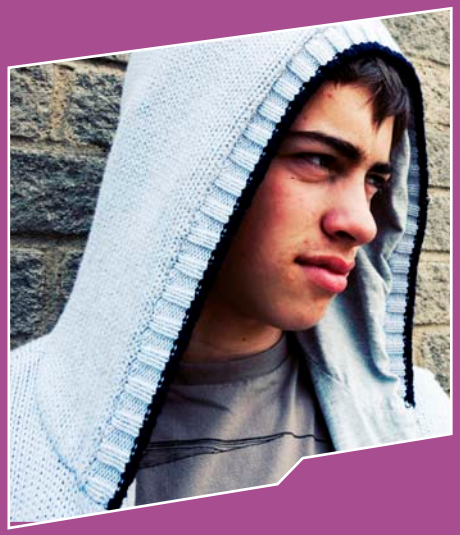
SCRA Mainstreaming and Progress on Equality Outcomes Report March 2015

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION






Changing for children and young people

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1 Foreword from PR/Chief Executive and Board Chair

SCRA's vision is that vulnerable children and young people in Scotland are safe, protected and offered positive futures. We support the Scottish Government's Programme for Government themes:

- Creating More, Better Paid Jobs in a Strong, Sustainable Economy.
- Building a Fairer Scotland and Tackling Inequality.
- Passing Power to People and Communities.

As an employer we aim to continue to provide well-paid jobs for our staff and opportunities for young people to develop their skills. As a service provider, our Reporters support the improvement of the life chances of children and young people who are referred to us.

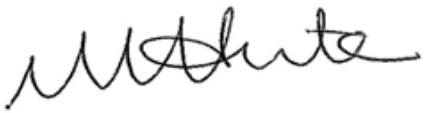
As an official statistics provider with an excellent information and research team, we will:

- use evidence to take forward a range of actions to tackle stereotyping to improve the life chances for children and young people;
- Continue to create/provide robust evidence to allow partners across Scotland to identify the causes of inequalities and address these.

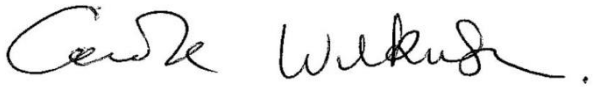
As a public body we are:

- engaging directly with different communities in order to better understand their concerns, priorities and perspectives;
- ensuring that public funds are invested, where appropriate, with a focus on deprivation;
- working with public and private sector partners/suppliers to address inequalities in Scotland;
- mainstreaming equality into all our policies and procedures to ensure we provide excellent customer service.

This report looks at how much we have mainstreamed equality into all aspects of our work and the progress we have made in meeting both our initial and revised equality outcomes. We recognise that we have started the journey - but we still have a long way to go. All equality work is overseen by SCRA's Equalities Network, which reports routinely to the SCRA Board. The Equalities Network is voluntary and draws staff from across the organisation to discuss, develop, design and implement programmes of work – in terms of our Reporter practice, our service delivery and our role as an employer. We hope you find this report encouraging and relevant.



Neil Hunter
(Principal Reporter/Chief Executive)



Carole Wilkinson
(Chair of SCRA Board)

2. Background.

On the 5th April 2011, the Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector equality duty which became law in Scotland. The public sector equality duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under this Act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it;
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This duty is referred to as the general duty.

On 31st March 2012, the Scottish Government introduced The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 which requires SCRA to publish by 30th March 2015:

- A mainstreaming report outlining the progress SCRA has made in achieving the general duty;
- A report on progress made towards achieving equality outcomes published in 2013;
- An annual employee information together with details of the progress made in gathering and using the information to better meet the duty; and
- Updated gender pay gap information.

This duty is referred to as the specific duty.

This report will cover:

- the progress SCRA has made in achieving the general duty;
- how we use employee information to meet our duty;
- progress made towards achieving equality outcomes published in 2013 and 2014.

Employee information is contained in a separate document also published in March 2015.

