

# Scottish Children's Reporter Administration

Communications and Engagement Strategy 2020-2023



Care



Protect



Connect



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## 1. Introduction

SCRA's Communications and Engagement Strategy demonstrates how we will deliver on SCRA's Corporate Plan 2020-2023 and ensures:

- That we are an organisation that puts children and young people at its centre,
- That we live our value of being child and young people centred and;
- That we recognise and learn from the experience of others as we shape, evolve and improve the service that we deliver.

## 2. Alignment with the Corporate Plan 2020-2023

Our new Communications and Engagement Strategy sets out what we want to achieve during 2020-2023, in line with our Corporate Plan's three aims: Care, Connect and Protect.

Our Corporate Plan 2020-2023 sets out the framework by which we will realise our vision for transformational change in that period.

**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.

**We will deliver our objectives by ensuring that SCRA's values resonate through everything we do:**

**Supportive** We work with kindness to support children, young people and families, our partners and each other.

**Child Centred** Children and young people are at the heart of everything we do.

**Respectful** Everyone is respected and treated fairly, inclusively and lawfully.

**Accountable** We are responsible for our decisions, our ethics and our learning.

### 3. Communication and Engagement Strategy aims

We have three key aims:

- 1. Engagement:** Our communication platforms will be varied and informed by experience, and we will work with and engage with Hearings-experienced children and young people through effective and trauma informed methods of participation, to ensure that our service is child-centred with the voice of children and young people being a visible influence and driver in terms of service provision.
- 2. Communication:** Through multiple communication platforms we will ensure that we effectively connect with others – internally, and with external partners, local communities and children, young people and families.
- 3. Accessibility:** We will ensure that the information that we provide is accessible, relevant and in a format that is appropriate to make sure that everyone in receipt of information is able to be as informed about the Children’s Hearings process and our service as possible.

Our strategy aims are supported by a number of objectives and actions (**section 8 & 9**).

### 4. Key audiences

SCRA has a wide and varied audience. To ensure effective communication and engagement, we must use a flexible mix of communication methods, as children, young people and families have different information and communication needs to our partners and our staff.

SCRA’s key audiences include;

- Children, young people and their parents/carers in the Hearings System
- All members of SCRA staff
- SCRA Board Members
- Children’s Hearings Scotland, AST Members and Panel Members
- Victims and vulnerable witnesses
- Scottish Government – Ministers and officials
- Partner organisations, such as Social Work Scotland, Police Scotland and Education Scotland
- Groups such as the Children’s Hearings Improvement Group and the Youth Justice Improvement Board
- The Independent Care Review Oversight Board
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscals Service
- Health
- Elected members
- Voluntary organisations (Who Cares? Scotland, Barnardo’s etc)
- Partnerships such as Stand Up For Siblings

- UNISON
- Media – local and national
- Social media
- The general public
- Academics and researchers in the children’s services/child protection arena

## 5. 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 the system the best it can be for people that experience it. It is at the heart of this new strategy and are supporting actions.

Over the course of the 2020-23 Corporate Plan, SCRA hopes 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, what the centres look and feel like.

Children and young people will feel supported to take more control of how their Hearing is run and this will take partners and agencies to work effectively together through the avenue of Better Hearings to make this happen.

We will continue to work with and strengthen partnerships with care experienced children and young people, from groups such as Our Hearings, Our Voice, local Champions Boards and organisations like Who Cares? Scotland and the Fostering Network.

## 6. Internal communications

SCRA has a large staff group based in offices and Hearing Centres across the country. Staff within SCRA cover a wide spectrum of roles, from those involved in the frontline delivery of the Reporter’s service, to corporate functions such as human resources, finance and property.

SCRA continues to recognise the importance of internal communications in supporting the effective progress and development of the organisation.

In order to successfully implement an open, transparent and effective internal communications approach, it is important to understand the needs of staff and to appreciate there are differences in these needs, and plan communications to take account of them.

It is also important to recognise that internal communications are not always driven centrally and rightfully so - Localities have a crucial role to play in achieving high quality internal communications. Two-way communication is vital to the success of this strategy and every member of staff has a role to play in making this happen. Our internal communications must also be timely and appropriate to ensure maximum staff engagement and buy in. To achieve this, we will employ a number of internal methods (see Appendix 1 for a detailed list)

## 7. External communications

As outlined in section 4, we have a large external audience, with a variety of different information and engagement needs. Therefore, we will continue to utilise a number of communication methods to ensure maximum reach of our messages externally.

