Information Pack
Head of Practice and Policy

This pack contains:

- SCRA Vision & Values
- Role and purpose of SCRA
- History of SCRA
- Job Advert
- Job Description
- Person Specification

Supporting information:

SCRA Corporate Plan 2017-20
Corporate Parenting Annual Report

Quick links/more information:

SCRA website
SCRA/CHS Corporate Parenting website
CHS website
SCRA Vision and Values

Our Vision

What we want the world to be like for children and young people of Scotland?

“Our vision is that vulnerable children and young people in Scotland are safe, protected and offered positive futures.”

Our Values

How we will behave as we work towards our vision.

- The voice of the child/young person must be heard.
- Our hopes and dreams for the children and young people 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.
SCRA Role and Purpose

Focused on children and young people most at risk, SCRA’s role and 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, inform and reassure
- Provide premises for Hearings to take place; and to
- Work collaboratively with partners to support and facilitate the Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda
History of the System

Concern over the way society deals with vulnerable children and young people is nothing new. In 1960, a committee was established under Lord Kilbrandon to respond to concerns over youth justice at the time and investigate possible changes to the approach. At that time, children and young people were dealt with by juvenile courts, whether they had committed an alleged offence or were in need of care and protection.

In 1964 the committee reported that there were great similarities in the need for care of all children and young people appearing before the courts, regardless of their reason for being there. This report led to the creation of the Children's Hearings System.

The Children's Hearings System began operating on 15 April 1971, taking over from the courts the responsibility for dealing with children and young people who are in need of care or protection or who have committed alleged offences.

Under the new system, and until the creation of SCRA, there was a separate Reporter’s Department in each of the then 12 Regional and Island councils in Scotland.

Reporter Role, Function and Accountability

In 1992 the Scottish Office published a report – “Reporters to Children’s Panels: Their Role, Function and Accountability” – by Alan Finlayson, a former Reporter in the Lothian region. Among the report’s recommendations were the creation of a national training programme for Reporters and support staff and the development of a Code of Practice for Reporters.

This report, along with the prospect of local government re-organisation, which would turn the 12 larger regional authorities into 32 unitary councils and lead to ever smaller Reporter’s Departments, created a very powerful case for the creation of a national Reporter service. The Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA) was created in 1994 under the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act and became fully operational on 1 April 1996.

Strengthening of the Children’s Hearings System

Since Reporters were brought together to become one national body, there have been a huge number of advantages. Practice improvements such as Practice Guidance for Reporters and the new Reporter Accreditation training have all flowed from the creation of SCRA.

The single Referrals Administration Database (RAD) meant that details of all children referred were put into the same database, as opposed to each council having their own database. It is therefore much easier to have a full record of that child, even if they move between areas.

In addition, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 was very important for the recently formed SCRA, allowing the completion of national training and development of consistent Practice Guidance on the Act for Reporters across the country to follow.

Since then, the Children’s Hearings System has been strengthened further with the implementation on Monday 24 June 2013 of the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. There has also been the introduction of the new body Children’s Hearings Scotland (CHS). After a period of being a shadow body, this formally came into being on Monday 24 June 2013 to coincide with the implementation of the new Act. CHS is now responsible for the recruitment and training of Scotland’s 2,700 Panel Members.
SCRA as a Corporate Parent

On 1 April 2015 we became a proud Corporate Parent.

By law (the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014) Corporate Parents must carry out special responsibilities. We also have a moral duty to provide the best possible support and care we can to the children and young people we are involved with.

SCRA’s Corporate Parenting duties are:

- to be alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and young people.
- to assess the needs of looked after children and young people for services and support they provide.
- to promote the interests of looked after children and young people.
- to provide opportunities for looked after children and young people to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing.
- to take action appropriate to ensure looked after children and young people access these opportunities and make use of our services and support.
- to take any other action considered appropriate to improve organisational functions to meet the needs of looked after children and young people.

To find out more about SCRA as a Corporate Parent, you can read our three year Corporate Parenting Plan. This plan sets out the commitments that SCRA is making to children and young people to improve their individual experiences of the Hearings System.

To support the Corporate Parenting Plan, we have also launched a website aimed at young people. The website – www.mycorporateparents.co.uk – is a joint initiative with Children’s Hearings Scotland. The site provides young people with a more interactive version of our corporate parenting commitments and activities.
Head of Practice and Policy
£59,808 - £66,604
REF: EST914/18

A rarely available opportunity to work at the heart of Scotland’s unique children and young people’s legal system as the Head of Practice and Policy for SCRA. This role offers unrivalled opportunities and challenges, leading out professional practice and standards, public policy and legislative development, generation of ground-breaking, influential research, information governance and victim information services.

