
**Scottish Children's
Reporter Administration
Rights, Inclusion and Corporate
Parenting Strategy 2021- 2023**

Care



Connect



Protect



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1. Introduction

Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy aligns with our [2020-23 Corporate Plan](#), designed to ensure a Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting approach to children and families that is rooted in the findings of Scotland's Independent Care Review and 'Keeping The Promise' Scotland made to our care experienced and future recipients of care.

We aim to ensure that everything we do is grounded on respecting rights, is inclusive and supportive. This will enable the Children's Hearing to align with the other key non-statutory and statutory social supports and interventions in Scotland for children and families.

The strategy outlines the work we will do to achieve this, reinforcing our commitment to continuous improvement to ensure that the Children's Hearings System is truly the best that it can be for those who use and work in it.

Scotland's children have powerful experiences within the Children's Hearing - the national children and young people's Board for the Children's Hearings, Our Hearings, Our Voice has made this very clear in their 2020 'Calls to Action'. We are committed to working with children, families and our partners to better understand and address all the change required to better uphold rights, ensure participation and inclusive services and be the best Corporate Parents we can be. We will work in partnership with Our Hearings, Our Voice and local Champions Boards to continue the transformative work to empower Scotland's children to voice their experiences and directly influence change. We then need to put in place structures which hold us to account for that change.

Our Hearings, Our Voice have told us how they feel about the experiences they have had; and the impact this has on them and their engagement with the Children's Hearing and Hearings proceedings. Their experiences, along with the findings of the Independent Care Review, challenge all agencies involved in Children's Hearings to change our processes, develop new ways of engagement with and provide supports that children of all ages tell us they need to ensure their rights are upheld and their views are properly considered in decision-making that affects them.

This strategy is the mechanism through which SCRA intends to achieve what is required to meet our legislative duties in relation to Human Rights, Equalities and Corporate Parenting, as well as incorporating the 'Calls to Action' and 'The Promise'. We think it is also the right approach for children and families.

2. Rights

Developing a rights respecting approach

Since the inception of the Children's Hearing System in 1971, there has been a slow but incremental increase in the extent to which both Scottish society and the systems that have developed to protect children from harm have embraced children's rights and encouraged their meaningful participation in the numerous decision-making processes that impact on their lives. At all times children's rights and the rights of their parents should be considered and balanced against the decisions that are taken that may have an impact those rights.

The Covid -19 global pandemic has shone a light on the impact of adult decision- making on children at a time when legislative changes that impact them directly has quickened. In the past few years Scotland has:

- seen the introduction of Corporate Parenting responsibilities for a host of agencies
- raised the age of criminal responsibility and is actively considering a further rise
- outlawed assaults on children by removing the defence of "reasonable chastisement"
- consulted on raising the age of referral to the Principal Reporter to 17
- enacted the duty on Children's Hearing to make children aware of the availability of children's advocacy
- introduced provisions to ensure brother and sister relationships are considered and maintained
- and most significantly of all consulted on seeking to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots Law.

At each stage of decision-making the need to protect the child has to be balanced with the need to be proportionate when interfering with the rights enjoyed by the child and their family. This is a delicate balance for professionals to strike, but it is important to ensure the rights of the child are upheld; that the child's voice is heard and that opportunities and encouragement to participate meaningfully are provided throughout the decision-making process. Under the UNCRC every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

We are committed and will devote time and resources to examining how we currently engage with children and in considering what extra approaches could be tested to support, co-develop and implement creative and innovative solutions that protect children's rights, ensure their voices are heard and increase their meaningful participation in all decision-making that affects their lives.

3. Inclusion

Creating an equal, diverse and inclusive service

Creating an equal, diverse and inclusive SCRA will help us better serve children, and their families in Scotland, uncover new ways of doing things and keep our people engaged and motivated to do their best work.

Being inclusive not only makes SCRA a great place to work, it ensures that we can work in the best ways with children and their families so that the Children's Hearing is equally accessible for everyone as well as meeting individual needs and rights.

