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# Scottish Children's Reporter Administration Corporate Plan 2020-2023

Care  
Connect  
Protect



# Our Strategic Aims 2020-2023



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**A very warm welcome to our  
Corporate Plan 2020 - 2023, a  
plan that will take us through  
the next three years with  
compassion, ambition and a  
long standing commitment to  
Getting It Right For Every Child.**

## Welcome

The Children's Hearings System provides a place for children and young people at risk to be referred for protection, to ensure their rights are respected and to secure the support required to realise a safe and positive future.

It is an exciting and unprecedented time for the Hearings System – a point of evidence based and experience led change – for everyone experiencing it, campaigning for it and working in it.

We are privileged to work with and hear from children and young people with experience of Hearings and the broader system to look at what needs to change to make things feel better, and we will continue with this work until we get it right.

The Independent Care Review offered the opportunity to reflect on the founding principles of the Hearings System, the work that we do and our approach to its delivery. Fundamentally the principles that were set over 40 years ago are still as right and relevant today, however opportunity now exists for us to reconsider how we continue to apply these.

The strength of vision and clarity of conclusions from the Independent Review of Care support us to continue our drive for improvement to make the Children's Hearings System the best that it can be – rights respecting, participative and supportive.

Working effectively with our partners in the Hearings System will be crucial to successful improvement and sustainable change, so that the future of the Children's Hearings System is embedded with an approach that is compassionate, responsive, progressive and trauma sensitive.

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It is in this context that we take forward our plans to ensure ongoing support and protection for Scotland’s children and young people.

Here we provide our ambitious strategy for the next three years, how we will deliver this and the impact it aims to achieve. Our strategy will transform the operation of the Children’s Hearings System, both how it is experienced by children, young people and their families, and how we interface with our partner agencies in our collective ambition as Corporate Parents.

**Our three year strategy will be driven by our strategic aims: Care, Connect and Protect**

Some of the major changes that we aim to deliver include:

- A bespoke Hearings facility, where the needs and preferences of each child or young person are identified and accommodated before, during and after the Hearing.
- Digital Tools - offering children and young people more options for their attendance and participation with the use of technology and by digital means and providing a valuable facility for vulnerable witnesses.
- A multi-faceted participation model, offering a range of mechanisms to enable fuller and more effective participation by children and young people, before, during and after their Hearing.
- The work of Better Hearings being mainstreamed by all partners into their everyday practice.
- A trauma sensitive service visible in our workforce, our practice, our engagement with others and in our organisational outlook.



**Principal Reporter**  
**Neil Hunter**



**Board Chair**  
**Michelle Miller**

# Our Vision

Children and young people will be listened to, protected and supported to have a positive future where they are safe, valued and respected.

# Our Mission

We protect and support Scotland’s children and young people, by making high quality decisions, upholding their rights and working collaboratively as compassionate, inclusive Corporate Parents to enable the most positive and personalised experience of the Children’s Hearings System.

# Our Values

Our values are the shared motivations, beliefs and behaviours that underpin all that we do.

<b>Supportive</b>	We work with kindness to support children, young people and families, our partners and each other
<b>Child Centred</b>	Children and young people are at the heart of everything we do
<b>Respectful</b>	Everyone is respected and treated fairly, inclusively and lawfully
<b>Accountable</b>	We are responsible for our decisions, our ethics and our learning



# Our Behaviours

## Supportive

- We are trauma sensitive in the way that we work with children, young people, families and each other
- We are kind to ourselves, demonstrate value for each other and are supportive of all staff's health and wellbeing
- We support children, young people and their families to know their rights and to participate fully

## Child Centred

- We are caring Corporate Parents in our decision making, our interactions and in the facilities we provide
- We are guided by the experience of children and young people
- We focus on the needs and welfare of each child and young person

## Respectful

- We are friendly, approachable and open, treat everyone as an individual, and are inclusive and supportive
- We are rights driven to ensure everyone is respected equally and treated fairly and lawfully
- Our diversity and inclusiveness strengthen us as a team and support us to better understand the people we work with
- We listen, value and learn from the experience of others and work together to make things better

## Accountable

- We recognise our social and environmental responsibility and undertake our work in an ethical and sustainable way
- We are a learning organisation that continually drives improvement
- The decisions that we make are grounded in law, rights and strong ethics





# About Us

The Children's Reporter sits at the heart of the Children's Hearings System, providing continuity as the single point of referral for all agencies with concerns about a child or young person who may be at risk of harm (from others, to themselves, or to others).

