

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mainstreaming Report 2022/2023



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION



Foreword

Welcome to our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Mainstreaming Report for 2022/2023. This is our annual update reporting on our work to strengthen and embed equalities, inclusion and diversity across our organisation.

At SCRA, we are fully committed to the vision, values, and ethos of the Equality Act 2010, however, it is not just about legislation - as I hope our report will demonstrate. It is about ensuring we remain an inclusive organisation based on fairness, equality, cultural diversity, dignity and respect.

Putting the needs of children and young people is at the heart of what we do every day. SCRA firmly recognises care experience as a 'tenth' protected characteristic and we continue to review our practice, policies and processes to reflect this and we remain committed to supporting the campaign to have care experience recognised. Furthermore, we are committed to the Fairer Scotland Duty whereby we will look to identify and address socio-economic disadvantage – both of resource and opportunity – to support our workforce, and also the children and families we work with and communities we serve.

Although we - as with many public sector organisations - continue to recover from the global pandemic, the past 12 months has witnessed a host of inclusion and diversity activity across the organisation. From work at national level, to the growing activity in our Localities to ensure inclusion and diversity is fully embedded in every aspect of SCRA.

In fact, a significant focus of the inclusion and diversity work in 2022/2023 has been in supporting our operational Localities to mainstream inclusion and diversity at a local level. We now have at least one specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead for each of our nine Localities. There has been amazing support from colleagues and we anticipate this work will develop further in the year ahead.

Over the past few years, we have certainly been on an equalities journey to become a more inclusive and diverse employer and organisation. We hope this report demonstrates our commitment to this, but we know there is more work to be done.

We have pledged to doing more to ensure we better represent the communities we serve, through more targeted and bespoke approaches to recruitment and selection, with a specific focus on increasing the number of applicants who are disabled and/or from a minority ethnic background. We are also committed to addressing our Gender Pay Gap through positive action and our Women into Leadership Network.

As we look ahead to publication of the Hearings System Working Group report later this spring, we know there will be a renewed focus – quite rightly – on inclusion and rights in the Children's Hearings System. We are excited to see what this brings and we look forward to working with our partners to Keep The Promise and further strengthen and develop our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

We hope that this Mainstreaming Report not only highlights the significant amount of work that has happened over the past year, but also reflects our commitment, our passion and our determination. Equality and inclusion matters in SCRA.

Thank you for taking the time to read our report. If you have any questions or comments, please get in touch. We would love to hear from you.

Neil Hunter
Principal Reporter/ Chief Executive

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1. Introduction

SCRA is fully committed to the vision, values and ethos of the Equality Act 2010 and to fulfilling the three elements of the **general** equality duty as defined in the Act:

1. Elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
3. Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy, maternity and breastfeeding
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage/civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regards to the need to eliminate discrimination

In addition, SCRA is committed to complying with the Public Sector Equality Duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

SCRA's approach is to go beyond the compliance obligations and to develop an inclusive ethos within the organisation based on fairness, equality, cultural diversity, dignity and respect. SCRA recognises care experience as a 'tenth' protected characteristic and we continue to review our practice, policies and processes to reflect this.

This report:

- Builds on our previous Mainstreaming Reports and our Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Report Card 2021-2022 to provide an overview of key achievements and mainstreaming progress made within SCRA since their publication.
- Provides detail of our progress in relation to our Equality Outcomes 2020-23 and our work to promote equality, diversity and inclusion with our staff, partners and the children, young people and their families whom we serve.

2. About SCRA

The Children's Reporter sits at the heart of Children's Hearings, 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.

Children's Reporters routinely deal with and make critical decisions on the lives of children facing adversity and trauma such as: physical and emotional neglect; domestic abuse; parental substance misuse; mental health concerns; the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children; children disengaged in education; and children at risk of offending.

Our core role includes:

- Receiving referrals for children/young people who may be at risk.
- Ensuring that other public agencies carry out enquiries and assessments into children/young people's circumstances so we can make informed decisions about children/young people referred to us.
- Making decisions on whether to refer a child/young person to a Children's Hearing if they need compulsory measures of supervision.
- Drafting the grounds for the Hearing.
- Arranging for Hearings to take place when we decide that compulsory measures of supervision are warranted 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 Vision: Children and young people will be listened to, protected and supported to realise 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. We are supportive, child-centred; respectful and accountable.

3. Why Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Matters

Equality, diversity and inclusion is about culture. In SCRA we are clear that this is a journey with no end, and we are continually evolving and learning. This journey is one of leadership, change and continuous quality improvement. We aspire to actively value our unique differences and grasp this to promote equality, understand equity, encourages diversity and nurtures inclusion.

What does being inclusive mean for everyone in SCRA?

- We can all be ourselves at work.
- We have the best people from a wide range of backgrounds.
- We understand, respect and value each other's differences.
- We are motivated and passionate about doing our best.
- We encourage creativity and innovation.
- We behave and lead in an inclusive way.
- We can raise ideas and challenge one another in a respectful way
- We value everybody's contribution and experiences.

Getting inclusion and diversity right not only makes SCRA a great place to work, it also means that we are delivering the best possible service to children and their families – that is accessible to all, meets their individual needs and upholds their rights.

Our Commitment

SCRA aspires to be an industry leader in our behaviours, attitudes and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion where we go beyond our legal and statutory duties. We are passionate about equality, diversity and inclusion and recognise it is our collective responsibility to achieve our aspirations.

SCRA is committed to embodying and promoting the ethos and practice of equality, diversity and inclusion in all its service delivery, operations, practices, processes and policies whether pertaining to the workforce, partner agencies or children and families. 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 deliver a quality service to children.

SCRA is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce and throughout all of our working practices. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. We aspire to being an SCRA that embraces, acknowledges and is representative of all sections of society; promoting equality, tolerance and respect so that everyone is able to achieve their potential.

4. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is a specific requirement for public bodies in implementing the Equality Duty. It means integrating equality into our day to day working and considering equality in everything we do. Mainstreaming the Equality Duty has a number of benefits including:

- Equality becomes part of the structures, behaviours and culture;
- SCRA knows, and can demonstrate, how in carrying out its functions it promotes equality; and,
- Mainstreaming equality contributes to continuous improvement, improved performance and a better experience for those attending Children’s Hearings.

In Scotland, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (and subsequent updates) (“the Regulations”) impose **specific** duties.

Specific Duties: Mainstreaming Equality

In Scotland, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (and subsequent updates) are designed to help public authorities like SCRA meet the general Equality Duty.

The specific duties require SCRA to report every two years on mainstreaming the Equality Duty and the progress against achieving SCRA’s Equality Outcomes. SCRA’s Equality Mainstreaming Report must include, or be published alongside, information on:

- Progress to make the general Equality Duty integral to the exercise of SCRA’s functions;
- An annual breakdown of employment monitoring information under the duty to gather and use employee information;
- Details of the progress made in gathering and using employment monitoring information to perform the general Equality Duty; and,
- Information on the gender composition of SCRA’s Board of Governance, and the steps taken or planned towards ensuring diversity in relation to the protected characteristics of SCRA’s Board members.