SCRA's gender pay gap information is contained within SCRA's December 2014 Equal Pay Audit Statement also published in March 2015.

SCRA has ensured since 2013 that key equal opportunities data is published on our website: http://www.scra.gov.uk/children_s_hearings_system/about_scra/equality_and_diversity.cfm and is available when requested in other alternative formats.

3 Mainstreaming Report

Since August 2005 we have been attempting to integrate equality into our day to day working. Our approach includes all of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. The benefits of mainstreaming equality include clearer understanding of issues, earlier consideration of the diversity of needs, better policy making and ultimately improvements in outcomes for people especially children and young people.

This is SCRA's second mainstreaming report and the style has changed following feedback from children and young people (our main customers). The children and young people advised our communication needed to:

- Be more colourful
- Less formal
- Use less jargon
- Be clear about what is being communicated
- Short, snappy and use bullet points
- Pictorial
- Interesting

This report is also based upon advice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and advice from colleagues in the two external equality groups we attend.

This section of the report will focus on delivery of our Equality Outcomes and we have split it into five headings:

1. Practice
2. Engagement
3. Participation
4. Property
5. Employees

Practice

The work SCRA undertakes in relation to the children and young people referred to us is called our Reporter practice. Much of what we need to do as a body is shaped by legislation (Please see our website for more information).

SCRA has gone through a significant period of organisational change since 2013 as can be seen from our published annual reports and business plans. One of the key changes is the introduction and development of our new Case Management System. This system has allowed SCRA to communicate more clearly with our children, young people and families by creating more customised and age appropriate letters in our Case Management System. The system also allows for increased electronic communication with our partners in the Children's Hearings System. We are currently looking at how we can improve the quality and speed of our decision making using our Case Management System to make the right decision for all children and young people.

SCRA is providing our staff with Customer Service Professional Qualifications and bespoke professional training from various organisations such as LGBT Youth and SAMH.

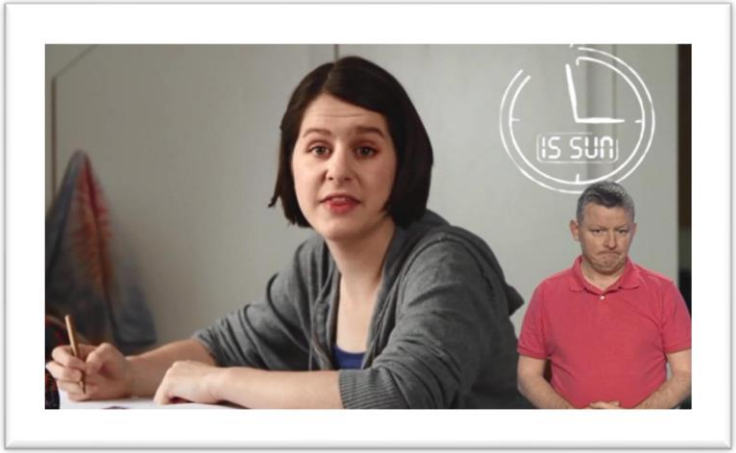
SCRA recognised that we needed better consistency across Scotland in how we support ethnic minority groups and therefore have spent a lot of time looking at our translation and interpretation services. Our translation services were provided by Global Languages from November 2013 to February 2014 and then Global Connects from February 2014. Both contracts have been delivered under public sector frameworks to ensure value for money. The top 10 languages translated and interpreted were:

1. Polish
2. Urdu
3. Lithuanian
4. Russian
5. Punjabi
6. Romanian
7. Mandarin
8. Arabic
9. Slovak
10. German

In the financial year 2013/14, SCRA spent £239,306 on translation and interpretation.

On Monday 2nd March, SCRA joined the public sector wide trial of a British Sign Language support internet based package. This allows members of the BSL community to contact any public body in Scotland to discuss non-emergency issues.
In addition, SCRA's two information films are signed and have subtitles available.

This is a screenshot from our new Going to a Children's Hearing film which is being launched in April 2015.