Children's Reporters routinely deal with and make critical decisions on the lives of children and young people facing adversity and trauma such as physical and emotional neglect, domestic abuse, parental substance use, mental health concerns and physical and sexual abuse. To find out more click [here](#).

## Our core role centres on:

- Receiving referrals for children and young people who may be in need of protection, guidance, treatment or control.
- Ensuring that other public agencies carry out enquiries and assessments into children and young people's circumstances so we can make informed decisions about the children and young people referred to us.
- Making decisions on whether to refer a child or young person to a Children's Hearing if they need compulsory measures of supervision.
- Drafting the Statement of Grounds for the Hearing.
- Arranging for Hearings to take place when we consider that it is necessary for a compulsory supervision order to be made and where there is sufficient evidence to prove the grounds, ensuring fair process takes place within the Hearing, including the rights of those in attendance being met.
- Establishing grounds of referral in court, where these are contested, and in defending decisions of Children's Hearings which are subject to appeal.



# Our Broader Role

SCRA actively promotes partnership and collaboration, encapsulating the aims, vision and values of the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP). SCRA is a key partner in this group and chairs one of its three work streams.

We have influenced change and driven improvement over time – internally, as well as in the broader landscape of the Children's Hearings System and Scotland's legal system through innovative research and sharing information and data. Working with our partners and with children and young people, we are doing all we can to promote better experiences for everyone in contact with the Hearings System.

We aim to be recognised for leading and innovating, for contributing significantly to child protection, and for helping to shape and influence Scotland's dialogue on child protection and the rights of children and young people.

We actively engage with the Scottish Government and others on development of policy and/or legislation in key areas, and link with independent review bodies. We have very much welcomed and worked alongside the Independent Care Review, and will work with others to deliver on its recommendations.

With the commitment by the Scottish Government to fully embed the UNCRC within Scots Law, we will ensure the work that we do is underpinned by this approach. We are well placed to do so.





# Our Strategic Environment

The context in which we operate is constantly changing and, at any point in time, our strategy has to be built around these changes. This involves working to shape our strategic environment wherever possible, anticipating legislative and policy changes, identifying when and how they will impact on our activity and planning how to manage these factors.

Many such changes require us to adjust elements of our professional practice, planning and training to enable consistent implementation of new procedures nationally. The unpredictability of some elements of change requires that we operate with flexibility and agility, adjusting priorities when needed without losing sight of our wider objectives.

We actively scan our strategic environment, monitoring developments and planning our approaches accordingly. Issues that we anticipate will impact significantly on our activity during the lifetime of this Corporate Plan are below, with more detail about these and their impact at Appendix 1:

- **United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child**
- **Research on very young children in Residential Care**
- **Independent Care Review**
- **Age of Criminal Responsibility**
- **Research on Child Sexual Exploitation**
- **Making Scotland the Best Place to Grow Up**
- **Victim Support**
- **Advocacy**
- **Children (Scotland) Bill**
- **Cases involving young people aged 16-17**
- **Siblings**
- **Disclosure Bill**
- **Equal Protection Bill**
- **Climate Change**



# Engagement with children and young people

Effective and meaningful engagement with the children and young people who are in contact with the Children’s Hearings System is absolutely essential in ensuring that we continue to improve, adapt and shape the way that we work to make it the best it can be for the people who experience it.

Working towards a system where we can make Hearings and the experience of them as personalised as possible, is one of our key objectives over the next three years and we will be working with young people to help guide us. We know a lot of the issues and the barriers and are excited to be working towards the solutions. Children and young people need options, choices and support to enable them to take more control of their experience. It will be through our work with young people that we start to put in place what these choices and supports look like in action.

We have been working closely with Our Hearings, Our Voice (an independent Board made up of young people with experience of Hearings and who are passionate about improvement) as they have been setting their priorities for the improvement that they would like to see across the system. Through our Corporate Parenting Plan, we will respond to the direction that they set. We have also put forward a number of proposals to Our Hearings, Our Voice to work with us on areas that we have identified for improvement.

We are now in our 10th year of employing care experienced modern apprentices to work with us to gain skills, experience and qualifications. Alongside their ‘day job’, the modern apprentices have been working with us to reflect on the way that we work – everything from the language that we use, to the way our Hearing rooms look. They have offered a great deal of insight, constructive challenge and suggestions. We have also made links with



other organisations employing young people to undertake some joint assessments with them.