Our Aspirations

SCRA aspires to be a leader in terms of our behaviours and attitudes to equality, diversity and inclusion. Our 2020-23 Equality Outcomes set out how we will meet our Public Sector Equality Duty and the Fairer Scotland Socio-Economic Duty and mainstream equality across all parts of our organisation and in the provision of our service to children and families.

SCRA is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce and throughout our organisation at large. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Our aim is that SCRA embraces, acknowledges and is representative of all sections of society; promoting equality and respect for all, so that everyone is able to achieve their potential. SCRA is committed to promoting the practice of equality, diversity and inclusion in all its operations and dealings with employees, children and families and all partner agencies. SCRA aims to ensure that it employs and deploys a workforce that is diverse and equipped with the right mix of skills and experience to benefit children and families.

Equality Outcomes

The delivery of equality and diversity outcomes must become integral to everything we do and shape our approach to the service we deliver to children and families. It is at the heart of attracting, retaining and developing a highly skilled, valued workforce that reflects the Scottish population.

A significant proportion of work to achieve our equality outcomes will be embedded in our organisational strategies. The strategy leads will take ownership of planning, monitoring and reporting on progress through their own governance structures.

4. Corporate Parenting

Making positive change for children and families

As a corporate parent SCRA has a responsibility to promote the wellbeing of children who are experiencing the children's hearing and to do that we should understand the lives of our children and respond to their needs. Corporate Parenting is a role which should complement and support the actions of parents, families and carers, working with these key adults to deliver positive change for children. This role does not sit with named individuals in SCRA, it is a role realised by every member of our staff.

SCRA's Corporate Parenting Plan 2020 – 2023 was developed around SCRA's three aims; **Care, Connect** and **Protect**. The GIRFEC SHANARRI wellbeing indicators are also key to our corporate parenting approach. We worked closely with children with experience of care to help us write our plan, and we took account of the research and the recommendations from the Independent Care Review. We are now also linking the SHANARRI indicators to our strategic objectives and actions so that we can really start to deliver our corporate parenting aspirations.

We Care by delivering a service that meets the individual needs and rights of children: We know how important it is to be treated fairly when coming to a Hearing. We will treat all children fairly, with dignity, kindness and respect. We are committed to keeping our children safe and healthy.

We Connect by working with children, families and our partners to make sure our service is as good as it can be – for children & families, our staff and the environment: We recognise the importance of relationships in all that we do, our approach to what we do will focus on our connections - to children and their families, our staff, our partners, the community, and the environment. We are committed to our children achieving, being nurtured and being active.

We Protect by making decisions to help keep children safe, supporting them to take part in their hearing, making sure children's rights are met and that all the information that we use is clear and secure: The safety and welfare of our children are important to us and the decisions that we take are to help protect them. We work with local communities to make sure that everyone understands their part in keeping children safe and their part in our children being respected, responsible and included.

5. Strategy Governance

The Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy will be governed by SCRA's Keeping the Promise Programme Board chaired by SCRA's Board Chair and will meet 4 times per year, ensuring that the Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting plans are delivered.

Project Leads will manage the Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting action plans and report on their progress to the Keeping the Promise Board on a quarterly basis. Keeping the Promise will provide quarterly updates to internal networks and annually for the Rights Audit and Corporate Parenting Reports.

The Leads for the RICP Strategy will include the following terms of reference.

RIGHTS	INCLUSION	CORPORATE PARENTING
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) ECHR and parent's rights2) UNCRC and Children's Rights<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Participation▪ Information▪ Privacy3) Annual Rights Audit4) Link with OHOV regarding: rights monitoring5) Standing link to Youth Justice6) Standing link to Victims	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Equalities2) Protected characteristics3) Fairer Scotland4) Islands and remote areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Training2) GIRFEC3) Child Protection4) Communications and engagement5) Participation6) links with OHOV

The strategy is a live document, and will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, ensuring it remains aligned to the needs of children, families and partners and our commitment to delivering The Promise.

