

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration

Practice and Policy Strategy 2020-2023



Care



Protect



Connect



Contents Page

1	Introduction	3
2	Practice and Policy Strategy	4
3	Strategy Aims	5
4	Strategy Objectives	6
5	Action Plan	10

1. Introduction

The Practice and Policy Strategy sets out what we want to achieve during 2020-2023, in line with our Corporate Plan's 3 Aims: Care, Connect and Protect.

Our Corporate Plan for 2020-2023 sets out the framework by which we will realise our vision for transformational change over the next three years.

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 the our SCRA 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.

2. Practice and Policy Strategy

The Practice and Policy Strategy will deliver some of the Corporate Plan's objectives and support Locality teams in their efforts to deliver outcomes.

The majority of the objectives within this strategy aims to provide generic capabilities that enable SCRA to play a leading role in influencing partners, including the Scottish Government, in the development of legislation and policies that promote the welfare of children within and connected with the Children's Hearings System.

This strategy outlines the priority areas that will be covered by the Practice & Policy functions over the period 2020-23, and how each of these will be addressed.

The key areas of work within this strategy includes:

- Policy development
- Partnership liaison and development
- Practice guidance, training and research
- Complaints management
- Induction training
- Partner training
- Oversight of court activity
- Victim Information Service

An action plan is also included summarising key activities that will be addressed during the first year of the plan.

The strategy will be updated annually to incorporate emerging issues and to set out action plans for 2021/22 and 2022/23. The key aims and objectives are detailed in sections 3 and 4.

3. Strategy Aims

Our strategy is led by three key aims that are aligned with the Corporate Plan, which will be delivered through our strategic objectives and Action Plans.

1. Policy and Legislation Development

Influence change in the content, implementation, guidance and training of policies and legislation through collaboration to ensure the welfare of children and young people.

2. Research

That is responsive to and influences policy development on child protection and children's rights.

3. Quality Practice and Information Governance

Support and embed high quality casework practice, standards and information governance.

4. Strategy Objectives

Our strategic aims will be achieved by the Practice and Policy team over the next three years through yearly Action Plans. The Action Plan will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure continuity and performance, and that it remains aligned with SCRA’s strategic framework, policies and legislative changes.

In addition to our three year strategic objectives, we have developed two specific recovery planning objectives to anticipate the impact of the pandemic.

Recovery Planning Objectives	Work collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure that contingency and recovery plans support business continuity and reflect best possible casework-related practice.
	Evaluate contingency and recovery plans to determine their effectiveness and appropriateness in response to Covid-19 restrictions.

Strategy Aim 1: Policy and Legislation Development					
Influence change in the content, implementation, guidance and training of policies and legislation through collaboration to ensure the welfare of children and young people.					
Strategy Objectives		Strategic Objective Ref. No.	Care	Connect	Protect
1.1	Monitor relevant forthcoming legislation and policy reviews to anticipate potential impact and develop organisational positions.	3.2			✓
1.2	Use our expertise, knowledge and experience to Influence partners, including the Scottish Government on legislative and policy matters.	2.6		✓	

1.3	Support and influence the work of the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) through collaboration with GIRFEC and the Hearings System.	1.2	✓		
1.4	Work with Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS), especially through the Hearings Management Group, to ensure common understanding of policy and practices and promote local working, and to ensure good information governance across the Hearings System through the Joint CHS-SCRA information Governance Group.	2.1		✓	
1.5	Participate in and influence national partnership work across a broad range of issues and agencies, including the Scottish Government, Police Scotland, COPFS, SLAB, SWS, and 3 rd sector.	2.1		✓	
1.6	Continue to be an active member of Stand Up For Siblings (SUFS).	1.1 & 3.5	✓		✓
1.7	Work with local authorities, Historic Child Abuse Review, ICO and Who Cares? Scotland on care experienced people's access to their records	1.2	✓		
1.8	Establish collaborative research projects with universities and partner organisations to help ensure that the policy and direction of the Hearings System and child protection more generally are supported and informed by a robust evidence base.	2.6		✓	
1.9	Develop training for external agencies to support shared understanding and implementation of legislation and policy.	1.1	✓		

Strategy Aim 2: Research

That is responsive to and influences policy development on child protection and children's rights.

