



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION



SCRA Board Meeting Agenda Wednesday 16 December 2020 at 10.30am, By Teams

		<i>Papers</i>	
1.1	Apologies		
1.2	AOB		
2.	Declarations of Interest		
3.	Board member Updates		
4.	Minutes/Committees		
4.1	Minute of Board Meeting held on 23 September 2020	Attached	
4.2	Board Workplan		
4.3	Matters Arising		
5.	Audit & Risk Committee		
5.1	Draft Minute of Meeting held on 19 November 2020	Attached	
	Reports		
6.	Chief Executive's Report	Attached	PR/CE
7.	Budget Monitoring	Attached	Head of Finance and Resources
8.	Data and Performance Report	Attached	Head of Strategy and OD/Data Manager
9.	SCRA Business Plan 2020/21 & 2021/22	Attached	Head of Strategy and OD/Data Manager
10.	Policy and Influencing Report	Attached	Head of Policy and Practice/Policy and Public Affairs Manager
11.	Research Plans 2021/22	Attached	Head of Policy and Practice/Information and Research
12.	Annual Policy Review a) Overview of Policies b) Response to Model Code of Conduct	Attached Verbal	PR/CE
13.	Digital Strategy Update	Attached	PR/CE
14.	Strategic and Operational Risks	Attached	PR/CE
15.	New risks		Board Members/Executive
	Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 20 January 2021		



Wednesday 23 September 2020 at 10.30am
By Vscene

Present:

Michelle Miller (Chair)
Jim Edgar
Anela Anwar
Martin Toye
Catherine Robertson
Tam Baillie

In Attendance:

Neil Hunter - Principal Reporter/Chief Executive
Ed Morrison - Head of Finance & Resources
Lisa Bennett - Head of Strategy & OD
Susan Deery - Head of Human Resources
Helen Etchells – Senior Operational Manager
Paul Mulvanny – Senior Operational Manager
Pamela Armstrong - Governance Officer, Minutes
Donald Lamb - Data Manager, Item 6

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Action</i>
1.1	AOB Meeting of SCRA and CHS Boards The respective Board Chairs will discuss offline what a potential shared agenda may look like and discuss with Officers. Item to be included in the Board Development Day agenda.		MM
1.2	Apologies Suzanne Vestri – Board Member Monica Sweeney – UNISON Branch Secretary Iain Fitheridge - Scottish Government Alistair Hogg - Head of Practice and Policy		
2.	Declarations of Interest None		
3.	Minutes/Committees		
3.1	Minute of Meeting held on 24 June 2020 Agreed as an accurate record.		
3.2	Board Action Log Reviewed and agreed.		
3.3	Workplan Reviewed and agreed.		



	Item	Timescale	Action
3.4	Matters Arising No matters arising.		
3.5	Audit & Risk Committee - Draft Minute of Meeting held on 27 August 2020 Jim Edgar, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and Board Member updated the Board in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Governance • External Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual Report 2019/20 (Restricted until publication) ○ Report to those charged with Governance on the 2019/20 Audit (ISA 260) and the Management Representation Letter ○ Draft 2019/20 Accounts ○ General Update • Internal Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data Protection ○ Attendance Management ○ Internal Audit Progress Report • Digital Strategy Joint Committee Update • Pensions Update • Annual Audit and Risk Committee self-assessment • Meeting with Internal and External Auditors. <p>The Board Chair acknowledged the high levels of detailed assurance provided by the Committee.</p>		
	Reports		
4.	Chief Executive's Report The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive spoke to the update report which detailed a wide range of activity across the organisation. <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Partnership • Strategic Partnership • Sponsor Team Issues • Delivering the Promise • COVID 19 Recovery Planning <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a slower pace around CSAS than we would like and we are working to see what can be achieved between now and year end. • Localities are currently dealing directly with families to discuss the suite of hearings types on offer and what suits best given the families circumstances • Children's attendance at hearings has decreased as the obligation to attend has been paused under the emergency legislation. We need to consider 		



	Item	Timescale	Action
	how to ensure future participation by a range of diverse means and secure learning from this period.		
5.	<p>Organisational Performance Report</p> <p>First Quarter Organisational Performance Report 2020/21: (1 April to 30 June 2020)</p> <p>The Data Manager introduced the report, which detailed organisational performance for the period 1 April 2020 – 30 June 2020. The Senior Operational Managers gave additional information from an operational perspective.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Organisational Performance Report (OPR) has been a key means by which SCRA officers report to the Board on performance across over 30 domains and measures. SCRA has developed a group of key performance indicators (KPI's) set against agreed performance targets. The current KPI's in relation to Reporter operations are:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decisions on referrals within 50 working days ○ Hearings scheduled to take place within 20 working days ○ Initial hearings proceeding to disposal • This is the first OPR to the Board which substantially covers the coronavirus pandemic emergency period. The pandemic emergency has profoundly impacted on Reporter operations across quarter 1 and is likely to do so until well into 2021. The impact on performance targets has therefore been significant. • Data collection continues to be a priority for SCRA. However we fully expect to see significant further fluctuations in operational activity over the coming quarters. We will review the position each quarter and update the Board on progress. In line with our recovery plan we are aiming for operations to return to steady state in Autumn 2021. • There will be transitional data gaps as we migrate to CSAS between now and the end of 2020 and interim reporting arrangements will be put in place. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the above the Board agreed to revise the approach to the current OPR and consider transitional measures. What are the critical parts of the process that should and can be measured, in the least labour intensive way in this period? 		