We have also been working very closely with local groups of young people across Scotland to consider what ‘Better Hearings’ would look like in their local centre from the information that they get, to the way they are welcomed, to the way that the rooms are set out – and what could be done to make it ‘feel’ better.

Young people have helped us to develop our plans and are working alongside us to ensure that we are sticking to them! As Corporate Parents we are very keen to support local groups/Champions Boards in their work as well as ask for their support in ours’. This has led to some serious planning, serious learning (for us) and a serious amount of fun.

Over the course of this plan we hope to deliver to children and young people a Children’s Hearings System that feels designed for them – with options around how, where, when they attend their Hearings, how they choose to participate and what support they need to do that. We would like children and young people to feel supported to take more control of how their Hearing is run. This will take partners and agencies to work effectively together through the lens of Better Hearings to make it happen.

# Care Review

SCRA was honoured to be part of the Care Review journey and were are pleased to see our contribution reflected in the findings.

We welcome the focus in the recommendations on the Children’s Hearings System, reaffirming the principles that we work to and fully recognise the trajectory for change and improvement.

We are passionate that children’s rights are at the heart of the Hearings System and we want to do everything we can to ensure these rights are upheld and that children and young people can participate fully in their Children’s Hearings.

It is critical that the children and young people who contributed to the review have a key role to play in the development of the Children’s Hearings System, helping and guiding us to ensure we provide holistic and transparent services. By working together, we can plan, deliver and keep The Promise!

Our Corporate Plan reflects many of the Care Review recommendations, and we are committed to working with our partners in exploring, coordinating and implementing the direction that we have now been set in everything we do from planning through to our behaviours, culture, conduct and values to ensure we do Get it Right for Every Child.

Key areas of alignment across the plan and the recommendations are around – digital enablement, trauma informed practice, participation and inclusion, and fundamentally kindness and compassion.



# Our Key Achievements

As an organisation we have influenced change and driven improvement over time, internally as well as in the broader landscape of the Children's Hearings System and Scotland's legal system.

## Our key achievements in recent years include:

- Leading the implementation and embedding of the multi-agency Better Hearings standards.
- Contributing national data and research findings to enable meaningful and informed debate on key areas of:
  - children's right/needs, including changes to the age of criminal responsibility
  - child sexual exploitation
  - home supervision
  - sibling relationships
- Placing our role as Corporate Parents at the heart of how we plan and deliver services and we were recognised for our 'Promising Practice' by Who Cares? Scotland.
- Actively participating in the multi-agency Children's Improvement Partnership, and playing the lead role in several key areas of improvement implemented nationwide.
- Working with local young people to completely re-design and refurbish 23 Hearing rooms.
- Led the multi-agency group to develop an independent Board of Young People for the Hearings System, secured funding from Scottish Government and are now the host agency for Our Hearings, Our Voice.
- Gained accreditation to the LGBT Youth Charter.
- Working closely with the Independent Care Review through the Justice and Care, and Economic Impact groups to reflect, review and explore the Care System in Scotland we feel well placed to support and respond to its final recommendations.

# Our Aims

## Our three Strategic Aims for 2020-2023 are to **Care**, **Connect** and **Protect**



# Care



**Delivering a service that feels right for each child, young person and family that experiences it.**

# Connect



**Working together to receive the right referrals, for the right children, at the right time.**

# Protect



**Making high quality and timely decisions for children and young people, using the right information that is relevant, clear and secure.**

# Strategic Aim 1 - Care



**We Care by: delivering a service that feels right for each child, young person and family that experiences it.**

We are absolutely committed to deliver our service in a way that demonstrates care and kindness to children, young people and families, to each other and our environment.

To meet this aim:

- We will demonstrate compassionate and proactive Corporate Parenting - asking, listening and acting, being open to try new approaches.
- Our service will be informed by experience – working with children and young people in Our Hearings, Our Voice, Local Champions Boards and others, we will welcome challenge, evaluation and partnerships to get it right.
- Our service will be trauma sensitive - recognising the impact of a ‘system’ on already traumatic circumstances and ensuring that it is the best and kindest it can be.
- Our service will be equally accessible to all, including people with protected characteristics to ensure it meets everyone’s individual needs and rights.
- Our staff will feel skilled, confident, valued and respected to enable them to work compassionately and with high quality.
- Our service will be digitally enabled to allow children and young people to engage with it in ways that suit their needs.