SCRA's work has a direct impact on children and young people, their families, schools and communities. Our work is challenging and often covers difficult issues which may be high profile. The impact of our work on children and young people, communities and Scotland cannot be easily measured. SCRA and our partners regularly publish information to show the positive short and longer term impacts of the Children's Hearings System on children and young people. Please see our publications section on our website for more information.

In 2014, a number of SCRA's Practice Team (Specialist internal legal advice team) and Locality Managers attended the Scottish Government's Training Sessions on Forced Marriage. This course was created by the Scottish Government in partnership with Scottish Women's Aid, HEMAT Gryffe Women's Aid and Shakti Women's Aid.

Engagement

SCRA has been engaging with both our staff group and the users of our services. The following actions have occurred since March 2013:

2013

April - SCRA published its second national survey of children, young people, parents and carers. The aim of the survey was to get feedback on the service they receive from SCRA and their experiences at Children's Hearings, and was carried out in collaboration with Children's Hearings Scotland.

May - SCRA published Easy Read guidance for parents/carers with learning difficulties.

July – SCRA published The Zone, SCRA's first magazine for young people.

September – SCRA annual staff event was held in Glasgow with young people from Kibble and Who Cares? Scotland in attendance.

October – SCRA published "It's All About Change Report". Our Modern Apprentices (MAs) visited 16 core and 11 Outreach Hearing Centres following on from the Fit For Us report published in 2011. The MAs wanted to see if things had improved since Fit for Us was published. As well as visiting offices/Hearing Centres, the MAs also conducted a telephone survey. The report was written by our MAs.

November – SCRA launched "In Touch" to communicate with staff who are on paid and unpaid leave such as maternity leave, career breaks, long term sickness or external secondments.

December – We launched our third toy drive to ensure the children who come to our Hearings have suitable toys, books and activities.

2014

January – A new Health and Wellbeing group was created to support all staff.

August – SCRA commenced discussions with Stonewall on how to improve LGBT issues in SCRA and the Children's Hearings System.

September – SCRA annual staff event was held in Glasgow with Who Cares? Scotland in attendance and Alexis Jay providing an insight into the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (1997 – 2013). Fairtrade, Healthy Working Lives, Stonewall and UNISON had stalls which staff visited.

Neil Hunter and Carole Wilkinson signed the NoBystanders Pledge along with Boyd McAdam (National Convener/Chief Executive) from Children's Hearings Scotland our partner body in the Children's Hearings System.



October – SCRA published a report called How SCRA communicates with Young People. This followed focus groups with young people to look at our communication materials. The aim of the research was to make sure SCRA materials help to support young people and give them information on the Children's Hearings System. The findings are clear and SCRA has used them to shape future communication proposals.

December – We launched our fourth toy drive to ensure the children who come to our Hearings have suitable toys, books and activities.

2015

February 2015 – SCRA published an information guide to support foster carers who are involved with the Children's Hearings System.

March 2015 – SCRA commenced biennial survey with children, young people and their families attending Hearings. This year we are asking young people and adults about the support we provide at Hearings and the format of our information. We will publish our findings later this year.

2013-2015 - SCRA has been improving our website information on our Hearing centres so that children and families can look at the detailed location on a map and see the outside and inside of the Hearing centre.

Participation

We have been engaging with service users, staff and partners about how we shape our services and future.

Internally:

SCRA has had a formal partnership agreement with UNISON since 2008. UNISON represent all our staff and as a national body speak up for those with protected characteristics drawing upon their national expertise and research.

SCRA has had an active internal Equality and Diversity group since June 2007 which has been engaging with a range of staff and bodies about protected characteristics (Access to Work, LGBT Youth, SAMH, Stonewall). Our current Equalities Network has representatives from front-line offices, the Board, Human Resources, our Property Team and UNISON. Members of the network have tended to have a particular interest in a specific protected characteristic/equality area and we regularly try to widen our membership (open invitation to all staff on our intranet).