	Item	Timescale	Action
	<p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the Q1 Organisational Performance Report 2020/21, covering the period 1 April to 30 June 2020. To agree the presentation of KPI's in relation to operational indicators. 		
6.	<p>Budget Monitoring Report Period 5 2020-21</p> <p>The Head of Finance & Resource introduced the report which provides a summary of SCRA's financial position for the year to August 2020.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Scottish Government have allocated core revenue funding of £24.91m for 2020/21. In addition the Scottish Government has allocated £250k for the revenue costs of the Digital Delivery Plan. In August the Scottish Government confirmed additional funding of £1.049m to support SCRA's recovery plan to 31st March 2021. £599k of the funding is for additional staffing (Reporters, Assistant Reporters, Virtual Hearings Team), £400k is for Digital Strategy projects (CSAS core development, digitizing hearing room capability, improving connectivity and access across the SCRA sites, digital training) and £50k for property alterations. This funding is reflected in the revenue and capital tables in the report. The Scottish Government have allocated core capital funding of £600k for 2020/21. The available capital funding of £810k also reflects funding from reserves for delayed 2019/20 projects and the £450k for property alterations. In addition the Scottish Government has allocated £750k for the capital costs of the Digital Delivery Plan. The report provided further information in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue East & Central Scotland North West Head Office Efficiencies Core Capital Digital Delivery The overall accruals based revenue underspend is £62k (0.25%). Capital and Digital budgets show no variance at this stage. The revenue underspend will reduce as a result of the plans under development. There is a significant COVID-19 impact on the revenue and capital budget plans. EMT has reprioritised budgets to meet this challenge and the Scottish Government have provided very welcome 		



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	<p>additional funding.</p> <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted the revenue and capital positions for the year to August 2020, acknowledged and thanked the finance team for their work. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the revised capital budget. 		
7.	<p>Annual Accounts 2019-20 & Management Representation Letter</p> <p>The Head of Finance & resource introduced the paper recommending the Board approve the 2019/20 accounts for signature by the Accountable Officer and approved the Management Representation Letter for signature by the Accountable Officer.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit Scotland (AS) has completed the audit of SCRA's 2019/20 accounts and has submitted a final audit report to the Accountable Officer. The audit report expresses an unqualified opinion on the financial statements and on the regularity of the financial transactions. The accounts were submitted to the Audit & Risk Committee on 27 August 2020 and were approved on that date. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft accounts 2019/20 were approved by the August Audit & Risk Committee for submission to the Board. The Finance Team, some of who are in new roles, have stepped up to meet deadlines and worked well with auditors who have showed a flexible approach in difficult circumstances. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the 2019/20 accounts for signature by the Accountable Officer. To approve the Management Representation Letter for signature by the Accountable Officer. 		
8.	<p>SCRA Annual Report</p> <p>The Head of Strategy and OD introduced the report recommending the Board approve the SCRA Annual Report 2019/20 and approve arrangements for the publication of SCRA's Annual Report 2019/20.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report covers the period 1 April 2019 to 31 		



	Item	Timescale	Action
	<p>March 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Annual Report will be published at 10am on Thursday 29 October 2020 and will be available on SCRA's website (www.scra.gov.uk). <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Annual report was reviewed at the August Audit & Risk Committee where it was recommended for Board approval. The Board acknowledged the report is engaging and easy to read. The Head of Strategy and OD assured the Board the SCRA website will provide clear direction to a plain text version of the Annual Report. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the SCRA Annual Report 2019/20. To approve arrangements for the publication of SCRA's Annual Report 2019/20. 		
9.	<p>Organisational Change Policy</p> <p>The Head of HR introduced the paper recommending the Board approve the revised Organisational Change Policy, in line with Board governance framework.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCRA's Organisational Change Policy ensures that the change process in SCRA is managed through fair, consistent and transparent procedures and in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance. The Organisational Change Policy has been reviewed in line with a cycle of policy review and to reflect the revised Scottish Government Guidelines on exit and severance schemes. Change can arise for any number of reasons, including Voluntary Severance/Efficiency Retiral Schemes, local and national organisational structure changes, other policy effects as well as supporting individual circumstances e.g. reasonable adjustments. This policy seeks to provide clarity on how SCRA will manage the impacts of change. The organisational change policy falls within the Board's Governance framework and as such requires Board approval. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the revised Organisational Change Policy on the basis that anything of significance as a result of the Equalities and Human Rights Impact 		



	Item	Timescale	Action
	<p>Assessment, will be brought back to the Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Version control will be added to the policy document. 	Immediate	SD
10.	<p>Digital Programme Update</p> <p>The PR/CE introduced the report asking the Board to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the contents of the report. Note that CHS and SCRA have separately commenced the transition to live journey. Note that the DDOC intend to consider future governance proposals on the digital strategy <p>The report provides information in the following areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSAS Product Development and Delivery Data Migration Security and System accreditation CHS and SCRA internal decision point checks CHS Operational Readiness/Transition to live Rota SCRA Operational Readiness/Transition to Live Transition Support and Maintenance Contract and Commercial Governance Arrangements beyond MVP <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CHS transition to live is nearing completion and early life support for the CSAS system has been successful. SCRA data migration issues have been quantified and addressed allowing the transition to live to commence. Following extensive penetration testing and remediation work over several months SCRA has achieved full, independent system Accreditation, in accordance with the UK Government, Security Policy Framework, (SPF) requirements. This is a major milestone for the CSAS platform. Detailed criteria has been developed by the Programme Director in relation to both Vanguard and 2nd Deployment decision points for CHS and SCRA. The CHS Vanguard Launch took place over 20 days in July '20 encompassing 4 ASTs (Shetland; Aberdeen City; Edinburgh; Fife). This enabled a 'soft' testing of the data migration, live platform performance and functional services before opening access to the wider CHS community. This also enabled initial testing and development of the new support structure in place between CHS/SCRA and the supplier. Due to the hearings Covid response, rota management is currently complex. Although lower in overall numbers, SCRA and ASTs are 		