## Strategic Aim 2 - Connect



**We Connect by: Working together to receive the right referrals, for the right children, at the right time.**

**We recognise the importance of relationships in all that we do, our approach to what we do will focus on our connections - to children, young people and their families, our staff, our partners, the community, and the environment.**

To meet this aim:

- We will work effectively with our partners; to agreed protocols, shared goals and common standards to ensure we meet the needs of children and young people.
- Through local partnerships and our connections with local children and young people, we will ensure that we are all working together to deliver and assess 'Better Hearings'.
- We will be connected to the local community through local events, and we will work with practitioners, children and young people to make a meaningful contribution to local initiatives.
- Our organisation is kind and connected to the world we live in – from the way that we work and travel, to the culture we promote.
- Our organisation is fully inclusive as employers, as partners, as a service to children, young people and families.
- We will recognise, promote and support the rights of individuals as they connect with the Hearings System and will work with others to do the same.
- We will have digital connectivity with partners to allow automated and secure sharing of information.

## Strategic Aim 3 - Protect



**We Protect by: Making high quality and timely decisions for children and young people, using the right information that is relevant, clear and secure.**

**The protection of each child's safety and welfare is the core of what we do. It is important to us that the organisation is well promoted and understood in the wider community to ensure that everyone is able to identify the role that they play in keeping children and young people safe as well as working with us to shape and deliver an effective service.**

**The decisions that we make are fundamental in ensuring the protective path is taken for children and young people and this takes highly skilled, dedicated and supported staff.**

To meet this aim:

- Our organisation will be visible in the community, in schools and in health services with our key role in the delivery of GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) clear and understood.
- Our organisation will be flexible, resilient, and responsive to allow us to act effectively and timeously to change.

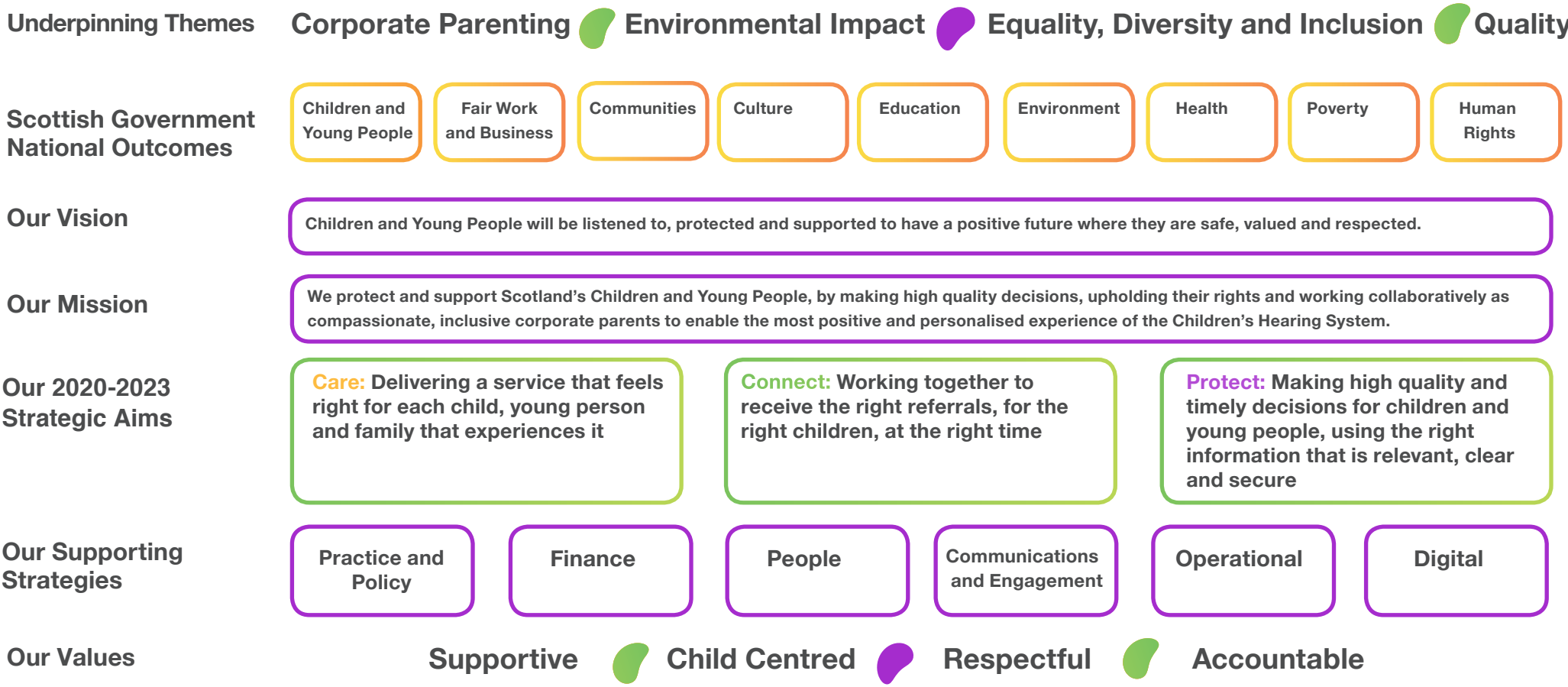
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- We will continue to be a high performing organisation, with quality and consistency at the heart of all that we do.
- Our workforce will be flexible and adaptable with the right balance of roles, skills and experience.
- We will enable all children and young people have the opportunity to participate in a way that suits them to ensure that their voice is heard in all decisions being made.
- Our organisation will continue to prioritise the privacy and confidentiality of children, young people and their families and have systems, processes and people skilled to ensure that all data is held securely and used appropriately.