Our reporting history

SCRA reports annually on progress to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion. We have published our Equality Outcomes and a report on progress in mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion since 2013. Our current Equality Outcomes cover 2020-2023.

Equality Outcomes 2020-2023

1. Children, young people and their families are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. They understand and are able to access our services in ways that suit their individual needs.
 - i. Our staff will continue to treat all children, young people and their families with dignity and respect.
 - ii. Our services will be procured, designed, shaped and delivered to meet the needs of children, young people and their families.
2. We will build an inclusive culture which values and develops our people, providing them with the tools and support they need to be skilled, confident, valued respected and cared for to maximise their potential.
 - i. Our leaders will foster a culture where our people feel included, valued, respected and cared for.
 - ii. Our staff will feel supported, respected and cared for.
3. We will actively tackle under-representation and create a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.
 - i. We will make our workforce more diverse through our recruitment and selection processes.

Realigning Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Over the past three years, significant change has taken place in SCRA, not just in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also in response to the wider policy and legislative landscape, such as UNCRC incorporation and The Promise. This external and internal change has necessitated a different approach to how SCRA thinks about and 'does' equality, equity, diversity and inclusion; and where it 'sits' within the organisation.

In 2021, SCRA's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy was integrated within our new holistic Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-23. This strategy recognises the intrinsic and inextricable link between our statutory – and moral – duties for human rights, equalities and inclusion and corporate parenting. The Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy is, alongside a reform work stream, the key delivery mechanism for SCRA to Keep The Promise. This approach ensures that equality, equity, diversity and inclusion sits at the very heart of the work we are doing to Keep The Promise, as well as our business-as-usual activity. Progress across SCRA's work around rights, inclusion and corporate parenting is reported annually in our accessible Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Year Report Card, which first reported in 2022 (covering the year 2021-2022).

Our Equality Outcomes (see Figure 1) are now aligned with SCRA's corporate aims of care, connect and protect, which are themselves aligned to the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (or National Outcomes) which are Scotland's localisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This Framework – like the SDGs – focus on tackling inequality to ensure a fairer Scotland for all, irrespective of background or identity. Aligning our Equality Outcomes in this way ensures that SCRA, as a public body, plays its part in

contributing towards national and international goals in relation to inequality and sustainability.

Figure 1:



This report provides an update on our achievements and progress in relation to the equality, diversity and inclusion part of our Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2023 and our Equality Outcomes 2020-2023. It highlights how we continue to embed equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do.

Leadership & Governance

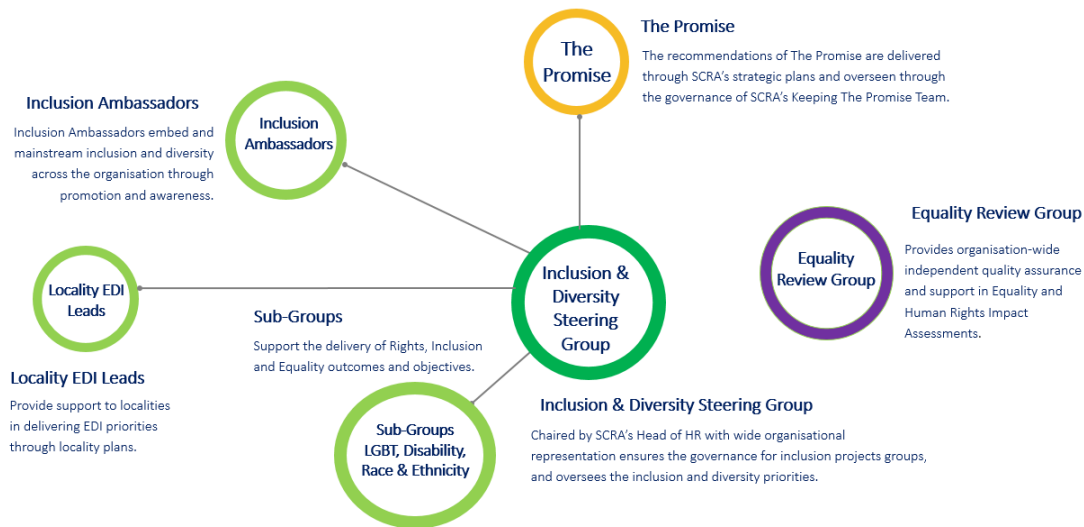
SCRA's inclusion and diversity work is overseen by an Inclusion & Diversity Steering Group, chaired by the Head of HR, which takes a strategic overview of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion as it aligns with the Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The programme of work is led and managed by SCRA's Inclusion & Diversity Manager, who is supported by topical inclusion and diversity groups: our LGBT Group, Disability Group, Race & Ethnicity Group and the new Locality Equality Lead Network and Fairer Scotland Group; as well as a network of 38 Inclusion Ambassadors from varying locations and roles throughout SCRA who continually champion our inclusion and diversity across the organisation.

See figure 2 on the next page for our structure.

Figure 2:

SCRA Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Structure



SCRA's approach to inclusion and diversity is that equality and equity is not just one person's or one group's job; it is the responsibility of all of us – it has, and should always be, a collective effort. True equality requires an equitable approach and that requires culture change and a recognition of what we do well and where we need to improve. This takes time, and it takes an army of enthusiastic, dedicated and knowledgeable people with real passion, drive and enthusiasm. Work towards achieving SCRA's Equality Outcomes takes place across many different groups, teams and plans – and the structure of the inclusion and diversity work in SCRA reflects that. To achieve our Equality Outcomes requires dedication and commitment, and SCRA acknowledges this in its support for staff from across the organisation to have the time and space to do this incredibly valuable work.

The Fair Work Agreement

SCRA is committed to implementing the Fair Work agreement confirming the application of Fair Work principles across Civil Service bodies in the Scottish Administration.

SCRA is recognised as an accredited living wage employer. SCRA also works in partnership with the recognised trade union UNISON, as set in our National Partnership Agreement and, as such, involves UNISON in decision-making and respects the right of UNISON to engage in legal industrial action. SCRA also continues to employ Modern Apprentices.

As an employer we have always committed to flexible working wherever possible and our strategic well-being approach underlines our commitment to all staff achieving a positive and healthy working life. In SCRA we have approximately 120 different working patterns which evidences our flexibility and inclusivity. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic saw significant impacts on our ways of working and saw our people working from home in a much more flexible way than before. This approach to work has, and will, continue to be the norm in SCRA through our Agile Working Policy.

Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment

SCRA has a statutory duty to assess the equality impact of applying its policies, practices, systems and processes. SCRA interprets this duty widely to include the full range of SCRA's policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services – essentially everything we do – and we welcome this as a mechanism to continually improve our service delivery, working environment and workforce diversity. Meaningful and timely completion of impact assessment for all new/revised policies, processes and procedures ensures that we consider equalities impact when we embark on any change – and thinking in this way as we work encourages us to think broadly about the impact of what we do and how we do it. In time, this way of thinking will become the norm and not something we have to actively engage in. We are also mindful that the general duties of the Equality Act 2010 require us to continually assess the impact of everything we do in relation to the protected characteristics. Our approach to impact assessment embraces that duty.

