

A young man with short brown hair and a green t-shirt is looking upwards and to the right. He has a small earring in his left ear. The background is a wall covered in colorful graffiti, including black, blue, yellow, and red tags and shapes.

EQUALITIES OUTCOMES

PROGRESS AND

MAINSTREAMING

Ensuring positive futures for children and young people in Scotland

Equalities Outcomes progress and mainstreaming report

As per the EHRC's guidance, we understand that mainstreaming the equality duty has a number of benefits including:

- equality becomes part of the structures, behaviours and culture of an authority.
- an authority knows and can demonstrate how, in carrying out its functions, it is promoting equality.
- mainstreaming equality contributes to continuous improvement and better performance.

The narrative below sets out how we have sought to bring consideration of equalities and diversity into the heart of the organisation and reflects progress that is not captured in the specific Equality Outcome tables on pp 6-13.

We have sought to bring equalities issues into the heart of SCRA's business primarily through our Equalities Network. This is the main vehicle for monitoring and driving forward work on our Equalities Outcomes. Led by our Chair, Carole Wilkinson, it includes representation from across the organisation, including both Head Office and operational teams. While the statutory duties are an important point of reference, the Network has also set itself a clear mission statement to guide its activities:

"SCRA is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce and throughout our organisation at large. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Our aim is that SCRA embraces, acknowledges and is representative of all sections of society; promoting equality and respect for all so that everyone is able to achieve their potential."

"SCRA is committed to promoting the practice of equality and diversity in all its services, operations and dealings with employees, children, young people and their families and all partner agencies. SCRA aims to ensure that it employs and deploys a workforce that is diverse and equipped with the right mix of skills and experience to deliver a quality service to children."

The Network's focus in 2015/16 has undergone a deliberate shift towards operational and frontline service delivery and our new set of Outcomes reflects this. The intention is to use this focus to make clear that equalities issues are real and relevant to the way our staff do their jobs on a day to day basis.

Each Network meeting has taken a protected characteristic as a theme and examined the impacts on, and issues for, children, young people and families. This has been assisted by seeking out inputs from external organisations which represent the interests of protected characteristic groups, and from SCRA's locality staff. The external contributors were specifically encouraged to identify

issues and challenge our practice, while local staff were asked to bring case studies highlighting issues that they had dealt with or learned from. This has allowed us to access both directly and indirectly the experiences of those with protected characteristics who engage with us. We have also drawn from the extensive body of work that has been undertaken by our Participation Group, from our own research, from discussions with stakeholder groups on Corporate Parenting, and from evidence assembled as part of the Better Hearings work, which seeks to promote a more flexible and individualised service to children. This includes sensitivity towards protected characteristics and encouraging all professionals to consider the child holistically in terms of their whole identity and needs.

In order to help facilitate this process, the Network has met in different locality offices around Scotland, including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling, Dundee, Kilmarnock and Hamilton. A further meeting is planned for Aberdeen and other areas of the country will be considered. The Network scrutinises all aspects of SCRA's work towards our Equalities Outcomes and in particular has oversight of Equality Impact Assessments undertaken in relation to projects, policies or other pieces of work.

Our new set of Equalities Outcomes for 2017-21 is aligned with our Corporate Plan, our Corporate Parenting Plan and our Business Plan in order to ensure that we are building equalities considerations into our day to day business and into our strategic and operational planning. In particular, there is considerable potential for overlap between our Equalities responsibilities and the Corporate Parenting duties enacted by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Our Corporate Parenting Plan will be published alongside our next set of Equalities Outcomes and will include a range of actions and outcomes intended to improve the hearings system experience and outcomes for looked after children. For example, we will be looking at how Reporters and reception staff interact with children and young people ahead of the hearing. Ensuring that these interactions take proper account of protected characteristics will be important.

In addition, Equalities considerations are built into other plans and strategies, for example our Procurement Strategy ensures that we consider equality throughout tender processes and comply fully with legislation. Where relevant and proportionate, suppliers are required to provide details of any equality policies and systems that they have in place and that will be utilised when delivering the contract. This is further addressed in SCRA's standard Terms & Conditions.