One of our most effective tools for reaching large numbers of people is our website. This routinely gets a lot of traffic, but even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to make improvements and refresh the content and review and respond to analytics.

Social media is also a key element of our communications and engagement approach. We actively use Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, to reach a variety of different groups. We review our Social Media Handling Policy twice a year to ensure it stays up to date.

Traditional media – due to the continuing changing nature of the media landscape, we do not receive the same number of calls from the press as with previous strategies. However, we do have an active media handling policy in place and this is supplemented by a joint media handling agreement with Children’s Hearings Scotland. Both of these are reviewed annually.

More detail outlining all our external communication methods is available at Appendix 1.

## 8. Strategy Objectives

Our strategy will be delivered by a combination of our Press and Communications Team, Participation Group, Corporate Parenting leads, Inclusion Ambassadors, as well as Localities at local level, but seeks to bring together a full picture of the communications, participation and engagement taking place across the organisation.

Our strategy objectives highlight how we will meet our aims:

<b>Strategy Aim 1: Engagement</b>					
Our communication platforms will be varied and informed by experience, and we will work with and engage with Hearings-experienced children and young people through effective and trauma informed methods of participation, to ensure that our service is child-centred with the voice of children and young people being a visible influence and driver in terms of service provision.					
<b>Objectives</b>		<b>Corporate Plan Objective Ref. No.</b>	<b>Care</b>	<b>Connect</b>	<b>Protect</b>
<b>1.1</b>	Through effective, meaningful and trauma-informed participative approaches, we will work with children, young people and families to empower them to participate and engage in Children's Hearings processes.	<b>1.3</b>	✓		
<b>1.4</b>	We will provide Hearings and/or care experienced young people with salaried opportunities to work, learn and develop in safe, supported, trauma-informed environments within our service.	<b>3.4</b>			✓

<b>Strategy Aim 2: Communication</b>					
Through multiple communication platforms we will ensure that we effectively connect with others – internally, and with external partners, local communities and children, young people and families.					
<b>Objectives</b>		Corporate Plan Objective Ref. No.	Care	Connect	Protect
<b>2.1</b>	We will consult with and engage with Hearings experienced young people employed within the service, as well as with external partners to develop new methods of communication.	1.2	✓		
<b>2.2</b>	We will work with the Senior Management team and Locality Management teams to promote an open and transparent engagement culture in SCRA aligned to organisational values.	2.4		✓	

<b>Strategy Aim 3: Accessibility</b>					
We will ensure that the information that we provide is accessible, relevant and in a format that is appropriate to make sure that everyone in receipt of information is able to be as informed about the Children’s Hearings process and our service objectives as possible.					
<b>Objectives</b>		Corporate Plan Objective Ref. No.	Care	Connect	Protect
<b>3.1</b>	Working with children and young people, including Champions Boards, Our Hearings, Our Voice, Modern Apprentices, internal work experience placements, and other groups, we will review and refine/improve the information that we provide.	1.2	✓		
<b>3.4</b>	We will work to ensure full user engagement in the development of digital systems designed to support children and young people to connect to the Hearings System.	2.7		✓	
<b>3.5</b>	We will continue to provide safe communication spaces and tools led by children and young people, including child-and-young-person-centred Hearing rooms, sensory gardens/areas, toolkits/information for people with autism, sensory and learning difficulties.	1.1	✓		



## 9. 2020-2021 Communications and Engagement Action Plan

CEO No.	Objective	Indicators	L M H	Outcome / Impact	Lead (s)	Timeline	
						Start	End
1.1	Through effective, meaningful and trauma-informed participative approaches, we will work with children, young people and families to empower them to participate and engage in Children's Hearings processes.	1.1.1: Consultation with relevant persons and foster carers, as well as children and young people to shape and inform communications service.	H		Jennifer Orren	October 2020	March 2021
		1.1.2: We will review and update our information guides on our website for social workers, etc.	L		Maryanne McIntyre	May 2020	July 2020
1.4	We will provide Hearings and/or care experienced young people with salaried opportunities to work, learn and develop in safe, supported, trauma-informed environments within our service.	1.4.1: Six month work experience placement in Grampian Locality in conjunction with the Local Authority.	H		Jennifer Orren	August 2020	January 2021
		1.4.2: Recruitment and appointment of one new Modern Apprentice in 2020/2021 (funding still to be confirmed)	H		Jennifer Orren	Recruitment September 2020	Appointment November 2020
2.1	We will consult with and engage with Hearings experienced young people employed within the service, as well as with external partners to develop	2.1.1: Engagement with care experienced children and young people from external partnerships, e.g. Our Hearings Our Voice, Champions Boards, Who Cares? Scotland	H		Maryanne McIntyre	August 2020	March 2021