Our Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) is a holistic approach to the development/revision of our policies, processes and procedures ensures the promotion and safeguarding of the rights of the child (UNCRC), the protection of parents' rights (ECHR) and our legislative responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. In addition, it ensures we consider the socio-economic implications (the Fairer Scotland Duty) in all that we do, so that we do not discriminate based on socio-economic status and that the impact of poverty (financial and opportunity) is minimised in our service delivery and working policies and practices. To provide oversight, governance and quality assurance to our EHRIA process, we have an Equality Review Group. In 2023, the Equality Review Group comprises 12 staff from across the organisation. The remit of this group is to review all the EHRIAs submitted to ensure all equalities and human rights impacts have been adequately considered and negative impacts mitigated.

A significant focus throughout 2022-2023 has been on further developing and refining the EHRIA approach. We have continued to raise awareness and promote SCRA's EHRIA process to staff. Throughout the year we have worked to proactively manage impact assessment. Impact assessment continues to be resource intensive, however, it is a statutory duty and is both an effective and efficient way of mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion at both strategic and local level, with training and guidance provided to staff. SCRA's integrated and holistic approach to impact assessment has seen significant interest from a number of other public bodies.

In the reporting period, 22 EHRIAs were completed covering strategic and locality work and also our Keeping The Promise project work. The outcomes of all EHRIAs are published on SCRA's internal intranet Connect and are publicly available on our website www.scra.gov.uk.

Embedding Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in Corporate Planning

A strong strategic approach to inclusion and diversity is required to fully embed and mainstream equality, diversity and inclusion. By embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into SCRA's integrated Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy – which is a

foundation strategy upon which all of SCRA's organisational planning is built on – we ensure that equality, equity, diversity and inclusion sit at the heart of *everything* we do, now and in the future.

Additionally, SCRA's Inclusion & Diversity Manager and Planning & Performance Manager continue to work together to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is included in all corporate planning – strategic and operational, national and local.

Embedding Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in Localities

Throughout 2022-2023 a significant focus of the inclusion and diversity work has been in supporting Localities to mainstream inclusion and diversity at a local level. We now have at least one specific EDI Lead for each Locality. To support this group of geographically diverse colleagues, we created a Locality EDI Lead Network. This Network is hosted on MS Teams and enables all Locality EDI Leads to share questions, good practice, ideas and get peer support or advice and guidance from SCRA's Inclusion & Diversity Manager, as well as being a mechanism to promoting inclusion and diversity opportunities and training.

The Network ensures that strategic national inclusion and diversity priorities are communicated and discussed within Localities, but that Localities can identify areas of local inclusion and diversity work to 'feed up' into the national programme. This top down, bottom up approach to inclusion and diversity ensures that strategic priorities and local needs remain at the forefront of our inclusion and diversity work, in effect providing a feedback loop from Localities to ensure our inclusion and diversity work is needs-based.

We have revised our locality planning process to ensure that our national equality, diversity and inclusion objectives are embedded locally and that progress continues to be reported and tracked by managers across SCRA. The Locality EDI Lead Network will be further enhanced in 2023-2024 by embedding national EDI priorities around training and impact assessment in Locality Plans as well as identifying areas of local need to influence the national programme of inclusion and diversity work. A broader programme of training will also be considered in 2023-24 ensuring that all staff have an awareness of what is expected of them working in SCRA.

5. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: Achievements & Progress

This section will outline the progress SCRA has made on achieving its Equality Outcomes 2020-2023 and presents all activity pertaining to equality, diversity and inclusion since 1 April 2022.

Despite the challenges and pace of change over the past few years, we continue to make significant progress in embedding and mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our service and our workplace. Our specific actions and achievements during 2022-2023 reflect our commitment and demonstrate the significant breadth and volume of work that has been undertaken in 2022-2023 to progress our equality, diversity and inclusion ambitions.

To ensure continuous improvement and learning and encourage the use and sharing of good practice, we remain members of the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei) and the NDPB Equalities Forum. We are also represented in the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls, the Cross-Justice Working Group on Race Data & Evidence and the Scottish Government's BSL-led Justice Advisory Group.

Improving Equality Data

Recording and monitoring equality data is important, not just for data's sake, but to aid organisational and corporate planning. Equality data helps us to better understand the needs of the people we work with and for and provides us with an evidence-base for implementing and measuring change and improvement. Without it, we would not know how or where to target our action and resource. As a public sector organisation we have a finite budget, and robust equality data helps us to spend that budget in the most impactful way.

Equality Data: Service Delivery

SCRA rolled out a new computer system – Core Systems and Applications Solution (CSAS) – at the end of 2020. CSAS has fields to collect the protected characteristic information for children referred to SCRA to ensure that we provide a sensitive needs-based service to all. These include: age; sex; gender identity; disability; race/ethnicity; and religion/faith. The recording options are those set by the Census with the view that as recording across the protected characteristics improves, SCRA will have robust data on the children referred to the Reporter and those that attend Hearings which will be comparable to the wider Scottish population.

To improve the recording of children's equality data on CSAS, a project is underway. This is still in its infancy and guidance for staff will be provided in 2023-2024 on what information to record, our responsibilities to ensure the information recorded is correct and the importance of recording this information in terms of service delivery, service improvement

and data improvement. The project will be piloted in two Locality areas (Ayrshire and South East) to establish the best approach, prior to finalising the guidance and process to embed in our Target Operational Model and roll out nationally across SCRA. It is hoped that we will have robust reportable data within five years.

Equality Data: Workforce

Our Employee Information Statistics Report 2023 shows that we have 487 employees in SCRA (as at 31st January 2023)¹.

Our annual Equalities Monitoring Campaign 'Free To Be Me' was launched on the International Day of Tolerance on 16th November 2022 and ran until International Human Rights Day on 10th December 2022. Equalities monitoring of our workforce helps us to:

- Better understand our workforce demographics and where we should concentrate action and resource to better support and respond to our colleagues' needs;
- Measure the diversity of our workforce, and how that compares to the Scottish population (and areas where we need to improve diversity);
- Explore any trends and whether actual or potential disadvantage or discrimination exist;
- Inform policy, decision-making and make improvements through our inclusion and diversity programmes and action plans;
- Provide targeted information, support and positive action initiatives (e.g. menopause awareness and resources, mental health initiatives, etc);
- Comply with the law in protecting our people from discrimination, victimisation and harassment at work; and,
- Measure and report progress in meeting our Equality Outcomes and to inform impact assessments.

Staff Survey

We conducted our annual staff survey in November 2022. Our staff survey provides a key metric of employees' views on what it is like to work for the organisation, and normally covers a range of diverse topics such as communication, learning and development, managing change, our organisational objectives and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our 2022 staff survey found that:

- 96% of staff understand their individual responsibility for inclusion and diversity and how this relates to their role;
- 88% of staff think that SCRA is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion;
- 85% of staff know how and where to report a concern about discrimination or harassment;
- 80% of staff feel included and respected in SCRA;
- 80% of staff think that SCRA respects individual differences (e.g. cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas, etc);

¹ Our Employee Information Statistics 2023 report is available on our website www.scra.gov.uk

- 80% of staff think that their line manager demonstrates a commitment to and support for inclusion and diversity; and,
- 68% of staff feel that SCRA provides an environment for free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs.