Similarly, our Property Strategy sets out how we will deliver on our responsibility to provide suitable accommodation and facilities for Children's Hearings, including considerations around accessibility. We think it is important for hearings centres to meet the needs of children. This is why our more recent renovations and projects have involved children and young people at the design stage. This has allowed them to shape an environment in which they feel comfortable. Young people also told us that they wanted the hearing rooms to be more child friendly. In Glasgow, we piloted a model hearing room based on what they asked for. It is more colourful and less formal and the furniture can be moved around depending on the needs of the child. We evaluated the model

room and we are now rolling it out across the country, with local young people involved in deciding how to shape the base model to their own needs in their own areas.

A major focus from 2016 onwards has been around “Better Hearings”. This is a piece of work shared between SCRA, CHS and Social Work Scotland, which seeks to promote a more individualised, flexible and responsive service. A set of draft standards has been produced with the involvement of practitioners, children and young people. Clearly, part of this more individualised approach will involve careful consideration of any protected characteristics and appropriate responses to the needs they create. In 2015, SCRA’s Policy and Public Affairs Manager was supported to conduct a piece of research on the participation rights of learning disabled children in the hearings system. The results of this research have informed the Better Hearings work, ensuring that equalities considerations are embedded into the standards.

In 2016, we established a Research Ethics Committee to scrutinise requests from researchers to access SCRA’s data. Equalities considerations are an integral part of the matrix that the Committee applies to its decision making and ensures not only that we are protecting the rights and interests of children and families with protected characteristics, but also that we seek where appropriate to support research that tells us more about the experiences of those children and families in the hearings system.

Also, in 2016, all Reporters received mandatory practice training in domestic abuse and coercive control, which was developed and delivered alongside Scottish Women’s Aid. This helps to provide confidence that we are dealing appropriately with domestic abuse referrals and recognising the gendered nature of such abuse in our practice and decision making.

Through the work of our Participation Group we have promoted a range of improvements to how we deliver our service in a way that supports the participation rights of children and young people. Revised communications materials, pilots of new communication tools such as emoji cards, and the encouragement of pre-hearing visits to reduce the anxiety associated with coming to a hearing are just some examples of the work the group has undertaken. In addition, we have begun work on producing an information film aimed at children and families with learning disabilities, and will shortly begin a pilot of Easy Read versions of some of the most important letters we send out notifying families about hearings and their decisions.

We will continue to encourage staff to see equalities as an integral part of their day to day work, for example via our 2017 staff event, which has equalities as one of its major themes and which will provide an opportunity to raise awareness of the Equalities Network and its activity.



SCRA's Board diversity

New regulations require us to publish a gender breakdown of Board membership and the actions we will take to improve Board diversity. We believe it is important for the Board to set an example in terms of the priority it attaches to equalities issues. The fact that the Board Chair, Carole Wilkinson, also chairs SCRA's Equalities Network is an indication of how important the Board considers this subject to be.

Our current Board is made up of eight members, of whom 6 are female and two male. The Board therefore is 75% female, including the Chair. For the next round of recruitment, our Nominations Committee has been working on an enhanced skills matrix which seeks to support us in maintaining a balanced Board through more targeted recruitment. This has been done in consultation with our own HR & Communications team, Scottish Government sponsor team and the public appointments team.

While the regulations are focused on gender balance, SCRA's Board has sought to go beyond the immediate legislative requirement and has worked with the Scottish Government on innovative ways to broaden the applicant pool for our Board positions, including individuals with other protected characteristics. One forthcoming initiative is to offer shadowing experiences for protected characteristic individuals who are interested in becoming board members and we hope to undertake more work in this area.

Equalities Outcomes

We developed our initial set of Equalities Outcomes in 2013. They were subsequently revised based on advice and feedback from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in 2014. We are grateful for the support we received from the EHRC through this process. This first four year period has been a learning experience for us and while we have not fully achieved some of the outcomes we first set ourselves, we have made significant progress in other areas. The leadership role taken by our Equalities Network has allowed us to refocus our outcomes based on clear information and contributions from groups and individuals working with and for those with protected characteristics.

The tables below set out those revised outcomes and our progress in achieving them. They also identify where more work is required and we have sought to capture that activity within our Equalities Outcomes for 2017-21.

Outcome One

Children and Young People feel their needs are better understood by the Children's Reporter

We have developed a simple mechanism to record instances where complaints are related to protected characteristics or otherwise raise equalities issues. SCRA's Equalities Network will continue to review issues raised on a regular basis to ensure that lessons are learned and disseminated where necessary.

In 2016, we published the latest children and families survey. This is how we get feedback on what children, young people and families think of SCRA and the service we provide. The 2016 survey indicated high numbers of adults and young people who felt that they were treated with dignity and respect by SCRA staff which is a positive indication that can be built upon.