SCRA has had a Health and Wellbeing group since 2013 led by our PR/CEO Neil Hunter which prioritised issues of emotional wellbeing, stress and mental health. This is in recognition of the predominance of these issues amongst employees at times of change and upheaval, as well as being areas that are often least talked about, recognised and accepted. The group which includes UNISON representation has aimed to create more visibility and acknowledgement of these issues, to help all talk about them openly and honestly and to create practical supports. Key achievements of this group have been:

- Carrying out a focused Health and Wellbeing Survey in 2014
- Creating an action plan to address issues highlighted by the Health and Wellbeing Survey, Staff Surveys and local teams;
- Developing closer partnerships with Scottish Association for Mental Health and other organisations;
- Undertaking health and wellbeing work which will hopefully result in SCRA obtaining Healthy Working Lives Bronze Award status by summer of 2015.

Externally:

We have also been participating in the Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) Equality Forum since September 2007 and the Justice Equality and Diversity Sub Group since July 2014. Both of these specialist groups enable a transfer of best practice and knowledge across the public sector. In addition, both have been engaged with a wide range of stakeholders such as Changing Faces Scotland, Enable Scotland, Sense Scotland, RNIB, Scottish Disability Equality Forum over the last few years. Speakers in the NDPB Equality Forum over the past two years have covered:

- approaches to engagement/consultation of service users and employees
- general and specific duties
- the challenges and business benefits of mainstreaming
- mainstreaming reports
- equalities reporting and comparators
- gender pay gaps and
- supports available for NDPBs from the Scottish Government.

August 2013 – SCRA signed up to a National Participation Forum with Who Cares? Scotland.

2013-2015 - Since 2013 we have invested in a further three Modern Apprentices (all of whom have been through the Children's Hearings System). All three Modern Apprentices obtained their SVQ level 3 in Business and Administration in December 2014 and as of March 2015, they continued to be employed by SCRA.

Zoie Sneddon, one of our original Modern Apprentices, now a part-time Support Assistant (Information) is also completing a degree at the University of the West of Scotland commented:



"I have learned a lot about working from being a Modern Apprentice and it has helped me decide what I want to do as a career. I have enjoyed getting to know the staff at SCRA and learning how to collate and analyse data, which I have found useful in university. Also in writing research reports and gaining confidence in presenting the findings to different audiences. I have had many achievements while here in SCRA: I achieved my SVQ 2 and 3 and a Higher National Certificate (HNC) qualifications; and in 2012 I received the award for the Scottish Modern Apprentice of the Year (Service Category). I am proud to have been part of improving the Hearings System for children and young people."

Property

All our core properties have induction loops and we make reasonable adjustments where possible to support staff/allow children, young people, families and others with disabilities to physically attend work, Hearings and meetings.

Over the past 10 years, SCRA has rationalised - where possible - our offices to reallocate resources to front-line services supporting children, young people and families. To support some of our investment decisions, our Modern Apprentices (MAs) inspected 23 of our offices in 2011 and made various recommendations. In regards to the physical property they recommended:

- Hearing suites were more colourful;
- Entrances were discrete;
- There were separate entrances for children/young people who did not wish to see their parents;
- There were tables in waiting rooms and all chairs were comfortable;
- The Hearing suite was child/young people friendly – no glass reception counters;
- All rooms were more private and sound-proofed.

SCRA's Board agreed with the recommendations and the Scottish Government also supported the findings and provided SCRA with additional funding to help improve Children's Hearings Centres. Our MAs re-inspected our offices in 2013 and found significant improvements since 2011. Their additional recommendations around physical property were:

- Office sites could be perceived as physically unsafe by children, young people and families due to their location on main roads or across car parks;
- SCRA to consider reducing the number of outreach offices because the majority of the outreach offices inspected were viewed as not suitable for a Children's Hearing. (This item links to Output 2.3 of our revised Equality Outcomes. See Section 4 of this report)

We have, where possible, tried to address the recommendations from both MA reports, however future finances will limit our ability to address all. (SCRA's Budget for 2015/16 will be equality impact assessed and this will be published on our website.) Key achievements since our last equalities report are listed below:

March 2014 – Our Fraserburgh Hearing suite moved from the first floor to the ground floor and now has a new accessible ramp which you can see below.



