

Participation and Engagement in SCRA

Focused on children and young people most at risk, SCRA's fundamental purpose is to:

- Make effective decisions about a need to refer a child/young person to a Children's Hearing
- Prepare for and participate in court proceedings where Statement of Grounds or Hearings findings are appealed, and ensure the wellbeing of children and young people – particularly vulnerable witnesses – are protected throughout the court process
- Support Panel Members (though we are not involved in making Hearing decisions) and ensure fair process in Hearings
- Enable children, young people and families to participate in Hearings
- Disseminate information and data to influence and inform the wider Children's Services community
- Provide premises for Hearings to take place
- Work collaboratively with partners to support and facilitate the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda

Background

In 2009, SCRA created a Participation Group to make SCRA and the Children's Hearings System more accessible and more responsive to the needs of children, young people and their parents and carers and to create long term, structured solutions to support and enable the participation of children, young people and parents/carers. Since then, significant progress has been made and this briefing sheet provides an update on our participation work.

Areas of participatory practice

In line with our fundamental purposes, our Corporate Parenting responsibilities and Customer Commitment, SCRA is committed to four main areas of participatory practice:

- Modern Apprenticeships and funded temporary work experience placements for young people who have been involved in the Children's Hearings System or who have been looked after and accommodated.
- Improved communication with, and support to, children, young people, parents and carers, including electronic, paper and personalised services.
- Provision of child and young person friendly reception areas and Hearing suites to promote a safe and inclusive environment.
- Ongoing participative work with - and training of - key partners to improve their overall knowledge and understanding of the Children's Hearings System and service delivery.

SCRA's commitment to providing Modern Apprenticeships to young people involved in the Children's Hearings System and/or having been Looked After and Accommodated is successfully into its seventh year. The programme commenced in 2010 and we recruited a third group of young people in 2015 to undertake the Apprenticeship, with an additional two Modern Apprentices being recruited in 2016. In 2015 we also introduced funded temporary work placements in partnership with Local Authorities for care-experienced young people.

This approach is unique to SCRA, and we remain dedicated to providing learning, development and employment opportunities to young people who have been involved in the Hearings System.

The Modern Apprentices complete a work-based SVQ in Business and Administration and at the same time gain valuable work experience in an office environment. In addition to their work placements they provide important contributions to SCRA in terms of improving and influencing practice, policy, communications and facilities for children and young people attending Hearings.

Information materials

SCRA's suite of improved communications material for children and young people can be viewed on our website – www.scra.gov.uk . All of these leaflets, booklets, films and podcasts were designed in consultation with children and young people and can be downloaded from the website.

There are several films to support children, young people, families and people with disabilities attending Children's Hearings. The SCRA films created by us are available in British Sign Language and/or subtitles, and ROKTalk, which enables visitors to our website to hear written text spoken aloud in a life-like voice in six different accents and languages without the need for the visitor to download any software. In addition, it allows the font size to increase and for the colour of the screen to change to suit different visual impairments.

We – in conjunction with Children's Hearings Scotland – also have a website for young people about Corporate Parenting – www.mycorporateparents.co.uk

Working in partnership

In addition, SCRA is focussed on improving other channels of communication including offering Pre-Hearing visits, and working with partners including Children's Hearings Scotland, Social Work Scotland and Education Scotland to promote a rights-based approach to children and young people involved in the Hearings System.

Partnership work has been a focus for SCRA and its importance in terms of improving participatory practice has been very much the emphasis. Regular meetings with key partners take place, including Education, Social Work, Foster Care providers, Children's Rights officers and Children's Hearings Scotland, to improve support and engagement opportunities offered to children and young people involved in the Hearings System.

Ensuring positive futures for children
and young people in Scotland
www.scra.gov.uk
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