Our ability to extract protected characteristic information from our Case Management System is still limited but we have made progress by approaching the matter from a different angle. We will ensure through the multi-agency Better Hearings work and via any case sampling exercises that decision making is sensitive to children's individual needs. We will also improve our data collection through research and work with our partners on the revised Blueprint for processing children's hearings cases. See our 2017-21 set of Equality Outcomes for more detail.

1 Children and Young People feel their needs are better understood by the Children's Reporter				
	Output	Measure	Commentary	Further work
1.1	To develop a formal mechanism to capture complaints relating to protected characteristics.	Complaints (resolved) can be quarterly interrogated to establish if there are any protected characteristic issues.	<p>There is now a separate category for protected characteristic complaints which allows the log to be interrogated and regular reviews conducted.</p> <p>A review via the Equalities Network identified four complaints in the previous year with protected characteristic elements; 2 relating to Transgender issues, 1 relating to BSL interpretation and one relating to disability and reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>In the 2016 Children and Families survey 94% of young people and 98% of adults felt they were treated with dignity and respect by SCRA staff.</p>	<p>Complaints guidance to be revised to make clear the need to capture equalities issues and ensure that the log is being filled in.</p> <p>Complaints training to be revised to include equalities considerations in terms of recording and investigation.</p> <p>Regular figures on protected characteristic complaints to be provided to Equalities Network, which will review and ensure lessons learned are disseminated.</p>
1.2	Look at how protected characteristics are recorded with the Association of Directors of Social Work & Police Scotland.	<p>100% of race data provided by partners to be recorded on new cases.</p> <p>Ability for SCRA's case management system to hold all disability and religion information provided.</p> <p>All information can be easily interrogated.</p>	<p>Challenges remain in terms of receiving, recording and extracting protected characteristic data.</p> <p>Better Hearings and case sampling offer opportunities to ensure that decision making is sensitive to children's needs. More discussion needed on CMS capabilities.</p> <p>Ethnicity, age, gender and disability information has been recorded in our research on Permanence, and on U12s referred for offending.</p>	<p>Blueprint revision and work with Social Work Scotland and Police will take account of need to access equalities information.</p> <p>Further possible case recording and reporting changes will be scoped as part of our move to a new system.</p> <p>A new court form will include protected characteristic information</p> <p>Research will continue to collect and report on protected characteristic information</p>

Outcome two

All children and families are enabled to engage with our services with ease and confidence

We have made significant progress on our physical estate. We maintain 23 staffed offices across Scotland where we hold children's hearings. We also use other buildings (called Outreach centres) from time to time. We own some of these, but others are borrowed from other agencies. We have a Property Strategy, shared with Children's Hearings Scotland, which sets out what people should be able to expect from our hearings centres, particularly in terms of accessibility. Successful development of the Perth and Stornoway hearings centres has involved co-design with local children and young people to ensure those properties meet their needs, while we have continued to roll-out the model hearings suite, which was also co-designed with children and young people.

Equalities training has been developed and will be delivered to all staff on a mandatory basis. We will prioritise staff members who deal directly with members of the public or who are involved in decision making roles, either in relation to referrals or as part of the recruitment process and this will include unconscious bias training.

We are constantly reviewing our communications materials and seeking to improve them or to offer alternative tools or routes to enable children and young people to participate in the hearing. Changes are driven by the views and experiences of children and young people and we want to further develop our materials to better support children with disabilities or whose primary language is not English. In line with this aspiration, we have provided materials for staff to assist in obtaining BSL interpretation for children's hearings. We will further develop this guidance to ensure that translation is provided where needed to enable children and families to participate effectively in their hearings and to ensure fair process.

Our work around Better Hearings and the Digital Strategy has helped us to develop a more sophisticated understanding of children and families' journey through the hearings system, as has the most recent Children and Families survey mentioned above. That information will inform both those workstreams going forward, as well as the content of our Corporate Parenting Plan.