2014-2015

- Work has been undertaken for the replacement of our Inverness Academy Street Hearing suite/office in 2015/16. The future plans allow for an accessible office and Hearing suite.
- Work has been undertaken for the replacement of our Lerwick Hearing suite/office by March 2015.
- Work has been undertaken for the replacement of our Stornoway Hearing suite/office in 2015/16.

Employees

Developing our staff

Similar to other bodies in the public and private sector, SCRA has used vacancy management and workforce planning to deliver opportunities for the career development of our staff. Unlike some public bodies, our Reporter training schemes have not been limited to certain ages - an approach agreed in partnership with UNISON.

SCRA offers an accredited (by the Scottish Qualification Authority) professional development award. Currently we have 4 Assistant Reporters, 2 Trainee Reporters and 6 Reporters undertaking the programme.

SCRA's workforce planning takes account of The Commission for Developing our Young Workforce 2014 report. We will continue to invest in young people through our Modern Apprenticeship Scheme, our on-going Training and Development

programmes, the provision of unpaid work experience for school students and our links to the Justice, Equality and Diversity Sub Group work on Scotland's Future Workforce.

In addition, SCRA has provided secondment opportunities to the Office of the Children's Convenor, Guernsey for our permanent Reporter staff and since 2013, two staff have benefitted from this.

In October 2014, seven Assistant Reporters successfully completed the Advanced Diploma in Children's Reporter Practice. They passed the two modules of the Diploma which are aimed at Assistant Reporters.

They are pictured at their graduation ceremony with our PR/CEO Neil Hunter.



Flexibility

Over the past two years, many of our staff have been provided with laptops which allows flexibility to be embedded into the organisation. This approach is not just valued by SCRA, but also by our staff.

Similarly, investment in our IT software and systems has allowed staff to work more flexibly across SCRA's properties. SCRA staff can more easily support colleagues in other parts of the country with their workload. Recent examples include staff in a number of Localities across Scotland supporting staff in Ayrshire whose workloads were impacted by sickness (long and short-term) and multiple complex court cases. Staff in Ayrshire initially had some reservations about remote working, but found the model allowed a great deal to be achieved and that it contributed positively to their health and well-being.

The on-going work to ensure connectivity in our Hearing centres allows participation in a digital world and addresses concerns identified by bodies such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Staff can also conduct more meetings by Video Conferencing. This improves our communications internally and with partners, our productivity, helps employees with their work-life balance and assists us as a responsible organisation take steps to cut our carbon foot print.

In February 2015, SCRA was awarded the recently launched Scottish Government's 'Carer Positive Engaged' Kitemark. (The Carer Positive Kitemark is awarded to employers in Scotland who have a working environment where carers are valued and supported. This might be through flexible working policies or with simple practical measures which can make a big difference to carers.)

Angela Mitchell, a Locality Support Manager, highlighted the support she has received while being a carer for her mother:

> "I have been able to compress my hours and work flexibly to enable me to care for my mother and achieve a better work life balance. The change in hours has allowed me to devote more time to my mother, spend more time with my family and has helped improve my health."

Neil Hunter, Principal Reporter/CEO at SCRA commented at the award event:

"It is very important to support our employees in their caring role, being a carer is very demanding. Our staff are our most important resource and we must support them and appreciate the many demands on their time."

Sue McClintock, Policy Officer from Carer's Scotland is pictured presenting Neil Hunter, Carole Wilkinson and Neil Murdoch with our award.



CARER POSITIVE
Employer in Scotland
ENGAGED

4 Equality Outcomes Progress Project

In 2013 we published our initial equality outcomes. These did not meet the expectations of the EHRC and following advice from the EHRC, Stonewall and UNISON we replaced them in October 2014 with clearer revised equality outcomes.