6. ACTION PLANS – 2021-2022

We aim to deliver the following objectives throughout 2021-22, which are aligned with our 2020-23 Corporate Plan’s aims; **Care**, **Connect**, **Protect**.

We will develop workstreams under the umbrella of Rights and Policy; Corporate Parenting; Inclusion; and Trauma Training and Resilience to achieve these objectives.

RIGHTS PLAN	
CARE	3.1: We can and will explain why we need to act in ways which affect rights.
	4.1: Our approach should result in family rights being recognised and supported and impacted only when necessary and in order to make a situation better.
CONNECT	1.1: Children’s Rights and Human Rights underpin all the work we do.
	2.1: We are all aware of rights and aware when our work is affecting rights
PROTECT	5.1: We will offer positive support and solutions to people in order for their rights to be respected in our work.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OUTCOMES PLAN	
CARE	1.1 Our staff will continue to treat all children and families with dignity and respect.
	1.2: Our services will be procured, designed, shaped and delivered to meet the needs of children and families.
CONNECT	2.1: Our leaders will foster a culture where our people feel included, valued, respected and cared for.
	2.2: Our staff will feel supported, respected and cared for.
PROTECT	3.1: We will make our workforce more diverse through our recruitment and selection processes.

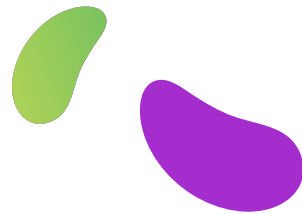
CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN

CARE	<p>1.1: All staff will be trained in trauma and its impact, corporate parenting, rights and inclusion.</p> <p>1.2: We will work closely with the Promise team and with Partners to plan, prioritise and deliver the findings from the Independent Review of Care – developing our own internal structures to support this.</p>
CONNECT	<p>2.1: We will work with Our Hearings Our Voice, groups of Young People and our Partners as we plan, prioritise and deliver the 40 calls to action, to keep them informed of progress, to check that what we are doing is what we should be doing and to seek their expertise in areas that we are better working together on.</p> <p>2.2: We will work in partnership with Children’s Hearings Scotland, ‘Our Hearings, Our Voice’ and other partners to work towards a Children’s Hearings - wide approach to rights, inclusion and participation.</p> <p>2.3: We will focus on the way that we communicate with and the information that we provide to children and to ensure that they have the information that they need, know what to expect, and how they should expect to be treated, know how to complain and importantly, know how to have their voice heard.</p>
PROTECT	<p>3.1: We will continue to make our Hearing centres feel safe, comfortable and welcoming.</p> <p>3.2: We will use our learning from our response to COVID-19 and the research conducted, previous research – internal and external, staff experience, previous improvement projects and, importantly, the voices of children and young people to identify and describe best practice for future service improvement – to support us in Keeping the Promise.</p>

Appendix 1: Links to Articles

Links	Summary
European Convention on Human Rights (coe.int)	The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the protocols explain the rights that all of us have in our lives.
The European Convention on Human Rights - A living instrument (coe.int)	This is an easy read version of the ECHR.
Human Rights Act 1998 (legislation.gov.uk)	The HRA 1998 enshrines ECHR in UK law.
UNCRC Layout 1 (unicef.org.uk)	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child explains the rights of children in detail (children also have the human rights in the ECHR but as rights holders are in a different position as children – as at different points throughout childhood adults are required to enable children to achieve their rights)
The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The children’s version UNICEF	This version of the UNCRC is intended for children and a download of the document is available from the link.
Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)	Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is the policy umbrella that covers all of the work of services which impact children in Scotland.
Scotland and the sustainable development goals: a national review to drive action - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)	The sustainable development goals look to the future and are a vision for the ways in which Scotland can recover from the Covid19 pandemic. They are a universal call to action.
Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk)	The Equalities Act 2010 prevents people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

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