	Item	Timescale	Action
	<p>scheduling for a combination of hybrid, virtual and Face to Face hearings, sometimes in differing venues to normal hearing arrangements. In addition, Panel member availability and matching to the schedule is complex as some are available only for face to face or virtual hearings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA vanguard teams peer support have worked through all 3 training modules and provided helpful feedback on an approach for delivering training. • The support and maintenance arrangements are currently tailored to support the transition phase as opposed to business as usual with the development team in Leidos picking up most of the bug fix issues directly. • Managing within the commercial of the revised contract have been challenging, with additional claims from the supplier for additional funding to cover in particular the additional assurance work around the migration activity. Work is underway to develop a suitable compromise that achieves all party's needs within the existing resource availability. • The DDOC is considering the requirement to plan inheritor arrangements post MVP/transition/live, reflecting the entry to a business as usual phase. Work on a detailed paper and proposals is being developed by the Head of Strategy and OD 		
11.	<p>New Risks No New Risks Identified</p>		
12.	<p>Proposed 2020 Board/Committee Dates The Board agreed the proposed 2021 Board and Committee dated.</p>		
	Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 16 December 2020		



SCRA Board Meeting Workplan December 2020

Business Item	Wed 23/9/20	Wed 16/12/20	01/21	03/21	06/21	Wed 23/9/20
Strategic/Corporate						
Policy & Influencing Report		✓			✓	
Research Programme		✓				
Risk Register		✓			✓	
Governance						
Audit Committee Minutes	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Development Day Minutes						
Committee Annual Reports					✓	
Nominations Committee Minutes				✓		
Board Committee Membership					✓	
SCRA Standing Orders Review (Next due 2022)						
Finance						
Budget Monitoring Report	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Draft Budget				✓		
Annual Report & Accounts	✓		✓			✓
Financial Strategy					✓	
Planning						
Draft Corporate, Corporate Parenting & Business Plan		✓ (BP)		✓		
Draft Annual Report	✓		✓			✓
Annual Workforce Planning Report				✓		
Communications Plan					✓	
Performance			✓			
Organisational Performance Report	✓					
Data & Performance Report		**✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Operational						
Locality Performance Reviews		*				
Chief Executive's Report	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Business Item	Wed 23/9/20	Wed 16/12/20	01/21	03/21	06/21	Wed 23/9/20
Complaints Review					✓	
Equalities Annual Report					✓	
Environmental Annual Report				✓		
Overview of Policies Annual Report		✓				
Health & Safety Annual Report				✓		
Efficiency Report					✓	
Procurement Report					✓	
Property Strategy					✓	
Digital Strategy update	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Review of Risk Policy		✓			✓	
Organisational Change Policy	✓					✓

* As a result of the operational response to Covid-19, locality reviews did not take place this year.

** The Data and Performance report will replace the OPR whilst localities are working to the SCRA Covid-19 recovery plan and the transition to live in CSAS continues.



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Chief Executives Report

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive
Report Author: Neil Hunter
Date: 16 December 2020

Recommendation:

- a. To note the contents of this report

Reason for Report: Requested by the Board

Resource Implications: Within approved budgets

Strategy: Within approved plans

Consultation: N/A

Equalities Duties: Not required

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

1. Staff Partnership

- 1.1 The National Partnership Forum (NPF) met on 24 November with a focus 3 substantive issues
- SCRA's response to and recovery plan from COVID,
 - transition to live of our new Childrens Hearings Core Systems and Applications (CSAS) platform which for SCRA replaces our current case management system
 - SCRA staff health and wellbeing
- 1.2 The COVID recovery plan implementation and transition to CSAS are covered elsewhere in this report. The update on staff health and wellbeing was based on the work of the Health and Wellbeing (HWB) group which reports to NPF. At its November meeting the HWB agreed the following
- The issue of wellbeing vouchers to all SCRA staff in recognition of their exceptional work over the COVID period. These vouchers are aimed at promoting group/team (or where not feasible individual) wellbeing activities, encouraging staff to keep connections with each other, in the context of ongoing home working advice
 - The agreement of an additional 'wellbeing day' for each staff member to be added to their annual leave in 2020 and to be used for promoting individual wellbeing or wellbeing related activities – again in recognition of the strains and stresses which all SCRA staff have been under this year – professionally and personally
 - An approach which encourages staff, over this winter period, to take more extended breaks from desk/laptop during daylight hours and to use this time whether possible to get outside, exercise if possible or some other form of wellbeing activity and which promoted individual enjoyment
 - The ongoing focus of the Mental Wealth group of promoting awareness and understanding of issues relating to staff stress, mood, emotion and psychological functioning as part of our long term plan to reduce stigma and develop effective preventative interventions and support for staff.
- 1.3 The all staff communication attached to this wellbeing offering is shown at **appendix A**. The approach to wellbeing is being jointly developed by SCRA and UNISON and in 2021/22 we hope to make further incremental progress in relation to longstanding discussions on issues such as a formal 'wellbeing hour' at an agreed frequency to promote team and group activities, improve relationships and team cohesion through health promoting, enjoyable activities.