# Our Strategic Framework

Everything that we do is underpinned by our values, seeks to deliver on our aims and objectives and aspires to meet our vision. Our organisation’s vision maps through to the Scottish Government’s National Outcomes. Further details of the linked work can be found at Appendix 2.





# Our Performance Framework

Everything we do links our organisation’s vision through to our values; leading to a common understanding of how the vision, aims and values of the organisation relate to everyday tasks. It aligns what we think, say and do.



We will review our Corporate Plan and aligned strategies on an annual basis to ensure they are fit for purpose, and report on our performance against these plans.

# Measuring Performance

We are absolutely committed to doing what we say we will do and we measure ourselves against this through our targets. We anticipate that the impact of the current pandemic on the service will inevitably affect the timescales for delivering our targets, and therefore, we will closely monitor and amend these accordingly during the period of this plan.

We report to SCRA’s Board quarterly against these as well as against our Business Plan delivery actions.

Through the life of this Corporate Plan, we will consider how we measure performance in a different way. We will maintain our current measures aligned to the Time and Quality Standards, however, we will introduce some impact measurers, which will allow us to know whether our actions have had the effect we intended.

Outcomes for Children and Families
The percentage of Hearings scheduled to take place within 20 working days
The percentage of decisions on referrals made within 50 working days of receipt
Outcomes for Panel Members, Partners and Staff
The degree to which SCRA core properties comply with SCRA property standards
Organisational Efficiency Outcomes
Variance in annual revenue spends as a percentage of the available revenue budget
Variance in annual capital spends as a percentage of the available capital budget
The Scottish Government efficiency savings target will be met
The percentage of revenue savings achieved in the year
The percentage of working days lost to absence (long term)
The percentage of working days lost to absence (short term)

These measures will be at strategy level and will be detailed in our Business Plans, we will be reporting on a six-monthly basis to our Board and will provide a detailed update in our Annual Report.

We have developed a framework to support this that will be used across the organisation to ensure all actions, plans and strategies are fully aligned.

# Our Resources

SCRA has prepared a five year Financial Plan for 2020-2025 which sets out the required revenue and capital resources over the medium term. The Financial Plan will be updated in summer 2020 as more detail emerges on the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Care Review.

The 2020/21 Revenue and Capital Budgets are shown below and are aligned with the budget provided by the Scottish Government. The revenue plans are based on the existing service delivery model and workforce and incorporate a 1.5% net savings target. The capital plans include resources for the next phase of the Glasgow project, further hearing room improvements and implementation of the last year of the Digital Programme.