Strategy Objectives		Strategic Objective Ref. No.	Care	Connect	Protect
2.1	Complete research with Barnardo's Scotland on sexual exploitation of looked after children, and work with them to raise awareness and influence policy on protection of children at such significant risk.	1.1	✓		

2.2	Carry out research on children under 12 years old in residential care – their needs, supports, care history, decision making, and outcomes.	1.2	✓		
2.3	Explore how the Children’s Hearings System responds to 16 and 17 year olds referred and those who commit more serious offences to inform how such young people could be diverted from the criminal justice system.	1.2	✓		
2.4	Positive destinations for children on termination of their CSOs – identification of good practice	1.2	✓		
2.5	Who are child victims? Impact on child victims of offences by other children or adults.	1.2	✓		
2.6	Children aged 12 to 15 years involved in offending. Research to inform review of the age of criminal responsibility.	1.2	✓		
2.7	Evaluation of Our Hearings Our Voice.	1.2	✓		
2.8	What is the challenge for SCRA staff between working within a legal framework and balancing the best interests of the child? Tests of change on non-disclosure and content of reports.	1.2	✓		

Strategy Aim 3: Quality Practice and Information Governance					
Support and embed high quality casework practice, standards and information governance.					
Strategy Objectives		Strategic Objective Ref. No.	Care	Connect	Protect
3.1	Continually develop and maintain Practice Direction and other Practice materials.	3.3			✓
3.2	Provide direct Practice support to Localities on all aspects of casework.	3.3			✓
3.4	Continually develop and maintain a programme of national Practice Training, including core modules, more specialised modules and mandatory ongoing training.	3.4			✓
3.3	Collaborative working to Improve experiences for Victims.	1.2	✓		
3.5	Maintain and deliver a range of national training inputs to other agencies, including Police Scotland.	2.1		✓	

3.6	Manage appeals and other proceedings in the Sheriff Appeal Court, Court of Session and UK Supreme Court.	2.1		✓	
3.7	Administer and analyse SCRA's complaints in line with SPSO best practice guidelines to inform improvements in SCRA's service.	3.3			✓
3.8	Ensure SCRA's compliance with Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 and Data Protection Act 2018, and liaison with Scottish Information Commissioner, Keeper of the Records of Scotland, and Information Commissioner's Office.	3.6			✓
3.9	Work with Who Cares? Scotland to embed a personalised approach to how SCRA's responds to those requesting information about themselves (subject access requests).	1.2 & 3.6	✓		✓
3.10	Introduce a systems focused approach to investigation and remedial actions following data protection breaches – tests of change.	3.6			✓
3.11	Deliver on-going data protection training for all staff and introduce e-learning for all new starts to be completed before access to personal data.	3.6			✓
3.12	Ensure the provision of information to Disclosure Scotland on its requests under PVG Scheme within required timescales.	3.6			✓
3.13	Develop approaches with National Records for Scotland for transfer of SCRA records for permanent preservation.	3.6			✓
3.14	Produce guidance on information sharing and put in place information sharing protocols with partner organisations.	3.6			✓
3.15	Ensure that all SCRA staff are aware of a child's rights as a data subject and the GDPR requirement to give 'special consideration' to a child's personal data.	3.6			✓

5. Action Plan 2020 - 2021

PPO No.	AP No.	Action	Timeline	
			Start	End
1.1	1.1.1	Develop and implement resources on CSE, Forced marriage, FGM, Trafficking.	April 2020	March 2021
	1.1.2	Develop and extend Locality-based Induction materials to cover Principles and Structure, Good-decision-making, Drafting Statements of Grounds).		
1.2	1.2.1	Influence external stakeholders on a range of legislative and policy matters.	April 2020	March 2021
1.3	1.3.1	Support CHIP to ensure GIRFEC is achieved within the Hearing System.	April 2020	March 2021
1.4	1.4.1	Agree revised information sharing and processing agreements with CHS.	April 2020	March 2021
	1.4.2	Regular meetings of joint SCRA-CHS IG group		
1.5	1.5.1	Regular participation and influence on broad issues across partnerships.	April 2020	March 2021
1.6	1.6.1	Collaborate with SUFS partners on Tests for Change and evidence to support changes to practice and law .	April 2020	March 2021
1.9	1.9.1	Wide range of training is developed external agencies on legislation and policy.	April 2020	March 2021
2.1	2.1.1	Publish final research report and policy briefing.	April 2020	March 2021
	2.1.2	Hold joint event with Barnardo's to promote research findings and recommendations		
2.2	2.2.1	Complete research and publish SCRA research report.	April 2020	March 2021
	2.2.2	In consultation with Research Advisory Group, develop recommendations for practitioners and policy makers.		
3.1	3.1.1	PD developed and implemented, reflecting changes introduced through implementation of CSAS.	April 2020	March 2021
	3.1.2	Collaboration undertaken with SWA through focus group work regarding use of VC.		