What did we do in relation to these initial outcomes?

OUTCOME 1: PRACTICE

- 99% of service users in SCRA's Children and Families Survey 2012/3 stated they were treated with dignity and respect at their Hearing centre. Our 2014/15 survey is underway and we will publish the results in summer 2015.
- Equality and diversity awareness is still to be delivered as part of the core Reporter training programme. We are working to develop a new bespoke e-learning course. As an interim measure we are offering staff the ability to attend equality and diversity courses run in conjunction with our customer care qualification training process. We also have extensive equality information available on our intranet.

OUTCOME 2: PEOPLE

- As noted above, SCRA has commenced work on equality and diversity training. Managers and all staff have been offered mental health awareness training delivered by SAMH.

- Personal Development Plans completion is not currently recorded as part of the Annual Appraisal process. The 2015 HR and Payroll system software specification has been designed to improve performance management recording and reporting.
- 85% of staff in the 2012 and 2014 Staff Survey either "agreed or did not disagree" that Employees are treated fairly and equally by SCRA irrespective of their background. We are working in partnership with UNISON to unpack why this has not changed since 2012 but know there was unhappiness around the change of our case management IT system in 2012.

OUTCOME 3: POLICIES

We have published a range of Equality Impact Assessments since 2013:

- Central Locality 2014
- Stress Management Policy 2013
- Hearings Management Practice Guidance 2013
- Voluntary Redundancy/Voluntary Early Retirement 2012/13

We will continue to develop and strengthen our approach to Equalities Impact Assessments through the Financial Year 2015/16 through engaging with all mangers in practice and policy development overseen by the Equalities Network.

We have made progress since October 2014 with our revised equality outcomes:

OUTCOME 1: Children and young people feel their needs are better understood by the Children's Reporter.

Update:

By December 2014 we had ensured complaints (resolved) could be quarterly interrogated to establish if there were any protected characteristic issues. We have had no complaints from applicants with protected characteristics since setting up this system.

OUTCOME 2: All children and families are enabled to engage with our services with ease and confidence.

Update:

As noted earlier, we examined low cost equality and diversity e-learning software available to SCRA in September 2014 but ruled it out in terms of applicability for SCRA. (Although excellent, it was not focused enough on the public sector). Work on developing our own new e-learning course commenced in December 2014 and is in progress. The Justice Board approved unconscious bias training for senior management and board members off-line in February 2014.

The Head of Property has ensured that all new outreach Hearing centre properties that SCRA will occupy from January 2015 will take account of the agreed protected characteristics (age, disability, sexual orientation and religion/belief). This will ensure children, young people and families can come to buildings which are better suited for hearings to occur in and do not further add to the emotional pressures which a Hearing can create.

SCRA has mapped customer journeys and our new customer commitments will be rolled out during the financial year 2015/16 and subsequently measured on an regular basis.

OUTCOME 3: We have a workforce where staff are engaged and feel valued.

Update:

Our employee information details in section 4 shows in the last 6 months a:

- 62.5% increase in disability reporting
- 19.2% increase in marriage/partnership reporting
- 4% increase in religion/belief reporting
- 4% increase in sexual orientation reporting

Our aim is now a 10% increase in staff filling in protected characteristic information year on year (up to full 80% completion) as staff see their information is kept anonymous and confidential and creates positive changes for them personally and SCRA as an organisation e.g. the data changes training and development opportunities, provides opportunities to create new staff networks or impacts on strategies through Equality Impact Assessments. We will use Stonewall's "What's it got to do with you?" leaflet to support this change.

Stonewall was represented at SCRA's September 2014 staff event and we completed our first Stonewall workplace equality index questionnaire in 2014. We were ranked 365th out of 397 in our first year which we were advised was a normal start. Our target is a 10% rise so we need to be 328 or above next year. SCRA's Equalities Network in conjunction with our Executive Management Team will create an action plan by 31 May 2015 which will focus on the following areas:

- Training
- Leadership
- Communication
- Network development/access/staff support
- Recruitment/selection/induction

Work on this plan started at SCRA's Partnership Development Day in March 2015.