The results of the staff survey are broadly positive in terms of our inclusion and diversity work, and people's understanding of their responsibilities, their managers responsibilities and SCRA's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. That said, there is always room for improvement and we acknowledge that, whilst a majority, 68% of staff feel that their working environment is conducive to free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs, is lower than we would like, and lower in comparison to the other inclusion and diversity metrics in the survey. This will be an area of focus over the coming years.

Core Corporate Activity

Whilst some equality, diversity and inclusion work is specifically labelled and promoted as such, some of SCRA's core business-as-usual activity also contributes towards equality, diversity and inclusion mainstreaming. By embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our business-as-usual activity we will, similarly to impact assessment, begin to naturally consider it and it will become part of our collective psyche and not something with which we have to actively engage.

Policies & Procedures

We have a comprehensive package of policies and guidance that promote mainstream equality and inclusion across SCRA. We have an established audit process to ensure that our policies are up to date and reflect current legislation, inclusive language and best practice. We are committed to providing an inclusive workplace where our people feel valued and cared for regardless of their age, religion or belief, race, disability, marital status, pregnancy, maternity and breastfeeding, sexual orientation, gender identity, care experience or socio-economic background. Our policies and guidance support us to achieve that. In the reporting period, we reviewed the following:

- Managing Fixed Term Workers Policy;
- Career Break Policy;
- Standby Policy;
- Volunteering Policy;
- Agile Working Policy;
- Probationary Policy;
- Learning & Development Policy;
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy;
- Inclusive Standards & Behaviours Framework (new policy); and,
- Right to Disconnect Policy (new policy).

Training

SCRA has three mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion e-learning courses for all staff. The courses 'Bullying, Harassment & Victimisation' and 'Unconscious Bias' were previously

mandatory, and, in January 2023, we introduced a new mandatory e-learning 'Diversity, Equality & Discrimination'. These courses are also part of induction for new members of staff.

We also have access to additional equality, diversity and inclusion topical e-learning courses which focus on specific equalities related issues pertaining to the protected characteristics. We encourage managers to use these resources to address specific issues or areas of concern that may arise locally, such as age discrimination and disability discrimination.

Property

Details of the Hearing centres owned or leased by us are published in our external website for children and their families to access in advance of their planned visit to our hearing centre and other SCRA buildings. We are continually looking at our estate to identify potential improvements to improve accessibility for staff and children and families who attend Children's Hearings. In addition, we have now have Visual Information Guides for 19 of our Hearing Centres available on our website to help people coming to Hearings.

As part of our corporate parenting duties and our ongoing commitment to improving Hearing rooms for children, we continue to roll out a Hearing Room Improvement Programme to upgrade facilities for children attending Hearings. During the reporting period and building upon our existing property portfolio improvements, the following upgrades were undertaken in 2022-2023: Stirling, Hamilton; Stranraer; Tranent; and Fraserburgh. We have also done some additional improvement works to our Alloa Hearing Centre and we have started the upgrade to our Hearing Centre in Elgin. The focus of these works are to improve the experience for children and families coming to Hearings and to better enable them to participate in a more accessible and child-friendly environment. A programme of property improvement for staff workspaces is also underway.

Fairer Scotland Duty: Socio-economic Equality

The importance of the Fairer Scotland Duty has never been more significant in light of COVID-19 and the current cost-of-living crisis. The socio-economic duty was included as provision in the Equality Act 2010 and implemented by the Scottish Government on 1 April 2018. The Duty, known as the Fairer Scotland Duty, is one of a number of duties placed on the public sector to tackle socio-economic disadvantage, child poverty, equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. The Duty requires relevant public authorities to do more to tackle inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring their strategic decision making takes account of those experiencing it. SCRA is not currently listed as a public authority that is required to report on the Fairer Scotland Duty, however, we consider the understanding of the impact of socio-economic disadvantage and inequality to be integral to everything we do and have been committed to the Duty since it was introduced.

The response to COVID-19 necessitated a focus on the impact of socio-economic deprivation on digital poverty and the resultant digital divide. It has become increasingly clear that the link between poverty and digital exclusion is significant and inhibitive to participation. At a

time where Children’s Hearings were delivered virtually and staff were working predominantly from home, our understanding of and approaches to tackling the digital divide are of paramount importance in our aim to reduce inequality and ensure inclusive and participative practices, both for children and families and our workforce. As we continue our journey of recovery from the pandemic, SCRA continues to offer virtual, as well as hybrid, Children’s Hearings, in addition to traditional face-to-face Hearings and our approach is constantly being refined as we learn. In keeping with this more flexible approach to Hearings provision, we are able to provide a range of options for Hearings attendance to best suit individual children and family’s needs, for example, where they live rurally to attend Hearings virtually, or for a child to attend a Hearing from school if they do not have the technology to do so from home.

In October 2022, to mark Challenge Poverty Week, we launched our new Fairer Scotland Group which forms part of our wider inclusion and diversity programme of work. The aim of the group is to examine and consider how SCRA can tackle poverty (of resource and opportunity) for the children and families we work with, but also for our colleagues. As with all the other topical inclusion and diversity groups in SCRA, the Fairer Scotland Group will develop an annual Action Plan of activity to actively address the impact of socio-economic disadvantage.

Targeted Activity: Protected Characteristics

SCRA recognises that there are many aspects of our social and political identities that make us ‘us’, including things that are not covered by the Equality Act 2010, such as our upbringing, child and adulthood experiences, our education and our political beliefs. These aspects of our identity do not sit independently of one another and we understand that multiple forms of inequality often compound experiences of discrimination, and of privilege. As such, we take a rights-based intersectional and cross-sectional approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and recognise that there is overlap and interplay between the protected characteristics. Some key equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives and work in 2022-2023 cross the protected characteristics and are intersectional and, are therefore reported under the subheading of ‘intersectional’. Our activities outlined in this section all serve to raise awareness, promote understanding and tolerance and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not and, as such, fulfil part of our obligations under the general Equality Duty.

Age

SCRA has an ageing workforce. As at 31st January 2023, our workforce comprises of the following:

- 16-24 years: 2.5%
- 25-34 years: 13.1%
- 35-44 years: 24%
- 45-54 years: 30.6%
- 55-64 years: 28.1%
- 65+ years: 1.6%

Whilst age in and of itself has not been the focus of targeted activity during the reporting period, issues pertaining to age have been of significant focus throughout the year, such as menopause. Given SCRA work for children, much of our activity also focusses on children and young people. Whilst age-related these activities have been reported under other protected characteristics.

Disability

In 2016, SCRA became a Disability Confident Employer, which has been further accredited until 2026. The Disability Confident Employment Scheme is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions.

Our Employee Information Statistics show that, as at 31st January 2023, just 5.1% of our employees reported having a disability. For comparison, around one fifth of Scotland's population considers themselves to have a disability. Given the wide variety of potential disabilities, we anticipated that this figure is under-reported as a result of a lack of awareness of what constitutes a disability under the Equality Act 2010 which is "a long-standing health condition that limits daily activity". This includes diagnoses of neurodiversity, enduring and recurring mental ill-health and critical illness, which some of our colleagues may not be aware of. We do not have accurate data on how many children we work with who have a disability or disabilities.