	3.1.3	View obtained from C&YP on use of VC (OHOV).		
3.2	3.2.1	Mechanism developed and implemented to enable Reporters to consistently identify Victims of seriously harmful behaviour in all referrals of children under the age of 12 years, and complying with Victim-related PD (including PD on the use of information provided by victims).	April 2020	March 2021
	3.2.2	Mechanism developed and implemented to support Reporters to consistently provide the VIS with relevant Victim information.		
3.3	3.3.1	Contribution made to the Victims' Taskforce and relevant workstreams to influence improved experiences for Victims of children and young people.	April 2020	March 2021
	3.3.2	Victims and VIS Roadshow undertaken to all localities to promote VIS to ensure Reporters are familiar with the practice direction for Victims.		
	3.3.3	Letter translation service implemented and is available to Victims.		
	3.3.4	Identify, contribute and implement improvements, internally and externally through website Victim communications by having a link where all information can be found easily.		
	3.3.5	Vulnerable Witness Packs reviewed and updated.		
3.4	3.4.1	HSB training developed delivered.	April 2020	March 2021
	3.4.2	Practice messages delivered to Support CSAS training. by providing relevant Practice.		
	3.4.3	Number of VICs completed Trauma Sensitive Training.		
3.6	3.6.1	Court training developed for Assistant Reporters.	April 2020	March 2021
	3.6.2	Develop training for safeguarders in relation to court.		
	3.6.3	Core modules on court refreshed.		
	3.6.4	Develop and deliver input for LRMs and SPs on threshold for not opposing an appeal.		
3.7	3.7.1	Tools provided to enable LRMs dealing with complaints from Victims to consistently protect the rights of the referred child/young person to confidentiality of personal information beyond what is permitted to share by legislation.	April 2020	March 2021

	3.7.2	Revise SCRA's Complaints Handling Procedure in line with new SPSO requirements.		
	3.7.3	Report annually to ARC and EMT on SCRA's performance in handling complaints.		
3.10	3.10.1	Manage and monitor SCRA's breach reporting process, including reporting to ICO when appropriate.	April 2020	March 2021
	3.10.2	Respond to FOISA requests and SARs within statutory timescales.		
	3.10.3	Review SCRA's Records Management Plan and submit to Keeper of the Records of Scotland.		
3.11	3.11.1	Finalise and agree with Who Cares? Scotland's campaign group, SCRA new guidance for requestors on SARs.	April 2020	March 2021
3.12	3.12.1	Tests of change in 2 Localities on new approach to investigation of breaches and learning from them.	April 2020	March 2021
	3.12.2	If the above successful, roll out to all Localities.		
3.14	4.14.1	Develop e-learning on data protection for new starts.	April 2020	March 2021
	4.14.2	Deliver Non-Disclosure training to all Localities.		
	4.14.3	Adapt child as a data subject training for non-Reporter staff and deliver to all Localities.		
3.15	3.15.1	To answer requests within 28 days and maintain log.	April 2020	March 2021
3.16	3.16.1	Finalise MOU with National Records of Scotland and put process in place for transfer of records for permanent preservation.	April 2020	March 2021
3.17	3.17.1	Finalise revised information sharing guidance.	April 2020	March 2021

PPO: Practice and Policy Objective Ref. No.

AP: Action Plan ref. No.

**Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
Ochil House
Springkerse Business Park
Stirling
FK7 7XE**



www.scra.gov.uk