundee	Alloa
Kilmarnock	Barrhead
Hamilton	Arbroath
Greenock	Perth
Livingston	Dunoon
Edinburgh	Irvine
Aberdeen	Selkirk
Dumbarton	Kirkintilloch
Dumfries	Dalkeith
Elgin	Bellshill
Stirling	
Glasgow	
Inverness	
Paisley	
Stornoway	

Phone call list

- Paisley
- Arbroath
- Glenrothes
- Perth
- Dunfermline
- Irvine
- Bellshill
- Hamilton
- Dumfries
- Dumbarton
- Aberdeen
- Edinburgh
- Livingston
- Ayr
- Dundee

All the other offices were contacted by email.



Recommendations

Phone Call:

All staff must give names when answering the phone in particular reception staff

All staff to speak in a friendly and appropriate manner.

Offices:

Water Dispenser in Hearing rooms as well as the reception area

Tables should be an appropriate size for the room - our aim is to have medium sized tables in the Hearing rooms so that the families are not separated too much from the Panel Members.

All waiting rooms should regularly have up to date magazines for young people and family members also waiting to attend a children's Hearing. Toys for younger children should be more age and gender appropriate.

Children's rights information displayed in every waiting and Hearing room.

Reduce number of outreach offices as we feel that the majority of the outreach offices that we inspected have not been suitable for a Children's Hearing and can be very intimidating for any child or young person attending.

All core offices to have colour in reception, waiting rooms and Hearing rooms. This is a follow up from the 2011 recommendations, we feel that not all offices had been painted to a suitable standard.

Reception glass to be optional. We think that the glass can be intimidating for children and young people but can also be a source of protection for staff, whilst travelling round the different SCRA offices and speaking to the staff in reception we discovered that most staff would prefer the glass to be removed or optional window to be put in its place.





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