You will work as part of a senior team which has overall responsibility for the effective delivery of the statutory role of the Children’s Reporter. You will help SCRA develop and innovate as a proud corporate parent and as a progressive, inclusive public body and employer. You will be able to work comfortably and confidently in the organisational, operational and political spheres and will bring to these a clear understanding of, and insight into the working of and challenges faced by the Children’s Hearings system. You will see these challenges through a clear prism of constructive partnership and positive collaboration with a myriad of partner agencies on which the success of the Hearings system depends. Your ability to work in partnership internally and externally will be one of the key measures of success in this post.

As a national role, location is flexible. However significant regular travel is a feature, mainly across the central belt but from time to time across other parts of Scotland.

Closing date: Friday 8 March 2019
Interviews will be held w/c 1 April 2019
JOB DESCRIPTION

1. **JOB TITLE**
   Head of Practice and Policy

2. **JOB PURPOSE**

   To lead, direct and develop practice and policy across SCRA and ensure these support organisations objectives, statutory functions and the effectiveness of our frontline services to achieve the best interventions and outcomes to children and families.

   To facilitate and nurture best practice across the service; actively encourage and promote the contribution to practice and policy and information governance from all staff; and maximise efficiency and effectiveness through integration and inclusion. Contribute to the leadership of the effective delivery of SCRA’s broader legal duties, including that of a corporate parenting and equalities.

   Promote the work of SCRA with external agencies in particular SG influencing the legislative and policy environment through sound research, promoting of the organisation, visible and engaged with those policy and decision-makers at the most strategic level.

3. **ORGANISATIONAL POSITION**

   **Immediate Line Manager:** Principal Reporter/Chief Executive

   **Peers:** Executive Management Team

   **Management Responsibilities:**
   - Practice Manager
   - Information and Research Manager
   - Policy and Public Affairs Manager
   - Accreditation Manager
   - Operational Development Manager

4. **DIMENSIONS**

   Direction, advice and guidance to all staff on practice and policy
   Engagement with partner agencies, at a national level
   Lead on national practice and policy
   Influence Scottish Government on development of legislation

5. **PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES**

   - Provide leadership and direction on practice and policy in support of the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive, Senior Operational Managers and Heads of Service and undertake any Principal Reporter delegated responsibilities as required.
   - Contribute as a member of the senior management team, to the development of corporate strategy and policy.
• Develop and ensure the implementation of an effective practice management framework through written guidance, documentation, tools, practical assistance, and through active engagement with the wider service.

• Act as SCRA’s Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) ensuring effectiveness of information risk management across the organisation ensuring appropriate strategies and interventions maintain the safety and privacy of personal and sensitive information.

• Overview SCRA’s service to victims of youth crime through the operation of the Victim Information Service.

• Work closely with the Scottish Government on influencing and development of legislation and policy.

• Ensure SCRA influences and informs the national policy agenda for children and families in areas such as youth justice, child protection, family and criminal law and the continuous improvement of the children’s hearing environment.

• Provide expert guidance and advice to SCRA on its strategic policy framework and statutory responsibilities, ensuring the principles of Equalities and ECHR are an integral part of policy and decision-making.

• Lead in co-ordinating SCRA responses to national consultation exercises, SCRA’s evidence to Parliamentary Committees and contributions to answers for Parliamentary Questions.

• Work in partnership with the Practice Team and Head of Human Resources to ensure the workforce has the skills and competencies to deliver the service demanded.

• Lead and develop, as part of the senior management team, the vision, direction and standards of frontline services.

• Direct the operation of the Professional Development Award to provide best quality training especially for new Reporters/Assistant Reporters, acting as the Head of SQA accredited centre.

• Lead and ensure research produced by SCRA is influential and informs development of national policy.

• Support organisational compliance with legal requirements, organisational priorities and strategy and evidence based practice to ensure effective and consistent operation and best performance by SCRA and its staff.

• Develop, ensure implementation of and monitor a scheme of delegation that provides an appropriate framework for the professional decision-making and accountabilities of Reporters.

• Provide leadership in the provision of advice, guidance and practical assistance on difficult and sensitive cases, appeals to the Sheriff Appeals Court and Court of Session to ensure the proper, effective and efficient handling of these cases.