2. Strategic Partnerships

- 2.1 The CHIP strategic group has not met since March, although detailed updates have been provided to all CHIP members in relation to [Childrens Hearings recovery](#) planning and the statutory 6 weekly reporting on the use of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act in relation to Childrens hearings proceedings to members for information and feedback. For SCRA this mainly reports on use of the emergency legislation to extend Compulsory Supervision Orders beyond 12 months, Interim Compulsory Supervision Orders beyond 22 days (to a maximum of 44 days) and number of Child Protection Orders first heard on the 8th working day (as opposed to 2nd work day pre-COVID).
- 2.2 The Youth Justice Improvement Board meets on 10 December. The agenda will focus on:-

- The conclusion of the Youth Justice Strategy 2015-20, reporting on progress and impact
- The approval of a revised Youth Justice Vision and Action Plan from 2021 onwards
- A report on the [outcome of the recent consultation](#) of increasing the age of referral to the Principal Reporter to include 16/17 year olds
- An update report on the Cross System Group looking at operational implications of increasing the age of referral (chaired by SCRA)
- Research by the Children and Young Peoples Centre for Justice (CYCJ) on [Young Peoples experience of COVID 19 and the Justice System](#)

2.3 The consultation outcome in relation to raising the age of referral to the Principal Reporter was overwhelmingly in favour of the proposal. Key issues raised which need detailed further consideration include:-

- Need for improved capacity across all aspects of the current system – disposals, workforce development, skills development
- Increased investment in practical, emotional and social assistance for young people (e.g housing and accommodation)
- Alignment in the support for victims of crime
- New ways in dealing with non-compliance issues for older young people
- Improved transitions between children and adult justice systems (for example where provisions/requirements go beyond a child's 18th birthday)

2.4 Over and above this the proposed changes will require to be assessed against the range of current and future change in the hearing system over the next few years (The Promise/Review of Age of Criminal Responsibility etc.) or so and 'packaged' up in a streamlined and cohesive way. The consultation outcome is now with Ministers for consideration.

3. Scottish Government Sponsor Team

3.1 We met our sponsor team at our regular accountability meeting on 12 November and covered the following items:-

- COVID 19 and Hearing system recovery, including future reporting and monitoring arrangements
- Emergency Legislation reporting requirements to Parliament and discussion on any requirements for Hearings under the Act beyond March 2021
- Digital Strategy and CSAS roll out/transition to live progress
- Finance and budget – including spending review issues 21/22 and the SCRA 5 year financial strategy
- Performance reporting, data utilisation and limitations in the CSAS transition stage
- SCRA Framework agreement – noting that the 3 year review is due in 2021
- Independent Care Review and Keeping the Promise – noting the early engagement between SCRA and the Promise Team

3.2 The next accountability meeting is scheduled for early March 2021.

4. SCRA Recovery update

4.1 We are now in quarter 3 of 2020/21 which, in recovery plan terms, coincides with the main programme of roll out of CSAS. Therefore we had asked locality teams in advance to pull back on hearing diaries in order to create the space for the transition to live to substantively take place before year end. Nonetheless priority hearings in

line with practice direction continue to take place across Scotland and continue in a mixed format approach of fully virtual, face to face and hybrid arrangements.

- 4.2 We estimate¹ that some 6000 hearings have taken place since May 2020. At the beginning of December somewhere around 41% of these hearings are face to face, with 43% virtual and 13% hybrid type hearings
- 4.3 An array of components of recovery have now been put in place by SCRA including:-
- **Increased staffing** – the majority of recruitment to support the SCRA recovery plan has now been completed with commencement dates for most roles in January 2021.
 - **Hardware to support hearings** – we have in place a range of hardware such as conference camera's and audio units to offer hybrid hearings. We have suffered from global delay in delivery or availability of some items of enabling hardware. A new significant order has now been placed with alternative suppliers for a series of higher specification audio units, camera and other devices to support this approach further. Installation support to maximise the use and performance of this equipment will also be purchased and identifies leads in each area identified in each locality to ensure good linkages back to the national digital team and encourage a higher degree of local learning, confidence and expertise in set up and utility of this equipment. Beyond the pandemic these elements of hardware will form the basis of a better connected more technologically enabled estate to support our wider digital hearing centre ambitions
 - **Virtual platform** – we continue to be reliant on VScene for virtual hearings and the experience of this continues to be mixed. SCRA are attracting considerable external criticism for our current approach – although in reality we have limited options at this moment in time. Work has commenced with Leidos on the integration of the video conferencing elements of MS Teams within the CSAS platform. This will be a significant development as we will be able to fuse this with our developing scheduling and hearing information pack components within CSAS (as opposed to having to tie up with an external components). The timeframe for this is March 2021.
 - **Cleaning regime** – our electrostatic cleaning regime is now in place across the core hearing estate and is enabling a high degree of confidence in the hygiene control of hearing room surfaces and soft furnishings
 - **Hearing room configuration** – significant internal works have been completed in Paisley, Dumbarton and Irvine in order to extend the size of hearing rooms and support physical distancing. In other sites across the country we are approaching physical distancing either via existing rooms and removing furniture or by linking rooms together in hybrid solutions
- 4.4 The Childrens Hearings Recovery plan, assembled by a multi-agency group including SCRA was sent to Board members for information on 27th November. A monitoring and implementation framework is now being developed by the oversight group and from an SCRA perspective will include reporting progress on the following key operational areas:
- COVID expiry reviews
 - Annual Reviews falling due in period

¹ We receive weekly data returned from Localities. Some elements of data are incomplete from 7 September to 26th October, hence the estimated figure. We are working to retrospectively complete these small numbers of missing data returns.

- Reporter decisions awaiting hearings
 - Court proceedings concluded and awaiting hearing dates
- 4.5 We have a baseline trajectory, previously reported to the Board and incorporate in the multi-agency plan on which to measure progress against recovery objectives. As well as reporting to CHIP we will also ensure that regular updates are given to the SCRA Board on progress.