During Deaf Awareness Week in May 2022 we launched Deaf Awareness and BSL e-learning and our guidance 'Deaf Awareness and Communication Tips' to promote better understanding of deafness and BSL. We also shared two bitesize films made by someone who is deaf which demonstrate the importance of deaf awareness and challenged misconceptions around being deaf and what it is like being deaf in a hearing world. In September 2022, to mark the International Week of the Deaf, we offered 12 colleagues the opportunity to study a six-week BSL Taster Course, promoted our Deaf Awareness and BSL e-learning and launched a BSL version of our 'How to Complain Guide'. A further 12 colleagues began the BSL Taster Course in March 2023 during Sign Language Week.

In September 2022 – Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Month – we encouraged our colleagues to learn about FASD and the impact that it has on people's lives. FASD is a 'hidden' disability and we shared a range of resources with colleagues, including factsheets and videos co-produced with people with lived experience of FASD and their families, encouraged our colleagues to access training and launched a dedicated FASD page on our intranet. In January and February 2023, we hosted sessions with the FASD Hub Scotland team (part of Adoption UK) to raise awareness of FASD, including the basis and a Q&A with members of the team with lived experience of FASD.

The Independent Care Review told us that many of the children attending Hearings have a known speech, language and communication issues and that there is an over-representation of children with additional support needs. To ensure a child can fully participate in the Hearings process we need to ensure that they are provided with all the support they need. In October 2022, the Speech, Language and Communication Needs subgroup of the

Children's Rights Implementation Group hosted a webinar on 'Upholding children's rights in the context of communication needs' which we encouraged our colleagues to attend to provide them with a starting point to improve their knowledge and skills in relation to speech, language and communication needs.

We have continued our commitment to supporting children and young people who have neuro-differences. To promote Dyslexia Awareness Week and ADHD Awareness Month in October 2022, one of our colleagues shared her experience with ADHD and dyslexia. In November 2022 we launched a pilot of our 'Autism Alert card' in two of our hearing centres which was developed following direct engagement with autistic young people. We will evaluate the findings of the pilot and consider whether this should be rolled out across our hearing centres. We have also recently partnered with Salveson Mindroom, a charity that champions all forms of neurodiversity and supports all kinds of minds, to launch a Neurodiversity Champions Network. The Champions will help raise awareness of neurodiversity within the organisation through providing training and awareness raising to staff. It will also provide advice and guidance to colleagues who are supporting people who have neuro-differences to attend Hearings, court and participate in the Hearings process more generally. The Champions will ensure that sensory tools, visual information guides and other aids to support people with neuro-differences are available and actively promoted within all our Hearing centres. In addition, the Network will provide a feedback loop to SCRA's wider Inclusion & Diversity Steering Group on matters relating to neurodiversity. As part of this work we hosted two webinars for staff in March 2023 to learn more about the 'History of Neurodiversity' and to provide them with 'An Introduction to Neurodiversity'. This will provide a basis from which the Neurodiversity Champions will work to increase awareness.

There are over 200 different types of cancer and, sadly, it will affect many of us during our lifetimes either directly, or supporting a family member, friend or colleague. As an ageing workforce, cancer is, unfortunately, not uncommon amongst our colleagues. During October, to mark Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we promoted the annual campaign run by Breast Cancer UK to raise awareness of breast cancer – which can affect women, men, transgender and non-binary people – and highlighted the main symptoms of breast cancer and encouraged our colleagues to sign up to various webinars and events being held by external organisations. November is Mouth Cancer Action Month and we launched and promoted a new information page on our intranet to help our colleagues identify the symptoms of mouth cancer and bringing together information and resources provided by experts such as the Oral Health Foundation.

The impact of disability on our workforce goes beyond just disabilities that we, ourselves, have; also important to consider is the impact of disabilities that our family members and people close to us may have in terms of any caring responsibilities our colleagues may have. In May 2022, we encouraged staff to attend a virtual webinar with the Charity for Civil Servants which talked about the challenges faced by carers and the supports available to carers, both through the Charity but also from other organisations.

Gender reassignment

Gender reassignment, gender identity and transgender issues is an area of significant political and public focus and interest. It is also an increasingly arising issue in SCRA, particularly in how we should respond to a trans child or young person. As at 31st January 2023, we have no employees who reported that they are transgender. However, 0.4% preferred not to say and 76% did not disclose this information. As such, there *could* be some employees who do not identify as the sex they were assigned at birth and do not want to disclose this. We do not have data on how many children we work with who may be transgender, although we have notes on 297 children's files that suggest they may be transgender (e.g. a note to use a different name or different pronouns that those aligned to their sex assigned at birth).

International Non-Binary People's Day in July 2022 we promoted a video where our Inclusion & Diversity Manager talks to a trans/non-binary young adult about their journey, experiences and the importance of getting pronouns and terminology right; and what to do if we make a mistake. We also highlighted our 'LGBT+ Inclusive Language Guide' to encourage colleagues to read to better understand the importance of LGBTQI+ inclusive language in how we communicate with each other, and with the children and families we work with. Transgender issues will remain a focus of our inclusion and diversity work in future.

Pregnancy, maternity & breastfeeding

SCRA is compliant with the legislation on pregnancy, maternity and breastfeeding including the Management of Health & Safety Regulations 1999, Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992, Employment Relations Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010. As at 31st January 2023, 1.8% of our employees were either pregnant or on maternity leave at some point in the previous 12 months.

We have longstanding generous family friendly leave policies including: antenatal care leave; maternity leave; paternity leave; adoption leave; fertility leave; dependent care leave; parental leave; and parental bereavement leave. We are also a breastfeeding friendly workplace and organisation. Our 'New & Expectant Mothers Guidance' outlines what new and expectant mothers should expect from SCRA, including a pregnancy risk assessment and how SCRA can support them to continue breastfeeding on their return to work.

Race

In October 2022, we published our first Race Equality Action Plan 2021-2022, to mark Black History Month. The plan was produced by our Race & Ethnicity Group, which is chaired by our Principal Reporter/CEO to ensure it remains a strategic priority and has authority to tackle racial inequality and progress our ambitious race equality agenda and Action Plan. The Action Plan aimed to ensure we have a better understanding of the needs and experiences of our colleagues, children and families and that all children and families can engage with our services and our colleagues can work without fear of discrimination or misunderstanding.

SCRA is a predominantly white workforce. As at 31st January 2023, 65.5% of our employees reported their ethnicity as white², 2.5% as from another ethnic background³ and 32% chose not to disclose their ethnicity. In 2011, the Census showed that around 4% of the Scottish population are of a minority ethnic background. We have used the Scottish Government's Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit to review our recruitment processes and identified areas of improvement from this benchmarking exercise. Improving the diversity of our workforce will remain a continued focus.