Revenue Budget 2020/21	£K
Staff Costs	19,284
Property Costs	3,056
Travel & Subsistence	229
Supplies & Services	2,505
Unfunded Pensions	179
Digital Programme	250
Income	(343)
Total	25,160

Capital Budget 2020/21	£K
Digital Programme	750
Property and Corporate Projects	500
Hearing Room Improvements	100
Total	1,350

# Appendix 1: Our Environmental Context

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children	Implementation of the UNCRC and incorporating it into Scots Law will impact significantly on how we meet our responsibilities, and we need to ensure that our policies, procedures and practice all protect the rights and wellbeing of children and young people. The full nature and scope of our activity have yet to be determined, but we already have plans in place for a Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework. This will include a new integrated Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment which includes children’s rights and wellbeing, planned training for staff to carry out impact assessments and a commitment to integrate this across the organisation. SCRA has also established a new Equality Review Group to develop an expertise, provide advice and have oversight of the Impact Assessments we publish as well as ensuring that decisions are reviewed and providing quality assurance.
Independent Care Review	We anticipate that actions flowing from this review will have implications for design and delivery of our services. It is likely that, in the first year of the Corporate Plan, we will consider the impact and develop our planned approaches, with implementation carrying into years 2 and 3.
Age of Criminal Responsibility	The raising of the age of criminal responsibility to 12 will have implications for our practice in the short term. In addition to this we are engaged in the review of the implementation of the Act, and consideration of further increasing the age of criminal responsibility. We have been commissioned by the ACR Advisory Group for research on 12 to 15 year olds to inform discussion around whether the age of criminal responsibility should be raised further.
Research Activity	Further areas in which we will be conducting policy relevant research are on children under 12 years old in residential care; 16 and 17 year olds and the Children’s Hearings System; children who are victims of offending by other children or of adults; how the Children’s Hearings System responds to children referred for serious offences; and children with positive destinations on termination of their CSOs. We will also be carrying out an evaluation of Our Hearings, Our Voice (the Children andf Young People’s board for the Hearings System). Additionally, we anticipate that we will adopt a lead role nationally in seeking to agree policy and direction to flow from our recently published research on Home Supervision. We have already identified clear implications arising from the research findings relating to timing of decisions and interventions and on care planning. We will also be working in collaboration with Barnardo’s Scotland to disseminate and raise awareness of the findings of our research on the sexual exploitation of looked after children. We will keep a watching brief and anticipate inclusion as momentum grows around the Born into Care work that is being piloted in Scotland.

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Cases involving young people aged 16-17	There are a number of factors that are likely to lead to an increase in the number of 16-17 year olds coming through the Children’s Hearings System. A possible change in the definition of children as a result of incorporation of the UNCRC, an increase in joint referrals to COPFS/Reporter, and consultation from the Scottish Sentencing Council around the sentencing of young people, all lead us to believe there will be a significant increase in the number of such cases. This increased workload, coupled with the additional complexity of cases involving this age group, will require us to equip ourselves to deal with this changing demand.
Making Scotland the Best Place to Grow Up	We will require to engage with and respond to ongoing GIRFEC activity led by the Scottish Government to address Making Scotland the Best Place to Grow Up: Vision, Priorities and Actions, which aligns with the National Performance Framework and Wellbeing Outcomes for Children, Young People and Families. Our engagement in all of our Community Planning Partnerships and in Children’s Services Planning will be central to our activities in this regard, and we anticipate reviewing our arrangements in light of developments. We also consider that work to address our cross cutting themes of Corporate Parenting, Equalities and Inclusion and Quality (from an improvement perspective) will be important elements of our response as the national direction becomes clearer.
Victim Support	We aim to adapt our victim service to changing needs such as the potential for more serious cases coming to us as a result of the anticipated increase in the number of 16-17 year olds in the system, and the need to communicate with victims of incidents relating to children under 12.
Advocacy	We anticipate new arrangements being introduced in 2020 but, while we are monitoring through membership of the expert reference group, we have yet to fully assess the likely impact and determine how we can best respond.
Siblings	Depending on the outcome of an ongoing Supreme Court case and the potential for legislation resulting from this, we anticipate having to alter our practice around inclusion of sibling considerations in decision making by Children’s Hearings, and the Children (Scotland) Bill and ICR. We will continue to be an active member of Stand Up For Siblings.
Equal Protection Bill	This will come into effect in 2020, but is likely to have only a moderate impact on our practice arrangements.
Children (Scotland) Bill	This legislation will bring about important changes in how Hearings and court proceedings operate. We are fully engaged with the legislative process, and will be prepared for implementation of these changes
Climate Change	There is a fundamental requirement on us to determine how we will meet our duties in relation to addressing climate change. This is a key area of concern for all public bodies, with the Scottish Government declaration of a climate emergency and conducting a public consultation on ways of dealing with this. We will need to determine how and when we will achieve zero direct emissions and a reduction in indirect emissions, initiate the necessary changes across the organisation, and measure and report on progress and outcomes.