Much progress has been made by the Justice Equality and Diversity Sub Group:

- Mentoring - following discussions with Scottish Government their mentoring scheme has been made available for criminal justice agencies with a focus on offering development and support for staff who have "protected characteristics" under the Equality Act 2010. SCRA has committed to developing staff and it is hoped this scheme will allow more female and ethnic minority staff to take up senior positions in SCRA and the public sector in future.
- Staff Networks - A general scoping exercise concluded that a uniform and extensive cross agency network would be difficult to realise. Instead key staff network contacts have been collated and SCRA will hopefully benefit from more joint working and communication. We plan to explore with SCRA staff in 2015 if they want staff networks.
- Staff Focus Groups - Police Scotland recently hosted a workshop for justice agencies to demonstrate the ability to use an anonymised IT solution called '10KV' to facilitate better discussions. Police Scotland are offering a follow up meeting to justice agencies to share lessons learnt from designing and delivering staff focus groups. SCRA hopes to use 10kV at future equality focus groups.
- Future Workforce - A future workforce event was held at Tulliallan Police College in September with 32 participating schoolchildren from schools in North Lanarkshire – predominantly female. Each justice organisation provided presentations on career options and the event was filmed to support future teaching materials for the Curriculum for Excellence. SCRA was represented by our Practice Manager, Gill Short at the event.

Similar progress has been made by the NDPB Equality Forum:

- Consideration is now being given to an NDPB wide mentoring scheme for protected characteristic groups, especially females.
- Developing a proposal for common reporting of employee protected characteristic information. SCRA will use this to shape our future HR/payroll system.

OUTCOME 4: We have a workforce which is representative of the Scottish population.

We have reviewed our Equal Pay position and produced a Statement with recommendations.

Work is well under way on our 2015 HR and Payroll system tender specification so we can ensure job applications are submitted on-line using an HR system in early 2016. We will ensure we can adapt future reporting mechanisms to keep up with best practice in the public sector.

5. Next Steps

SCRA's Equalities Network hopes you have found this publication interesting, transparent and thought provoking. We believe we can deliver more improvements over the next few years. SCRA has outlined many strategic outputs in our revised equality outcomes and our Equal Pay Audit Statement but the other actions we plan to look at are:

- Film clips to show how accessible each of our Hearing centres are;
- The creation of regular staff focus groups on equality issues;
- A Stonewall workplace equality index action plan;
- Implementation of the Modern Apprentice property recommendations as our finances allow;
- Ensuring our Equality Impact Assessment forms meet best practice;
- Developing an electronic Preliminary Equality Impact Assessment tool for staff;
- Development a group of charities which represents different protected characteristics and can suggest further improvements to the Equalities Network or comment on draft policies and procedures;
- Continued improvements through our work with the NDPB Equality Forum and the Justice Equality and Diversity Sub Group
- Developing clear equality links with partners in the Hearings System to share best practice and create unified messages.

Do you have suggestions the Equalities Network could consider?

Please e-mail: equalities@scra.gsi.gov.uk or

write to us at:

Equalities Network,

c/o SCRA,

Ochil House,

Springkerse Business Park,

Stirling,

FK7 7XE

6. Equality and Diversity Definitions:

Engagement - is an emotional and conscious state which people can gain.

It can be impacted by the process of consultation, communication, education, public participation, participative democracy or working in partnership.

Mainstreaming is "the systematic integration of an equality perspective … [which] tackles structures, behaviours and attitudes that contribute to or sustain inequality and discrimination" (Scottish Government)

For more information on mainstreaming, please visit: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18507

Participation - the act of taking part

Protected Characteristics - The 9 'Protected Characteristics' of equality as defined by the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex (male or female); and sexual orientation.

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
Ochil House
Springkerse Business Park
Stirling
FK7 7XE

Tel: 0300 200 1555
communications@scra.gsi.gov.uk
www.scra.gov.uk