We do not have reliable data to understand the ethnic diversity of the children we work with, however, we are committed to improving our recording of children's ethnicity. Our Race Equality Action Plan 2022-2023 included an ambitious multi-year approach to improving our understanding of potential racial inequality in our service delivery and decision-making, taking a mixed method approach. Improving our data is the start of this work and we will, as the data improves, conduct case-sampling exercises and research projects to explore whether there is racial inequality in our decision-making, particularly in relation to the Reporter decision-making.

In recognition that we do not necessarily know the scale or impact of racial inequality in SCRA – for our colleagues, as well as children, families and partners – we are committed to listening and learning about the experiences, in SCRA but also Scottish society more generally. We will do this through a range of mechanisms and in January 2023 we hosted a Listening Circle with colleagues in our Glenrothes office which provided valuable insight into experiences and awareness of racism and racial inequality and we will take that learning to inform our race equality work going forward.

International Migrants Day was in December 2022. This is a day set aside by the UN to recognise the significant contribution that migration can bring to our society whilst also highlighting the challenges that migrants may face. To celebrate the contribution of migration, and the diversity it brings to what we do in SCRA and Scotland more generally, two of our colleagues shared their stories and the impact of their experiences of migration on their personal and professional lives. To further raise awareness of inequality in relation to migration, and to celebrate Race Equality Week in February 2023, we hosted a virtual 'Refugee Awareness Session' which explored the reality of the refugee situation and racial inequality in refugee aid. Our Inclusion & Diversity Manager spoke about the refugee situation in northern France and we were joined by the Scottish Refugee Council who provided clarity around terminology, the asylum process and the supports available for refugees in Scotland, including unaccompanied children. To further mark race Equality Week, we launched our 'Racism Guidance Note' to support our colleagues in identifying racism and challenging any racism they experience or witness. This compliments our 'Hate Crime Guidance Note', published in 2021 and demonstrates our zero tolerance approach to racism.

Religion & belief

² This includes British, English, Irish, Northern Irish, Scottish, Welsh and any other white background.

³ This includes Chinese, Pakistani, any Asian background, any other mixed background and 'other'.

As at 31st January 2023, 20.3% of our workforce reported that they had a religion or belief, 7.8% reported no religion or belief and 71.9% did not disclose this information. We do not have reliable data to understand the religion or belief of the children and families we work with.

We used Interfaith Week in November 2022 as an opportunity to promote understanding between different faiths, including those who hold no religious beliefs, to help strengthen interfaith relationships. We spoke to four colleagues about their religion and/or belief and shared their testimonials on how they practice their faith and the importance of their faith/beliefs on their lives – at home and at work. We shared five fascinating testimonials from a variety of faiths/beliefs: Christianity; Roman Catholic; Islam; Judaism; and agnosticism. We will continue to celebrate a range of religious holidays throughout the year raising awareness around different faiths/beliefs.

Sex

In common with other ‘care’ focussed organisations, SCRA has a predominantly female⁴ workforce: as at 31st January 2023, 88.7% of our workforce were women and 75% of our Board are women⁵.

SCRA has one of the highest gender pay gaps in the public sector in Scotland, sitting at 23.80% (mean)/27.52% (median) in 2022. This is, however, the lowest pay gap in six years of reporting, with an overall reduction of 4.98% (mean)/1.73% (median) since 2017. We acknowledge the reductions are small and gradual and we are focussing on reducing this in every way possible including reviewing our recruitment and selection process and materials to ensure that women continue to apply for management posts – currently 57% of all senior managers (Grade F – G) are female - and also to encourage men to apply for non-management lower grade posts. In doing this we will use the Gender Decoder tool to identify any subtle gender bias in our language to ensure our adverts and job descriptions are unbiased and explore new opportunities for partnership working.

In celebration of International Men’s Day in November 2022 – which focussed on men’s mental health and well-being – we promoted the testimonials that some of our male colleagues shared in 2021 on the things they do to keep and stay well. We also highlighted the support offered by Andy’s Man Club. In lieu of Blue Monday (16th January 2023), SCRA hosted a webinar for all staff, facilitated by Andy’s Man Club. Andy’s Man Club is a men’s suicide prevention charity, offering free-to-attend peer-to-peer support groups across the UK and online. They aim to end the stigma surrounding men’s mental health and help men through the power of connection and conversation.

To mark International Women’s Day in March 2023, we promoted and encouraged our female colleagues – and allies – to attend a webinar hosted by the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei) focussing on ‘Celebrating Women Leaders’. We also re-launched our Women into Leadership Network which had taken a hiatus during COVID-19 and

⁴ This report refers to female/male colleagues, but this includes all people who identify as female/male.

⁵ Further information is available in our Gender Representation on Public Boards 2023 report, published on our website www.scra.gov.uk

subsequent recovery. We are now in a position to look at providing an exciting programme of work to support the development and leadership aspirations of women in SCRA.

In our Inclusion & Diversity Action Plan for 2022-2023, we committed to launching a Menopause Toolkit, in recognition that we have an ageing female workforce. To help us understand the impact of menopause amongst SCRA staff and to help us develop the toolkit and resources, we launched a Menopause Survey in August 2022 – we got 132 responses from our female colleagues, of which 99 were experiencing menopause or perimenopause symptoms including insomnia, brain fog, confusion, memory loss, hot flushes, anxiety, fatigue and feeling emotional. We used this information to develop our Menopause Toolkit, which we launched to mark Menopause Awareness Month in October 2022. This toolkit contains general information about the menopause, information for employers and managers and links to internal and external supports. We also hosted a menopause webinar (including one that was for men only) and shared some testimonials from colleagues who spoke candidly about their experiences with menstruation, perimenopause, menopause and endometriosis to raise awareness of the impact these issues can have on our lives and our work. We also hosted two mindfulness sessions focussing on anxiety in recognition that anxiety is a common symptom of menopause. We also hosted a virtual Menopause Café in November 2022, hosted by one of our Senior Operational Managers who led a discussion to promote the use of Menopause Cafés in localities and the impact of menopause and perimenopause on our people. In November 2022, we also hosted a webinar on pelvic floor health which was aimed at women of all ages and stages and covered why pelvic floor health is critical for all women. Finally, in March 2023, we hosted a webinar for colleagues on endometriosis to promote awareness and understanding of the condition, the symptoms associated with it, how to manage it and where to seek help and support.

Sexual orientation

As at 31st January 2023, 27.3% of our workforce reported that they are heterosexual, 2.1% reported that they are lesbian/gay/bisexual/other and 70.6% did not disclose this information. As such, we are unclear whether there is potentially a higher number of lesbian, gay, bisexual or other non-heterosexual people in our workforce.

SCRA received LGBT Youth Charter Foundation Award in 2019, which is due to expire at the end of 2023. Due to the diverse geographical spread of SCRA, obtaining the Bronze Award is not possible. We are committed to LGBTQI+ inclusion – for children, parents and our workforce – and will be working towards LGBT Youth Charter Foundation accreditation in 2023 through our newly reinvigorated LGBT Group which, unfortunately, had to be paused due to operational pressures in 2022.