2 All children and families are able to engage with our services with ease and confidence				
	Output		Commentary	Further work
2.1	Examine delivery of equality and diversity training including unconscious bias training	Target of >90% of staff with up to date equalities legislation knowledge. (August 2014 <70%) Appropriate senior management have awareness of unconscious bias.	Mandatory E-learning will begin to be delivered by end March 2017.	Consider unconscious bias training for decision makers (e.g Reporters and those involved in recruitment)
2.2	Develop with Stonewall Scotland and UNISON materials which support LGBT service users.	Materials are recognised as available by staff and an audit of staff in 2015 shows >50% agree they are helpful.	Training has been undertaken with LGBT Scotland but LGBT-specific materials have not yet been developed.	Work towards the LGBT youth charter.
2.3	Develop with CHS, a long term strategy for the provision of Outreach Hearing Centres.	All new outreach hearing centre properties that SCRA will occupy from January 2015 will take account of the agreed protected characteristics Target of 80% of outreach hearing centres meet agreed criteria for children, young people and families.	A review of OHCs has been undertaken and a report provided to the SCRA Board in September 2014. A joint Property Strategy is being developed between SCRA and CHS that sets out our expectations around provision of hearing centres for children, young people and families, including outreach centres.	Continue work on co-design and roll-out of new model hearings suites.
2.4	Relocate both of our Stornoway and Perth hearing centres to replacement fit for purpose facilities.	New properties are accessible to those with mobility issues/disabilities and welcoming to people of all ages. Measured through qualitative feedback to SCRA staff in 1st year of opening.	Stornoway and Perth hearings centres have been relocated to premises that are more accessible to disabled children and families, and that were co-designed with local children and young people.	Ensure that SCRA's website holds information on hearings centres re: accessibility, hearing loops etc. (inc outreach centres) so that service users can have confidence about supports available.

2.5	Look at customer surveys and journeys.	Clear mapping of how key customers engage with us and their experiences. Develop a set of customer service standards with relevant and appropriate performance measures.	Customer Commitment and a Customer Care training programme were developed in 2015. The Children and families survey was undertaken in 2015 and 2016, providing useful information on the experiences of children and families. Work is progressing on the Better Hearings standards in collaboration with Social Work Scotland and CHS. Funding has been obtained for the Digital Strategy, which is based on a "child's journey" map of the system.	SCRA's Corporate Parenting Plan will be published in 2017, setting out further commitments in terms of how we interact with children and young people. Continue to work on Better Hearings.
2.6	Consider amending SCRA's All About Me forms for young people aged 12+ based on feedback in recent focus groups.	It is identified from feedback from the children and families 2015 survey that revised forms are being used for the majority of 12+.	A new look form was designed with young people from Who Cares? Scotland and has been rolled out. Children and Families Survey indicates that more children are completing the form (72% in 2016 compared to 61% in 2013). However, only 28% of young people are doing so (compared to 28% in 2013).	Promote wider access to forms including via digital portals and partner organisations. Consider other routes to gathering young people's views via Better Hearings and Digital Strategy work.
2.7	Ensure all future CMS communications are age appropriate and achieve all reasonable adjustments known to be required for children and families.	Target of 80% of cases sampled in 2018 are age appropriate and achieve all reasonable adjustments known to be required for children and families.	Communications via CMS are designed and written with a view to being understandable for children and young people. Communication forms part of the consideration and work around Better Hearings and Corporate Parenting commitments.	Develop and pilot easy read letters.
2.8	Provide guidance to staff on how to obtain and when to obtain sign language support.	Target of 80% of front-line staff randomly surveyed in 2016 know where to find BSL guidance.	Guidance was approved and issued in December 2015. Practice Direction on Translation and Interpretation was revised in Oct 2016 to take account of developed understanding of BSL user needs.	

Outcome Three –

We have a workforce where staff are engaged and feel valued

Like in many other organisations, obtaining protected characteristic information about staff has been a challenge. Our statistics on gender and age are comprehensive but we still experience relatively low levels of reporting on disability, race, religion and sexual orientation. To some extent this is understandable, this data is sensitive and often regarded as private. We need to find ways of reassuring people that there is a value to providing SCRA with this data and that it will be treated appropriately. Our next set of Outcomes will take this forward through the Health and Wellbeing survey.

We have identified a significant issue in terms of the gender balance at senior levels within the organisation. We have undertaken research in order to explore and identify barriers to female members of staff progressing into leadership positions. The research will lead to a Women into Leadership action plan which will allow our Equalities Network to progress and monitor the recommendations.

Provision of opportunities for staff with protected characteristics access to support networks is progressing via our involvement with the Justice Equality and Diversity sub-group. We will also seek to appoint Equalities Champions who promote protected characteristic and raise the profile of equalities issues within the organisation. Coaching and mentoring opportunities will be provided via implementation of our Workforce Development Strategy.