## Appendix 2: Scottish Government’s National Outcomes

National Outcome	Our contributions through our objectives
Children and Young People: We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5
Communities: We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.	2.2, 2.3, 3.1
Poverty: We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.	1.3, 1.4
Education: We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society.	1.2, 1.5, 2.6
Health: We are healthy and active.	2.4
Human rights: We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.	1.4, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.6
Fair Work and Business: We have thriving and innovative business, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone.	1.4, 1.5, 2.5
Culture: We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely.	1.4, 1.6, 2.3, 2.5, 3.5
Environment: We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment.	2.3, 2.4

# Appendix 3: Our Organisational Strategies


As an organisation we have influenced change and driven improvement over time, internally as well as in the broader landscape of the Children’s Hearings System and Scotland’s legal system.

SCRA’s Organisational Strategies			
Practice and Policy	The Policy and Practice Strategy sets out the key policy and legislative areas in which we aim to exert influence, how we will respond to those which have implications for how we plan and deliver services, and other changes and improvements to our professional practice that we see as priorities.		
Finance	The Finance Strategy sets out how we plan and manage our budgets, procurement and our property estate.		
People	The People Strategy sets out how we will work to achieve the required balance of roles, skills and experience across all parts of the organisation, how we will work with staff to ensure they are skilled, confident and cared for, that they feel valued and respected, and are supported in their health and wellbeing. It incorporates the elements that have featured in workforce plans in recent years, but is wider in its coverage and addresses all of our aspirations and values from a people perspective, including plans to target improvement opportunities identified through staff engagement.		
Communications and Engagement	The Communications and Engagement strategy sets out our approach to connecting with others – Children and Young People, our Partners, our Staff. It describes our methods of engagement and communication tools, and focuses on the work that we do through participation.		
Operational	The Operations Strategy sets out our aims, approaches and priorities for planning and delivering front line services, and provides a framework within which Locality Plans can translate this into local delivery. It will dovetail with our Performance Management Framework which sets out the annual cycle by which plans and objectives at national, locality, team and individual levels are developed and aligned, performance appraised, reviewed and reported, and quality embedded into everything that we do.		
Digital	We will drive improvement across our services to be the best organisation we can be. We will continually seek the views of children, young people and our partners in our relentless pursuit of continuous improvement. We will adapt our services to the needs of our localities and their local circumstances to become more flexible and agile.		
Our underpinning themes are aligned to all our strategies - enabling us to plan, manage, monitor and deliver services now and in the future			
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Corporate Parenting	Environmental impact	Quality

# Appendix 4: Underpinning Themes

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Co-ordinated and driven by our Equalities Network, with subgroups leading on how to address each of the various protected characteristics, supported by Equalities Ambassadors across the organisation. We publish our equalities outcomes and report against these every two years.
Corporate Parenting	We are proud to be corporate parents, and this responsibility sits at the very heart of how we plan, manage, deliver and continually improve our services. We publish and report on our Corporate Parenting Plans annually.
Environmental impact	Our approach to this previously centred on a combination of mitigation, adaptation and sustainability, enabling us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet our responsibilities under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. Areas that are actively pursued include Estate Rationalisation, Utility Metering / Consumption, Waste Minimisation, Business Travel, Sustainable Procurement, Biodiversity, Staff Awareness and Engagement, Improving Data Collection. Co-ordinated by our Property team, all localities and head office teams are required to reflect local policy and guidance in their local approaches. Moving towards 2023 we ask all staff and areas of the business to demonstrate their part in improving the environment in which we live and work – through commitments to work in more digitally enabled ways, different approaches to travel, but also in the working environment – on a physical as well as relational level.
Quality	This sits at the heart of everything we do. Through our Performance Management Framework, performance at corporate, locality and team levels is measured against plans that have been approved for alignment, with regular review and reporting. Compliance with key areas of practice direction is regularly evaluated using case sampling techniques, with reflective learning and improvement action as key elements of the process. Further development of our Quality Framework is planned during the lifetime of this corporate plan.





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