Marriage/civil partnership

Marriage and civil partnership is a protected characteristic only in respect of the requirement to have due regards to the need to eliminate discrimination. In SCRA, as at 31st January 2023, 45% of our workforce reported they are married or in a civil partnership,

13.6% said they were single, 14.6% fall into an 'other' category⁶ and 26.9% did not disclose their marital status. All of SCRA's policies apply equally to those who are married or in a civil partnership and those who are not.

Care experience

SCRA recognises equality for staff and children who have experience of the care system as a 'tenth' protected characteristic. As at 31st January 2023, 0.8% of our workforce report having care experience, 7.4% do not, 0.4% preferred not to say whether they had experience of care as a child and 91.4% did not disclose this information.

SCRA continues to value its Modern Apprenticeship Programme, which has been running since 2011, in providing not only the organisation with valuable care lived experience input but also in providing young people with care experience employment and training opportunities. To date, we have provided 14 Modern Apprenticeships to care experienced young people. In addition, we also run work experience programmes for people with experience of Children's Hearings and/or of being in care. In the reporting period we ran one work experience programme between from May to end July 2022.

Our Voice of Experience Reference Group – comprised of colleagues from across Scotland with a wide range of experiences of care, including fostering, adoption, being in care and as kinship carers – was formed in March 2022 and met regularly throughout 2022-2023 to identify areas of improvement for children and families attending Hearings. To celebrate Care Experience Week in October 2022, we provided an update to colleagues to share the work of the group, which included their first report of recommendations for improvements to our Executive Management Team and the Keeping The Promise Programme Board and an away day to further consider improvements needed to make the Hearings System – and the work of SCRA – care-experienced person friendly.

Intersectional

SCRA recognises that protected characteristics are not independent of one another and that we all have intersectional identities. SCRA's values sit at the heart of everything we do, irrespective of our job roles. Our intersectional identities are inextricably interlinked with our values and how these influence our behaviours. How we behave and the language we use, consciously and unconsciously, is what others see – and feel – and is an expression of our commitment to SCRA's core corporate values of being supportive, child-centred, respectful and accountable.

Throughout 2022-2023, we have been developing SCRA's new Inclusive Standards & Behaviours Framework. These sit alongside our Management Standards and other existing policies, such as the Code of Conduct and Dignity at Work Policy to better illustrate and describe the values and behaviours we expect all our colleagues to uphold and demonstrate at work. The Standards & Framework outlines how we can all, through our behaviours, language, attitudes and approaches, contribute to an inclusive SCRA which recognises the

⁶ 'Other' includes: civil partnership dissolved, declared partnership, divorced, other, partner, surviving partner – civil partnership, widow

value of diversity and is consistent with SCRA's core corporate values. The six over-arching inclusive principles to inclusive standards and behaviours are:

- Working together – we will form effective, inclusive, psychologically safe and respectful partnerships and relationships with people, internally and externally, from a range of diverse backgrounds, sharing information, best practice, resources and support;
- Communicating & influencing – we communicate purpose and direction with clarity, integrity and enthusiasm while respecting the varied needs, beliefs and opinions of others;
- Developing self & others – we focus on continuous learning and development for ourselves, for others and for the organisation;
- Changing & improving – we will seek out opportunities to create effective change and harness innovation and creativity to ensure continuous improvement through our ways of working, including how we seek and provide feedback;
- Leadership & decision-making – we engage inclusively and supportively with others in delivering a shared vision by valuing our differences, ensuring fairness and opportunity for all. We use evidence and knowledge to support accurate, reliable and expert decision-making and the provision of advice carefully, ensuring we consider alternative options, implications and risks; and,
- Delivering a quality customer focussed service – we deliver our services for our people and the children and families with whom we work with professional excellence, expertise and efficiency, taking account of the diverse needs of everyone we work with. We provide exceptional and inclusive customer service internally and externally, with our partners as well as children and families.

The implementation of the Inclusive Standards & Behaviours Framework will continue throughout 2023-2024 and will inform our review of recruitment, supervision, succession planning and talent management and learning and development.

Embedding the importance of Health & Well-being

SCRA has a strategic aim to develop effective, confident and resilient staff through promoting high standards of health and well-being amongst its workforce. We recognise that any of us could go through a period where we struggle with our physical and emotional health. By choosing to be open about mental health, we are encouraging our people to become part of a movement that's changing the conversation around mental health to ensure that no one is made to feel isolated or alone for experiencing mental ill-health. We want everyone who works at SCRA to feel they can be open about their mental health and ask for support if they need it. SCRA has an active Mental Wealth Group that continues to promote mental health awareness and is working towards ensuring SCRA meets the Mental Health at Work Standards.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on individual and collective well-being of our workforce and continues to be felt, now compounded by the current cost-of-living crisis. Furthermore, as a result of national policy and legislative changes there is, and will remain for some time, significant change in SCRA and the wider policy and political landscape in which we work. Change is often uncomfortable for people and can impact their

well-being and so we remain committed to ensuring the emotional well-being of all our colleagues to support them through this period of change and recovery. To further enable us to support as many of our colleagues as possible, in partnership with UNISON, we have trained an additional 17 colleagues in Scotland's Mental Health First Aid in 2022-2023; and we now have a total of 24 Mental Health First Aiders, spread across SCRA.

For Mental Health Awareness Week in May 2022 we explored loneliness, its impact on our mental health and how we can all play a part in reducing loneliness in our communities and workplace. This is particularly pertinent in the aftermath of the pandemic and resultant public health restrictions that increased social isolation for all of us, and the consequent loneliness that some of us may continue to feel. We hosted two lunchtime webinars on 'Combatting the loneliness epidemic' which was run by Shine Workplace Wellbeing, challenging us to consider loneliness within a connected world and how we can all tackle this – as individuals, communities, and at work. We also kicked off our Big Team Challenge where we encouraged teams of up to six people to walk/run/swim/cycle/wheeling a virtual 1,557 km route (to take in 21 of SCRA's premises across Scotland). We revised and relaunched our Wellbeing Brochure which outlines all of the supports available to staff to ensure good mental health and promote their well-being. In recognition that contribution and connection are two of the five pillars of well-being, we promoted SCRA's Volunteering Policy to staff, encouraging them to use the policy to volunteer.

To mark Grief Awareness Day in August 2022, we launched a new health and well-being resource to help support our colleagues experiencing a loss in the form of a page on our intranet providing links to internal and external resources and colleague testimonials. In our approach, we have taken holistic view of loss, recognising that loss experience is unique to each individual, and include not just bereavement of family or friends, but loss of a pet, a breakdown of a relationship, diagnosis of illness or a serious injury.

For Time to Talk Day on 2nd February 2023 we hosted a webinar with Strathcarron Hospice on 'What is grief and how do I support my staff leading up to and after bereavement'. Whilst aimed particularly at managers, the webinar was open to all colleagues across SCRA, and explained what grief can look like and what we can do to support colleagues experiencing bereavement. We also hosted two virtual mindfulness sessions on Time To Talk Day, led by one of our Mindfulness Champions.