5. Keeping the Promise

- 5.1 The PR/CE updated the Board at its March meeting on the findings of the Independent Care Review and more recently in September on establishment of an internal team to give focus and cross organisational energy to how SCRA will progress with the changes recommended by the Independent Care Review.
- 5.2 The Promise itself have been busy recruiting to a range of posts within their structure and are currently finalising their Oversight Board. The Oversight Board is due to receive an initial plan in January 2021 which will include aspects of Hearing System change proposals. We have had 2 planning sessions with the Promise Team in the last 6 weeks and these have focussed on:-
- Priorities for continued short term incremental quality improvement over the next 3 or so years, driven by programmes such as Better Hearings, OHOV Calls for Action, Hearing Room improvement programme, Digital Strategy delivery etc. These short term programmes will likely proceed within the Hearing system based on its current paradigm
 - A focus on what a new paradigm for the Childrens Hearings between now and 2030 will look like – which may include significant revisions to the underpinning structure of what a Childrens hearing is, what roles and responsibilities support it, its scope and focus – with a presumption of ‘shrinkage’ to ensure the most complex, contentious and rights driven issues are considered.
 - Consideration of the policy and legislative change that will be required in order to allow immediate tests of change in the underpinning model, as well as long term change in policy and law
 - A corresponding and necessary increase in the availability of both universal and targeted community based support to families to allow this narrowing in of the Hearing systems focus
 - A refresh of the Kilbrandon ethos and principles to support and further develop Scotland’s welfare based approach
- 5.3 Further updates will be provided to the Board as we progress this work. However the Board will also wish to consider programming in further development/workshop based sessions over the next period to consider how it would wish to contribute thinking into the delivery of The Promise as well as providing ongoing support and guidance to officers.

6. Our Hearings Our Voice

- 6.1 After 3 very productive years Jacqui Dunbar our OHOV Development Worker is moving on to take up a new role with Children 1st. Jacqui has been key to establishing OHOV and developing really positive working relationships with the group. SCRA host OHOV on behalf of the Childrens Hearings Improvement Partnership. We are currently working on interim support for the young people, with a 9 month secondment being offered across CHIP partners. During this 9 month period the

agreed evaluation of OHOV will take place, led by the SCRA research team. This evaluation will provide evidence for any longer term recommendations on support, structure, approach etc. In the meantime the publication of the [Zine](#) by OHOV continues to make a real impact with its 40 powerful calls for action – to which SCRA is currently drawing up its response and timeline.

7. Enabling access to SCRA's records – Just Ask

- 7.1 SCRA has been working with the Who Cares?Scotland Records Access Campaign since November 2019 on how we can better support people who wish to access the information that SCRA holds about them. The Information & Research Team has produced a new policy on subject access which aims to provide a personalised and supportive approach. This policy was developed with input from the ICO and WhoCares?Scotland.
- 7.2 The Press & Communications team worked together with the Information & Research Team and WhoCares?Scotland to develop a new web page and easily accessible materials on requesting information from SCRA. The new web page is interactive - <https://www.scra.gov.uk/contact-us/asking-for-your-information/>, and includes an animation, guide for care experienced people and an easy read guide on how to access the information that SCRA holds about you. The new materials and policy were launched on 2nd November.

8. Press and Communications Team update – July to December 2020

8.1 Virtual Hearings/return of face to face Hearings

- 8.1.1 During this period, we have continued to receive a higher than normal level of visits to our website. Therefore, we have continued to proactively make information available on our website and then promote via social media about key developments in the return to face to face Hearings, continuation of virtual Hearings/move to Tier 4 etc. See **appendix B** for a snapshot of website and social media activity during this period.

8.2 Internal communications

- 8.2.1 Communications with staff have remained a key focus in the post lockdown/recovery period. We have continued to engage through a variety of methods, including all staff emails, information on Connect, Team Briefs and virtual team meetings, as well as more informal virtual gatherings. We have continued to review our set of FAQs for staff which are regularly updated as things change. There was a specific communication issued on Wednesday 18 November focusing on the festive wellbeing package for all staff as detailed above at paragraph 1.3

8.3 Official Statistics

- 8.3.1 On Thursday 30 July, SCRA's Official Statistics 2019/20 were published. The full set of statistics included:
- Statistical Analysis 2019/20,
 - Online Statistics 2019/20
 - Online Statistics by Local Authority Breakdown 2019/20 and
 - the interactive statistical dashboard

- 8.3.2 There was a detailed communications plan in place to promote both internally and externally, including an online animation which was used to promote the statistics on social media, along with a series of info graphics.

8.4 Our Hearings, Our Voice Zine

- 8.4.1 On Monday 19 October, Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV) published its [Zine](#) which was produced by the young people, with support from an intern from Napier University. SCRA provided communications support to OHOV to promote the Zine on the OHOV website and social media. In addition, we provided a private response to the young people which included a report and a cartoon animation, as well as an external response on our website which we promoted on social media.

8.5 Fact sheets

- 8.5.1 On Tuesday 22 September, we published our updated suite of fact sheets. SCRA's range of fact sheets about the Children's Hearings System is reviewed and updated annually, then published on our website. The suite of 15 fact sheets covers a range of subjects including:

- the Role of the Reporter,
- Child Protection,
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health,
- High Risk Young Offenders,
- Deprivation and
- very young children referred.

- 8.5.2 Each fact sheet outlines SCRA's fundamental purpose, and contains facts, figures and information on each subject, including the latest data from 2019/20.

8.6 Annual Report

- 8.6.1 On Thursday 29 October, SCRA's Annual Report 2019/20 was published. The Annual Report included the full set of audited Annual Accounts for 2019/20 which contained a new section on performance. We had a comprehensive communications plan to promote the report. We did not receive any media interest in the report.