• Represent SCRA and the Children’s Hearings System at the highest level to engage the understanding and support of the public, partners and all relevant interests. In particular engage with CHIP and the Youth Justice Improvement Board, manage effective national level liaison arrangements with COPFS/SLAB/Social Work Scotland/Police Scotland and other relevant partners.

• Develop and promote SCRA’s strategy for effective working relations with other agencies and services at all levels, to promote effective prevention and intervention services for children.

• Work with CHS in particular through the hearings management group to ensure effective dialogue in the management of the children’s hearings environment.
6. QUALIFICATIONS, TRAINING, EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Degree in social work, law, education or other relevant discipline
- Demonstrable management experience in a relevant organisation
- Depth of understanding of the role of the Reporter and working experience and clear insight of the children's hearings environment
- Detailed knowledge of relevant legal framework, roles and responsibilities of statutory partners that provide the basis of the Children's Hearing System
- Contemporary knowledge of legislation, case law, published text/research
- A clear understanding children and young people's needs in Scotland, child development and agency roles, practice and resources that exist to support and respond to need
- Sound knowledge of the operating environment of the Children's Hearing System and the issues and challenges impacting upon the system
- Demonstrable skills in the management of complex tasks and conflicting priorities
- Sensitivity and ability to handle difficult or challenging situations, with excellent interpersonal skills
- Excellent communication and people management skills
- Understanding and experience of information governance challenges, including current data protection and privacy legislation
- High level of digital skills including core day to day programmes and systems
- Ability to think strategically
- Effective problem solver
- Leadership and decision-making skills
- Ability to translate corporate strategy and policies into operational activity
- Planning and analytical skills
- Self-motivated and able to work to a high level of autonomy, with self-direction and prioritisation and commitment to developing the hearing system in line with SCRA and national policy.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

Internal: The Board, Principal Reporter/Chief Executive, EMT and the wider workforce.


8. PRINCIPAL CHALLENGE

Ensure that technically and culturally the organisation is supported to maintain a high standard of practice across the service, and that practice, policy and research support and reflect the needs of children, young people and their families.
## Person Specification

**Post Title: Head of Practice & Policy**

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<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>MEANS OF ASSESSMENT</th>
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<td>Application</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education, Qualifications and Training</strong></td>
<td>Essential: Degree in social work, law, education or other relevant discipline</td>
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<td>Desirable: Strong evidence of continuing professional development</td>
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<td>Desirable: Management qualification e.g. MBA</td>
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<td><strong>Experience</strong></td>
<td>Essential: Demonstrable management experience in a relevant organisation</td>
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<td>Leading, managing and motivating a team</td>
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<td>Aptitude for Policy development, implementation and review</td>
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<td>Partnership working</td>
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<td>Proven case practice and court expertise</td>
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<td>Desirable: Experience in policy development, implementation and review</td>
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<td>Desirable: Management experience in a relevant organization, preferably at a senior level</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Skills, Knowledge and Aptitudes</strong></td>
<td>Essential: Depth of understanding of the role of the Reporter and working experience and clear insight of the children’s hearings environment</td>
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<td>Detailed knowledge of relevant legal framework, roles and responsibilities of statutory partners that provide the basis of the Children’s Hearings System</td>
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<td>A clear understanding of children and young people’s needs in Scotland, child development and agency roles, practice and resources that exist to support and respond to need</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Leadership and management skills including influencing and negotiation</td>
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<td>Passion for improved performance</td>
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<td>Contemporary knowledge of legislation, case law, published text/research.</td>
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<td>Innovative, with ability to develop policy and enhance service provision in line with corporate and operational plans</td>
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<td>Application Reference Interview</td>
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<td>High level of digital skills including core day to day programmes and systems</td>
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<td>Sensitivity and ability to handle difficult or challenging situations, with excellent interpersonal skills</td>
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<td>Effective problem solver</td>
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<td>Planning and analytical skills</td>
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<td>Personal Attributes</td>
<td>Essential Positive role model, enthusiastic and proactive approach supporting service provision and the values and ethos of SCRA</td>
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<td>Self-motivated and able to work to a high level of autonomy, with self-direction and prioritization and commitment to developing the hearings system in line with SCRA and national policy</td>
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<td>Professional, calm and confident manner</td>
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<td>Persuasive</td>
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<td>Deals with others with respect and sensitivity</td>
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<td>Desirable</td>
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<td>Special Requirements</td>
<td>Essential Flexible with regard to working hours</td>
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<td>Health record appropriate for requirements of the post</td>
<td>medical questionnaire assessed by independent occupational health service</td>
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<td>Desirable Full driving licence with access to a vehicle</td>
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