3	We have a workforce where staff are engaged and feel valued			
3.1	Increase protected characteristic information held about staff through.	All staff review their sensitive data self-service fields and 5% increase in staff filling in fields other than leaving blank.	5% increase in recorded sensitive data	Equalities Ambassadors/Champions will be appointed for each protected characteristic. They will be provided with opportunities for accredited learning, support, recognition etc.
3.2	SCRA is perceived as an LGBT friendly employer.	Target of 10% Points rise in Stonewall Equality Index in 2016 over 2015	A reassessment against the Stonewall index was not carried out, however it will be part of the 2017-21 Outcomes.	SCRA will work towards the LGBT Youth charter and conduct a reassessment against the Stonewall index.
3.3	Positive action to improve occupational integration in the workforce in regards to women in senior	Target of 10% of possible senior female managers engage with PA.	Women into Leadership focus groups and research has identified issues and barriers. An Action Plan has been produced to move the work forward.	Additional discussion around content and implementation of Action Plan will guide further work. Opportunities have been made available to attend national Women

	management.			into Leadership Conferences, and access to all staff has been made available to join the Public Sector Leadership Diploma course.
3.4	Ensure future annual staff surveys can be disaggregated by protected characteristics (but still anonymous).	Target of 100% of future survey can be split according to protected characteristic issues.	Staff Surveys can be disaggregated by protected characteristics. However, rate of completion is still relatively low. Decision taken that seeking protected characteristic data on next staff survey would be counter productive and not provide required information due to reluctance on part of staff members to provide this data. More work needed to reassure and explain the purpose of data collection and better ways required to access information on experiences of staff members with protected characteristics.	<p>Following on from a programme of work designed to inform and reassure staff about the purpose of collecting protected characteristic information, we will seek this information as part of 2017's staff survey. The content of this kind of study is likely to provide more useful information about the experiences and needs of staff.</p> <p>We will ensure that we conduct exit interviews with staff members to help understand the experiences of staff members with protected characteristics.</p> <p>We will work with Justice Board partners to offer our staff access to protected characteristic staff groups in other organisations. This will help them to feel supported and allow issues to be raised.</p> <p>By providing mentoring and coaching opportunities to staff with protected characteristics, we will open up communications routes that will allow issues to be raised and, if necessary, escalated within the organisation.</p>
3.5	Look at mentoring options for senior staff with protected characteristics through our Justice Network colleagues.	Target of uptake of mentoring by at least one member of staff.	Justice Equality and Diversity Group was not able to arrive at a solution allowing cross-organisation access to mentoring opportunities.	Workforce development strategy to include opportunities for staff with protected characteristics to access coaching and mentoring opportunities within SCRA

Outcome four

We have a workforce which is representative of the Scottish population

We recognise that our workforce remains largely female, though the balance changes at more senior levels, and that some segments of society such as disabled people and those from BME backgrounds appear to be under-represented. More work is required here.

4 We have a workforce which is representative of the Scottish population				
4.1	Positive action taken to engage with males and ethnic minority groups	Target of 10% increase in both minority ethnic group and male external applications for generic posts in FY 2016/17.	Workforce remains largely female and we continue to see low levels of applications from BME communities.	More work to target recruitment and encourage applications from BME communities.
4.2	Identify any barriers to progression from those with protected characteristics through local staff groups and national representatives e.g Stonewall and attendance at Justice Sector events	SCRA is able to map out the top 10 issues each protected characteristic group face within SCRA and a plan of how to address these issues.	Women into Leadership report has identified barriers to progression in relation to gender. Justice Equality and Diversity sub-group report on disability considered by Equalities Network.	Progress Women into Leadership action plan. Equalities Network to consider as part of work plan over 2017-21.
4.3	Review Equal Pay Statement and Action Plan	Continuation of 0% equal pay claims in SCRA.	Completed and published in February 2015. No equal pay claims.	Gender Pay Gap Report to be produced and published no later than March 2018.
4.4	Ensure job applications are submitted online using an e-HR system	Target 90% of applications are on-line. More timeous protected characteristic information will be gathered helping with positive action if required.	90 per cent target achieved	SCRA's e-hr system is being developed to enable on-line application submission and management. This will mean that protected characteristic information for all new entrants to SCRA will be recorded. Work to be completed by October 2017.



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