8.7 Pilot – Imagination Library

- 8.7.1 SCRA has teamed up with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to launch a pilot initiative as an extension of their book gifting work with looked after and adopted children across Scotland. Children aged five and under attending Children's Hearings in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling will receive a free book from the start of November. If the pilot is successful, we hope to introduce it in other Hearing centres. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library gifts books to children aged five or under internationally. Through a partnership with Scottish Book Trust and funding from the Scottish Government, children who are looked after or adopted receive a free book through the post every month until their fifth birthday.

8.8 CSO easy read guide

- 8.8.1 SCRA has produced the latest in our series of [easy read guides](#) for people with learning difficulties. We have worked with the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability to learn best practice in developing these guides. The latest online guide is

focused on Compulsory Supervision Orders. All the guides are available on our website.

8.9 Advocacy for children and young people

- 8.9.1 Section 122 of the Children's (Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 which deals with children's advocacy services came into force in full on 21 November 2020. SCRA is a member of a number of sub groups developing this work. As part of the Communications sub group, our Press and Communications Team offered to build a [website](#) for children and young people providing them with information about the new service. We also designed a leaflet which was customised with the individual provider's contact details. These will be available in Hearing centres. We developed a communications plan to promote the new website and service externally, including a series of social media visuals/animations.

8.10 Staff Survey 2020

- 8.10.1 Our Staff Survey 2020 was issued via an all staff email on Monday 9 November. This year's survey had a different focus, looking at lockdown, recovery, CSAS and future working. The survey is due to close on 1 December. A total of 240 members of staff have already completed it. The survey has been promoted via a series of communications, including a special edition of the Team Brief, which stressed the importance of the survey and encouraged all staff to complete it.

8.11 Partnership communications

- 8.11.1 During this period we have issued two editions of our partner e-news bulletins. One was issued on 12 August including items on SCRA Official Statistics, return of face to face Hearings, publication of our Corporate Plan 2020-2023 and launch of our Corporate Parenting Plan for young people. The latest one was issued on 12 November and included information on our privacy and confidentiality report with Who Cares? Scotland, our Child Sexual Exploitation research report with Barnardo's Scotland and publication of our Annual Report.

8.12 Modern Apprentice appointment

- 8.12.1 Interviews have recently been held for SCRA's latest Modern Apprentice. A care experienced young person has been appointed (pending PVG checks) and is likely to start in our Dumbarton office in the new year. This is the 13th care experienced Modern Apprentice to be appointed by SCRA. As well as working with the local team, they will be completing an SVQ in Business Administration and working alongside SCRA's Participation Officer on key pieces of work engaging with children and young people. In addition, our fourth Local Authority funded work experience placement was postponed due to the pandemic. We continue to explore further opportunities in this area.

9. Research

9.1 Child Sexual Exploitation

- 9.1.1 On Monday 26 October, SCRA published a new ground breaking piece of research with Barnardo's Scotland. 'Sexual exploitation of children involved in the Children's Hearings System' is the first national study of child sexual exploitation in Scotland. As a result, a joint media and communications plan was developed and implemented with Barnardo's Scotland. This led to widespread and positive broadcast and print

media with our key messages being featured. We also promoted the study via social media utilising all our online platforms. Again, there was significant coverage with retweets, shares and positive comments. We are now looking at more targeted media with local newspapers across the country. In addition, we are looking at doing targeted communications via presentations to key groups and organisations like Police Scotland and the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership.

9.2 Young People's & Parents' Views on Privacy and How this Affects Their Participation in the Children's Hearings System

- 9.2.1 In early 2019, SCRA commissioned WhoCares?Scotland to carry out research on privacy and confidentiality within Children's Hearings proceedings and how this impacts on parents and children's ability to participate. WhoCares?Scotland carried out a survey, focus groups and interviews with parents, carers and young people about their experiences of Children's Hearings. A policy paper on the research findings and recommendations was published by SCRA and WhoCares?Scotland on 10th November -<https://www.scra.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Who-Cares-Scotland-privacy-research-policy-briefing.pdf>. There was a communications plan in place to promote this both internally and externally.

9.3 Born into Care Scotland

- 9.3.1 SCRA is part of a collaboration with the Universities of Lancaster and Stirling which was commissioned in October 2020 by the Scottish Government to carry out a feasibility study on infants entering care in Scotland .

The aims of the study are to:

- to investigate whether it is possible to use data held by SCRA to investigate the numbers and rates of infants becoming looked after in Scotland, trends over time and regional variation
- to compare these figures with those derived from the Children Looked After Statistics (CLAS) dataset
- to establish the feasibility of studying 'recurrence' for mothers and children using data held by SCRA
- to provide initial estimates of recurrence in Scotland, based on the number of infants whose mother had previously had a child taken into care
- to explore the scope of the data held within SCRA casefiles and the potential of this to study the context in which infant removals take place, characteristics and background of the mother, and pathways for children involved
- to explore what a larger project might look like, including the use of further linked data, the key policy/research questions, data requirements and practicalities.

- 9.3.2 The study will report by end March 2021.

Appendix A

Festive wellbeing supports for all SCRA staff

A package of additional wellbeing supports were approved by SCRA's Health & Wellbeing Group yesterday.

Every member of staff will be given a wellbeing day off to be taken over the festive period.

Wellbeing supports will also encourage all staff to take a proper break over the lunchtime period to support everyone to get outside in daylight hours, particularly in the winter months.

In addition, staff will receive a non cash voucher for a wellbeing activity.

Susan Deery, Head of HR said: "It has been an unprecedented year and we have asked a lot of staff over the past eight months. Everyone has been working in an extremely challenging environment and we know this can impact on people's resilience and wellbeing."