	new methods of communication.	2.1.2: Build on existing partnerships, e.g. Parentline, and develop new ones, to inform and develop new and updated communications and information for parents and carers (including virtual Hearings information flyer)	M		Jennifer Orren	May 2020	September 2020
		2.1.3: Create a dedicated section on our website and an information guide for new advocacy workers about the Children's Hearings System.	L		Maryanne McIntyre	September 2020	December 2020
<b>2.2</b>	We will work with the Senior Management team and Locality Management teams to promote an open and transparent culture in SCRA aligned to organisational values.	2.2.1: We will carry out our annual staff survey which will include specific COVID-19 questions	H		Maryanne McIntyre	June 2020	March 2021
<b>3.1</b>	Working with children and young people, including Champions Boards, Our Hearings, Our Voice and other groups, we will review and refine/improve the information that we provide.	3.1.1: Review and update content and design All About Me form for young people	M		Maryanne McIntyre	August 2020	December 2020
		3.1.2: Review and update content and design of Going to a Hearing leaflet for young people	M		Maryanne McIntyre	August 2020	December 2020
		3.1.3: Produce new film – What is a Compulsory Supervision Order	H		Jennifer Orren	September 2020	December 2020

		3.1.4: Introduce court information pack for national roll out	M		Jennifer Orren	June 2020	March 2021
<b>3.4</b>	We will work to ensure full user engagement in the development of digital systems designed to support children and young people to connect to the Hearings System.	3.4.1: Collate research undertaken, coupled with our learning from the current pandemic	H		Lisa Bennett	June 2020	July 2020
		3.4.2: Take research to date to young people for secondary validation.	H		Lisa Bennett	July 2020	August 2020
		3.4.3: Develop a set of requirements for digital hearings based on user research	H		Lisa Bennett	August 2020	August 2020
		3.4.4: Collate all information around interactions with the hearings system (not hearings rooms) and take to young people for consideration/thoughts/suggestions	H		Lisa Bennett	August 2020	September 2020
<b>3.5</b>	We will continue to provide safe communication spaces and tools led by children and young people, including new Hearing rooms, sensory gardens/areas, toolkits/information for people	3.5.1: Produce and launch Compulsory Supervision Order easy read guide	L		Maryanne McIntyre	July 2020	October 2020
		3.5.2: Create new section on SCRA website - CSOs	L		Maryanne McIntyre	May 2020	June 2020

	with autism, sensory and learning difficulties.	3.5.3: Create social stories guide for children and young people with autism and sensory difficulties	M		Maryanne McIntyre	June 2020	October 2020
		3.5.4: Latest phase of Hearing room improvements	H		Jennifer Orren	May 2020	March 2021

## Appendix 1 - Communications methods

The following tools are used for internal and external communications. The list is reviewed and revised on a regular basis as new tools become available.

### Internal communications:

Method	When	Comments
Connect	Daily	The home page of our staff intranet is updated on a daily basis (article of the day, ticker tape, news items, vacancies etc). Other sections are updated as and when required.
National Reporter	Quarterly	The staff e-zine is issued every three months (spring, summer etc).
Team Brief	Every six weeks	This is issued every six weeks to all managers and UNISON reps. A timetable of deadline dates and publication dates is published at the start of every year.
In Touch	Fortnightly	This e-communication is issued every second Friday afternoon to staff on long term sick leave, mat leave, secondment to other organisations etc. This is an opt in communication.
Healthy Being e-zine	Approx three times a year	Staff e-zine focusing on health and wellbeing. Issued several times a year
Consultation/discussion forums/surveys on Connect	Ad hoc	As and when required.
Staff Survey	Annual	Usually every autumn (theme-based surveys are issued throughout the year such as training needs, health and wellbeing etc).

