

Keeping people safe

Threats to public safety and wellbeing are resolved by a proactive and responsive police service

We will:

- Keep people safe in the physical and digital world
- Design services jointly to tackle complex public safety and wellbeing challenges
- Support policing through proactive prevention

Q. Do these objectives meet your expectations?

AGREE

Comments

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. We think it might be helpful to provide some context to the work that we do, before commenting specifically on the strategy.

The Children's Hearings System is Scotland's distinct statutory system, in which concerns about a child's circumstances (whether about the care or treatment of the child by adults or the behaviour of the child) are considered by Children's Reporters and then by panel members in a Children's Hearing, who make a decision about whether there needs to be compulsory professional involvement with the child and family.

In the Children's Hearings System:

- the needs of children or young people are addressed through one holistic and integrated system which considers all the circumstances of the child and the child's welfare
- the welfare of the child remains at the centre of all decision making and the child's best interests are paramount throughout
- the child's engagement and participation is crucial to good decision making
- the rights of children and families are respected

The role and purpose of SCRA is to:

1. Make effective decisions about a need to refer a child/young person to a Children's Hearing





2. 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
3. Support Panel Members (though we are not involved in making Hearing decisions) and ensure fair process in Hearings
4. Support children, young people and families to participate in Hearings
5. Disseminate information and data to influence, inform and reassure
6. Provide premises for Hearings to take place
7. Work collaboratively with partners to support and facilitate the Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda

SCRA's vision of service is that: We operate within Scotland's Children's Hearings System to protect and support the country's most vulnerable and at risk children and young people identified as requiring the full protection of the law due to difficulties, challenges and risks they face.

SCRA's work is in response to the referrals we receive about children and young people who may be in need of compulsory measures of supervision. However, we are in complete support of proactive and preventative measures to provide supports to children and their families which can mitigate any need for the consideration of compulsory state intervention in their lives. We are clear that such proactive and preventative measures need to be proportionate, legitimate and rooted in upholding the human rights of all of us.

SCRA are in full agreement with the focus on keeping people safe. We are pleased that the strategy encompasses public safety and individual wellbeing at the same time. As a public body we share the challenges that are coming from the developing online world and we agree that going forward joint service development and responsibility will be required. We would be pleased to work in partnership with Police Scotland and other public bodies to improve the wellbeing of children and their families and to ensure that our most vulnerable children and families are kept safe and can thrive.





Cybercrime is when technology is used as a tool to commit a crime or is the object of the crime itself. In addition to tackling traditional and visible crime and criminality, we must find different ways to prevent, disrupt and respond to the ever more inventive and complex use of digital tools and new tactics.

Work is under way that will transform Police Scotland’s capacity and capability to respond to these digital and cyber threats.

Comments

All public bodies whose work is focussed on safety and wellbeing face challenges as a result of continued and sustained technological innovation. Those challenges are multi-faceted, dynamic and shifting; for example, children of different ages use different social media platforms in different ways – and these may not be platforms that are familiar to the adults working with them. Keeping children safe online is difficult for families and professionals alike and for those intent on causing harm technology offers many new opportunities to do that. Families, the people around the child and professionals may not have the skills, technical ability or expertise to either assess risk effectively or to respond to that risk appropriately. Scotland needs to make a real investment in the skills base of our workforce, in order to provide an effective and meaningful response to the many online and technologically facilitated harms that children and their families face.

Communities are at the heart of policing

The needs of local communities are addressed through effective service delivery

We will:

- Understand our communities and deliver the right mix of services to meet their needs
- Support our communities through a blend of local and national expertise
- Support the changing nature of communities

Q. Do these objectives meet your expectations?

STRONGLY AGREE

Comments

The Children’s Hearings System has always made decisions within local communities, where members of the children’s panel are recruited locally, so that they are well placed to understand the circumstances of the children and families who come to the Hearing. There was some inherent risk of moving away from a community focus in the creation of a national policing organisation and SCRA are pleased that the value of community work and the differing





needs across communities in Scotland is being fully recognised. SCRA will be happy to work in partnership with Police Scotland, at a local as well as a national level, in order to meet the needs of communities.

How we involve you

The public, communities and partners are engaged, involved and have confidence in policing

We will:

- Embed the ethical and privacy considerations that are integral to policing and protection into every aspect of the service
- Protect the public and promote wellbeing across Scotland by providing services that are relevant, accessible and effective
- Work with local groups and public, third and private sector organisations to support our communities

Q. Do these objectives meet your expectations?

STRONGLY AGREE

Comments

SCRA welcomes the opportunity to be involved in further discussions about where responsibilities should lie across the public and third sector. Ethical, privacy and human rights considerations are crucial to our child protection and youth justice work, but information sharing is crucial to that work as well. In the recent past privacy and consent issues have affected the flow of information between Police Scotland and public and third sector bodies who rely on that information. This has a direct impact on the services that can be offered to support people on the ground.

Ongoing partnership work has to focus on clarifying the approaches we can take and consistently applying these approaches across all areas of the country. There is a risk that development or improvement in one area could lead to compromise somewhere else. For example, the recent development of the 'child protection flag' in the Police Scotland vulnerable person database (VPD) means that attending officers can now see quickly if there are child protection concerns when they are attending a residential address. However, if those child protection concerns have escalated and there is a need for compulsory supervision of the child then it may be that child protection measures have ceased. This escalation in concern and intervention will not be captured by the VPD flag and may be missed as a result.





Supporting our people

Our people are supported through a positive working environment, enabling them to serve the public

We will:

- Prioritise wellbeing and keep our people safe, well equipped and protected
- Support our people to be confident leaders, innovative, active contributors and influencers
- Support our people to identify with and demonstrate Police Scotland values and have a strong sense of belonging

Q. Do these objectives meet your expectations?

STRONGLY AGREE

Comments

This workforce model is positive and one which other public bodies may seek to emulate. SCRA agrees that the increased incidents of direct harm to Police Scotland staff is unacceptable and that keeping staff safe and resilient is the first step to enabling Police Scotland to keep the rest of the community safe. We fully support the focus on equipping the entire staff group appropriately to meet the multi-faceted demands placed on them.

Sustainable policing for the future

Police Scotland is sustainable, adaptable and prepared for future challenges.

We will:

- Use innovative approaches to accelerate our capacity and capability for effective service delivery
- Commit to making a positive impact through outstanding environmental sustainability
- Support operational policing through the appropriate digital tools and delivery of best value

Q. Do these objectives meet your expectations?

STRONGLY AGREE

Comments

All public service delivery moving forward through the new decade will need to innovate, find ways to increase capacity, use technology effectively and find a way to meet environmental expectations and achieve a net zero carbon footprint. These considerations have not necessarily been at the forefront of our thinking and we may not have the skills or experience to be able to plan such transformational service developments. It may be an area where partnership working will be entirely beneficial.

Police Scotland should be commended for setting such a challenging and future proof strategic priority.

SCRA Practice & Policy Team, 2020