"That's why we wanted to put together a wellbeing package over the festive period for every member of staff. We hope everyone is able to take advantage of this and hope it enables people to rest and re-energise."

The package includes:

Wellbeing day off: SCRA will give all staff a wellbeing day off from work to allow everyone to take time to focus on their own mental health and wellbeing. This is in addition to your current annual leave allowance. This day must be taken during the period Monday 21 December 2020 to Friday 8 January 2021. This may mean staff taking an additional day off, or where leave has already been booked there may be the opportunity to convert a current leave day to your wellbeing day. The wellbeing day cannot be carried into 2021 (beyond Friday 8 January). Managers are asked to ensure that all staff are able to take this wellbeing day during this period. The day should be agreed with managers direct. Staff should record the day as 'wellbeing day' on their Flex Sheet. There is no need to record on iTrent. The wellbeing day is a day's contracted time, whatever that means for each member of staff.

Wellbeing breaks: Managers and staff are asked to ensure that they plan for, and take a proper break over lunchtime to encourage everyone to get outside in daylight hours, particularly in the winter months. This means considering your schedule and ensuring, where possible, that you can take a break from work when you should. We recognise that sometimes it will not always be possible to do that every day, but we each take responsibility for our wellbeing and this is a small change we can all aim for now and beyond the winter.

Wellbeing voucher: The impact change can have on resilience and wellbeing is recognised. It is important that we all remain connected with each other and that we all take time to focus on our health and wellbeing. Therefore, to support this Localities/Head Office Teams will make the offer of a wellbeing non-cash voucher to all staff. The provision of which should have a wellbeing focus, and ideally support group activity(ies). Teams should make local arrangements for voucher provision and can decide on the voucher provider. Suggestions involving a group wellbeing activity include: virtual team Christmas lunch with a meal voucher provided, individual fruit baskets, wellbeing/fitness equipment e.g. yoga mats and wellbeing tools such as mindfulness books/apps. Where staff cannot

use the voucher to join a team event, then this can be used on an individual basis, and examples include a voucher towards sports equipment such as running or walking shoes/bike accessories etc. It would be great for teams to share how they use the voucher to focus on well-being and help us learn and harness ideas and innovation across the organisation.

Recognising the work of local well-being groups and that some teams may already have plans in place for wellbeing spend, the voucher amount can be a minimum of £25 to a maximum £50 per head, including any administration fee. The voucher will not be pro-rated, so everyone can benefit – whether full or part time and will not be redeemable for cash.

If you have any questions please contact your manager in the first instance, and if any questions remain, contact SCRA's HR Helpdesk Mailbox.

Please continue to look after yourself and others. As a reminder, we now have access to a new online platform Silvercloud which the Scottish Government launched as a digital tool to support mental health and provide early intervention during the pandemic. There's a variety of programmes including stress, sleep and resilience which you may find beneficial. To access Silvercloud, please click [here](#). There's some areas where you need to sign up and the PIN is Scotland2020.

Appendix B

SCRA website and social media analytics – 25.10.20 – 01.12.20



Twitter

Tweets earned 57.9K impressions organically over the period

TOP TWEETS

SCRA @ChildReporter

Going to a Children's Hearing? New advocacy supports are available. Check out the new website to find out more <http://www.hearings-advocacy.com> [#advocacy](#) [#scotland](#)

Impressions 9,018
(how many people we reached)

SCRA @ChildReporter

Want to access information held about your time in the Hearings System? We've launched new materials to make it easier for you <https://bit.ly/35ZB83k> A massive thank you to [@whocaresscot](#) and [@ICOnews](#) for all their help! [#justask](#) [#yourinformation](#)

Impressions 4,880
(how many people we reached)

SCRA @ChildReporter

First national study of child sexual exploitation in Scotland published today with [@BarnardosScot](#) - <https://bit.ly/2HxRrMA> [#CSE](#) [#childprotection](#) pic.twitter.com/sThq5ze6CE

Impressions 4,219
(how many people we reached)

SCRA @ChildReporter

Excited to pilot free books for under fives at some of our Hearing centres. Huge thanks to [@dollyslibrary](#) and [@scottishbktrust](#) – what a fantastic partnership! [#freebooks](#) [#DollysLibrary](#) pic.twitter.com/fBrlgJZrh6

Impressions 2,194
(how many people we reached)



Facebook

147

Total Page views

2,959 impressions

New page followers

24

Page followers

Up 14%

Increased to **723 followers** on Facebook - everything posted organically

Top Posts

Going to a Children's Hearing? New advocacy supports are available. Check out the new website to find out more - www.hearings-advocacy.com

1,124

People Reached

Excited to pilot free books for under fives at some of our Hearing centres. Huge thanks to [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#) and [Scottish Book Trust](#) – what a fantastic partnership! #freebooks #DollysLibrary

727 views

People Reached

Our new research report with [Barnardo's Scotland](#) shows the youngest victim of #CSE was 11, while 50% of boys and 78% of girls were age 16 or 17. Read the report <https://bit.ly/3eHylQA> #childprotection

690 views

People Reached



Instagram

793 followers

Free books for under fives – **176 impressions**

Accessing your information video animation – **148 impressions**

Audience Age range:

13-17 1%

18-24 7.7%



LinkedIn

Excited to pilot free books for under fives at some of our Hearing centres. Huge thanks to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and Scottish Book Trust – what a fantastic partnership! [#freebooks](#) [#DollysLibrary](#)

393 impressions

SCRA welcomes implementation tomorrow of the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act
[#equalprotection](#)

275 impressions

First national study of child sexual exploitation in Scotland published today with Barnardo's Scotland [#CSE](#) [#childprotection](#)