Understanding Trauma

SCRA is committed to Trauma Informed Practice and better understanding and appreciating the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) on the children and families we work with, and also on our colleagues. To enhance this, our Trauma Training Programme, which is aligned to the National Trauma Training Framework – in 2022-2023 had four elements:

- Locality and Head Office based Secondary Trauma Sessions;
- Trauma informed e-learning (provided by NHS Education Scotland);
- Trauma skilled training course (provided by NHS Education Scotland); and,
- Train the Trainer Programme (provided by NHS Education Scotland).

We have taken a staged approach to becoming more trauma informed, focussing initially on the Secondary Trauma Sessions which focus on the signs and symptoms of secondary trauma, as well as emphasising the supports available for colleagues experiencing secondary vicarious trauma. These sessions encourage managers and colleagues to consider what supports they may need and how they can limit the impact of vicarious trauma as a result of the work we do with vulnerable children and families. Sessions have been delivered to our Localities in Glasgow, Highlands & Islands, Ayrshire, North Strathclyde, Tayside & Fife (Dundee), Grampian, Glenrothes and Central. Any Localities that have not had the sessions in the reporting period will be scheduled by June 2023.

We have worked with NHS Education Scotland to provide comprehensive e-learning and more focussed face-to-face trauma informed training. The e-learning modules are mandatory for all SCRA staff on our e-learning platform, and is a requirement for further trauma training. The Trauma Skilled Training aims to help colleagues translate understanding and knowledge from the following areas into their practice at work: ways that trauma affects people; what trauma skilled practice looks like; how to hear and talk about trauma; how to develop relationships that support recovering following traumatic events; and the importance of caring for our own well-being. To date, 40 colleagues have received this training and this will be further rolled out based on availability of NHS Education Scotland. The next phase of our Trauma Training Programme is Train the Trainer Programme whereby SCRA will support select colleagues to be trained to deliver the Trauma Skilled Training course which will assist us in delivering a sustainable approach to trauma training going forward.

Notable Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Achievements

In June 2022, we participated in enei's annual TIDE (Talent Inclusion & Diversity Evaluation) benchmarking exercise – an exercise that focussed solely on the prior 12 months activity. TIDE is enei's self-assessment benchmarking tool which measures an organisation's approach and progress on diversity and inclusion over the following areas: workforce; strategy and planning; leadership and accountability; recruitment and attraction; training and development; other employment practices; communication and engagement; and procurement. TIDE enables us to identify our inclusion and diversity strengths and areas for improvement which are then used when planning our programme of work. Organisations who participate in TIDE are benchmarked against other organisations TIDE entries in that year. In 2022, we achieved a Silver TIDEmark Award when benchmarked against other organisations, an improvement on our Bronze TIDEmark Award in 2021.

6. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: Priorities for 2023-2024

This is the last year of work under our current Equality Outcomes 2020-2023; consultation and engagement will begin in summer 2023 towards identifying our Equality Outcomes 2024-2028.

Topical Activity

In 2023-2024 we are again committed to delivering an ambitious programme of equality, diversity and inclusion work. This will include a Disability Plan which will continue to focus on neuro-inclusivity, BSL and will also have a heavy focus on cancer as this is an issue which has significant impacts on our colleagues. Our Race Equality Action Plan will focus on better understanding racism and racial inequality in SCRA and in Scotland to enable us to identify activities and actions that we can take to address this.

Workforce diversity is important to us, and with relatively little turnover it is an area that will take some time to improve on. Nevertheless, there are things we can do to ensure our recruitment processes are fair, transparent, inclusive and attract diverse talent, and this will be a focus of work throughout 2023-2024, particularly how we might attract younger applicants, attract more men to the organisation (particularly to lower grades to reduce our Gender Pay Gap) and attract people from different ethnic backgrounds. We will be working to implement the Inclusive Standards & Behaviours Framework across SCRA which will promote and encourage an inclusive culture through ensuring inclusive recruitment, inclusive supervision and line management, inclusive succession planning and talent management and inclusive learning and development for all our colleagues.

Our LGBT Group took a hiatus in 2022 due to operational pressures, and this has only just been reinvigorated. The group will focus on SCRA retaining the LGBT Youth Charter foundation Bronze Award which is due to expire at the end of 2023. The group will also specifically focus on transgender awareness, through promoting awareness raising days and providing guidance for our colleagues on transgender issues. We hope to deliver some training and/or awareness raising sessions on transgender issues as these are increasingly raised issues from operational colleagues working with transgender children. We already have robust transgender guidance managers and Transgender Policy colleagues which was introduced in 2019.

Our work promoting mental health awareness and support, and our Trauma Training Programme and trauma awareness will continue to be a significant focus throughout 2023-2024 and beyond. The work we do at SCRA is often traumatic and it is imperative that our colleagues are supported in delivering their roles, but also in recognising the impact that their work can have on their own mental health. In addition to world events, including the cost-of-living crisis, SCRA is facing quite significant organisational and legislative change. We recognise change is often difficult for people, and particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, our colleagues may be needing support in staying mentally healthy.

There will be a focus on increasing training and learning opportunities for all staff in equality, diversity and inclusion. We will ensure our colleagues have completed the mandatory e-learning but will also promote the topical inclusion and diversity e-learning to broaden understanding and awareness of equality issues. Furthermore, we endeavour to host training and awareness sessions across the protected characteristics where any need arises.

Mainstreaming Activity

We believe that mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion is a journey of continuous improvement and culture change. Awareness raising and understanding inequality across and between the protected characteristics is only part of the journey; the other part is in embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our ways of working, rather than seeing it as a specialised 'add on'. By embedding our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion in our Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy, we are providing a foundation upon which all organisational strategy and plans are built, thus ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is considered across and within everything we do.

Mainstreaming is further achieved by (in addition to the topical equality, diversity and inclusion work) embedding a robust and impactful approach to Equality Impact Assessment, through delivering consistent mandatory training and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our localities to ensure it is a local priority, as well as a strategic one. As such, we will have a continued focus throughout 2023-2024 and beyond on:

- Training and awareness raising of our EHRIA process to empower colleagues to be able to identify when an EHRIA is required and complete them fully and timeously;
- The development of a risk reporting framework to manage organisational risk in relation to EHRIA;
- Ensuring colleagues have completed the mandatory e-learning, and ensuring managers are aware of its importance, and promoting the use of topical e-learning amongst managers; and,
- Developing and expanding our Locality EDI Lead Network.

Finally, a significant focus of work in 2023-2024 will be in improving the recording of equality data – both of our staff and of children we work with. Our colleagues equality data is entirely self-reported on our HR system, iTrent, and many colleagues do not wish to disclose their information. We will work to raise awareness of why it is so important for us to have this data in terms of planning and resourcing work that is as impactful as possible to our colleagues. The recording of children's equality data on our case processing system, CSAS, is more complex. Much of the information we have is provided by partner organisations (usually social work, education, police and health) and is not provided by children themselves. We will be working over the course of the coming year and beyond to ensure national consistency in the recording of this information, ensuring its accuracy and checking regularly to ensure it is up-to-date. By improving our data, we will be better able to establish whether the children we work with are reflective of the population (and where any differences may be), identify areas of inequality and also identify trends and patterns in outcomes between and within the protected characteristics.



Inclusion and Diversity
Challenge, Champion, Change

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