Campaigns	Ad hoc	Campaigns such as Equalities Monitoring (every November) are launched as and when required.
Team Meetings	Usually every 4-6 weeks	This is dependent on individual teams/Localities – best practice guidance is available for managers on Connect.
Staff Event	Annual	Usually every 12-18 months (next one dependent on pandemic)
Locality Development Days	Annual	Up to individual Localities, but usually annual and around the planning cycle.
Email communication	Regular basis	Emails are used to either communication and engage with a specific group, such as LRMs, Business Continuity Leads or all staff.
Networks and forums	Regular	Inputs to key groups such as the Participation Group, Practice and Quality Network etc are utilised to communicate and engage on specific topics.
Corporate Style Guide	Updated as and when required (usually twice a year)	This guide ensures staff have access to all the communication templates, briefing sheets etc to ensure consistency in our communications.
Staff Guide – Stay Connected	Updated as and when required (usually twice a year)	This is aimed at new recruits and provides an online one stop shop for where to get information on Connect. It links to the online welcome/induction tool.
The Box	Staff can submit a suggestion at any time	SCRA's Staff Suggestion Scheme which allows staff to submit ideas on a variety of topics.
Branded communications	As and when required	We develop branded communications for specific subjects, such as the Digital Strategy, Women into Leadership etc.

## External communications:

SCRA's website	Updated regularly	This is one of our key tools to reach out to a wide external audience. The website is split into sections (children, young people etc).  Includes online interactive statistical dashboard
Twitter	Checked several times a day	This is used to communicate quickly with partners and promote job vacancies, new research etc.
Facebook	Checked several times a day	Like Twitter, this is used to communicate quickly with partners and promote job vacancies, new research etc. A number of staff also follow us on Facebook and is an additional way of reaching them.
Instagram	Checked daily	Launched in January 2018 to mark Year of Young People and to reach out to more young people
Linked in	Updated when external jobs are advertised	Using it increasingly to promote general information
Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership website	Updated as and when required	SCRA built and maintains this website on behalf of the CHIP. The site is aimed at partners in the Hearings System.
Corporate Parenting website	Updated as and when required	SCRA built and maintains this website which is joint with Children's Hearings Scotland and is aimed at young people.
Stand up for Siblings website	Updated as and when required	SCRA built and maintains this website on behalf of the SUFS partnership. It includes an online pledge wall.

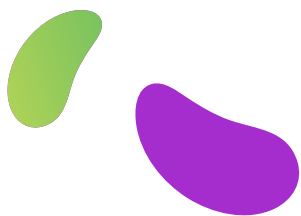
Our Hearings, Our Voice website	Updated as and when required	SCRA built and maintains the website for Our Hearings, Our Voice aimed at children, young people and partners
You Tube/Vimeo	As and when a new video becomes available	This is used to promote our films such as Going to a Children's Hearing and Going to Court, we also use it to promote films by partners
Media	Ad hoc	We do receive enquiries from the traditional press, but these tend to be focused on individual children. We have a media handling policy in place to deal with these (updated March 2020).  We also have a media handling policy in place with Children's Hearings Scotland.
E-news	Quarterly	Our e-news is issued every three months to local and national partners and contains all our latest news and links to items with more detail on the working in partnership section of our website.
Emails	Regular	Emails are used to target specific groups to highlight information such as new research reports. Often branded emails with a visual are created to give an email more prominence such as the Corporate Parenting Plan.
Meetings (CHIP, Tripartite, Participation Group etc)	Regular	We utilise particular multi-agency groups to inform our partners of updates etc.



Information materials for children, young people and families	Updated/reviewed on a regular basis	<p>We have a suite of information materials, both online and in paper format (leaflets, posters, flyers and forms) to inform children, young people and families of going to a Hearing, their rights etc.</p> <p>We have several films for young people, podcasts and easy read material for parents/carers with learning difficulties (developed in conjunction with the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities and People First).</p>
Information stands at events	Regular	We target specific events and conferences to promote the organisation and our information materials. We have a suite of marketing merchandise for these local and national events.
Fact sheets	Updated annually	We now have 15 fact sheets on a range of topics (child protection, youth offending etc).
Briefing sheets	As and when required	These are used to communicate with key groups, such as Panel Members, to inform them of new developments such as Hearing room improvements, particular events etc.

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