237 impressions

647

Total followers



SCRA WEBSITE

Users
21,744

Page views
34,942

<https://www.scra.gov.uk/contact-us>

Office locations

3,256 views

<https://www.scra.gov.uk/recruitment/current-vacancies/>

2,019 views

<https://www.scra.gov.uk/about-scra/information-for-professionals/>

1,237 views

https://www.scra.gov.uk/parent_carer/compulsory-supervision-orders/

782 views

https://www.scra.gov.uk/young_people/questions-and-answers/

750 views

<https://www.scra.gov.uk/coronavirus-attending-childrens-hearings/>

590 views

66% DESKTOP USERS

30% MOBILE PHONE USERS

4% TABLET USERS

DIRECT TO WEBSITE - 83%

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Influencing Report: 1st June 2020 to 30th November 2020

Accountable Director:	Head of Practice and Policy	Date:	16 December 2020
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Recommendation:
1. That the Board notes the content of this report

Reason for Report:	<i>For information of Board</i>
Resource Implications:	<i>Within approved budgets</i>
Strategy:	<i>Within approved plans</i>
Consultation:	<i>Practice and Policy team</i>
EHRIA:	<i>Not Required</i>
Document Classification:	<i>Open</i>

Report Contents:

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1	<p>Introduction</p>
1.1	<p>In March 2011, the Practice and Policy Team produced a report for the Board outlining the key areas where SCRA had been able to be influential and apply its professional expertise, data and research to particular issues at a national level.</p> <p>The Board subsequently requested that a similar report be provided on a bi-annual basis.</p> <p>This is the nineteenth such report and covers the period 1st June 2020 to 30th November 2020.</p> <p>Unlike any previous reports this report covers the period of 'lockdown' as a result of UK and Scottish Government action to combat the spread of coronavirus and Covid19 and the report may not, therefore, be as extensive as previously.</p> <p>This report also covers the period of CSAS migration and roll out.</p> <p>Melissa Hunt (Policy and Public Affairs Manager) has been temporarily re-deployed in the South East Scotland Locality Team since the week beginning 16th March; the focus of her work has been largely operational and she has been extensively involved in CSAS training and migration in South East Locality as a digital lead / peer supporter .</p>
1.2	<p>There are hyperlinks in the document - to external documents which may be of interest (including legislation and draft legislation) and to internal documents which are published externally. Internal documents which are not published externally are included as inserted file objects. There are fewer published documents for this six month period.</p> <p>Where there are links to legislation these links are to the Bill or the Act, not to associated policy memoranda or regulations (unless these other documents are of specific interest). Some hyperlinks are to web pages where there are multiple documents of potential interest.</p>
1.3	<p>Melissa Hunt, SCRA Policy and Public Affairs Manager, normally works alongside Government Officials in Victoria Quay at least one day a week, and has developed positive working relationships in order to encourage informal dialogue, increased contact through 'Mock Hearing' and other training with Government teams, through involvement in team meetings and through informal and formal consultation with SCRA, when relevant.</p>
1.4	<p>Alistair Hogg, Head of Practice and Policy is also a presence within Victoria Quay, to encourage dialogue and to keep SCRA visible and an active partner within conversations.</p> <p>This presence has not been possible since 23rd March 2020, as a result of the UK and Scottish Government's Covid 19 response. However, regular meetings / updates / conversations with the Government Teams have continued throughout this period; with Alistair Hogg having very regular contact as a result of the fast pace of change. Melissa Hunt has been regularly involved through working with Donald Lamb (Data Manager) and colleagues in Children's Hearings Scotland in the production of the regular report to Government on the provisions of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020.</p>

1.5	Melissa Hunt and Alistair Hogg have responded to a number of Government queries and have been involved in discussions about victims in the Children's Hearing System.
1.6	<p>SCRA's responses to National consultation exercises relevant to our work in the Children's Hearings System are published online, and can be found at https://www.scra.gov.uk/resources_articles_category/consultations-evidence/.</p> <p>Key messages from our full consultation responses are disseminated internally within SCRA to colleagues through CONNECT. The key messages can be accessed by all SCRA staff from either the news item on CONNECT or from the library of documents.</p> <p>In October 2019 Melissa Hunt and Alistair Hogg agreed to also circulate 'LRM Briefings' in respect of SCRA's position on national consultation exercises where we are not preparing a full response. These briefings will be circulated through the PPN network. We planned to gather feedback on this through the PPN at the beginning of 2020 and this will now have to happen in 2021 – when Melissa Hunt is able to re-establish the approach. Informal feedback suggests the approach was useful – and certainly there are more queries about possible SCRA / organisational responses to live consultation exercises across the country than there have been previously.</p> <p>SCRA has not yet agreed an approach to consultation responses with Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS). When complete SCRA's Key Messages are often shared with interested parties. CHS are one of the parties.</p>




2	Pending legislation & Parliamentary Work
2.1	<p>The review of section 12 of the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937 and section 42 of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 was published on 14th October 2019</p> <p>This consultation from 2019 has not yet resulted in any proposed legislative change and it is seeming more likely that additional consultation will be required before any new legislation is drafted. SCRA's position in relation to the proposed changes was that whilst the language of the legislation could be updated and elements of the specific section 12 offence could be improved, we continued to find the provisions useful and used them on a regular basis. We were also really clear that our focus was on using the legislative provision to protect children, not to prosecute parents, and that the suggestions we were making were about how to strengthen our abilities to protect rather than anything else. SCRA's response is still online, here.</p> <p>Melissa Hunt has still got data to consider which should give a rich evidential base for any future comments we wish to make on this area of the law.</p>

2.2	<p><u>Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill 2020</u> – a Consultation</p> <p>SCRA responded to a consultation in respect of this proposed piece of legislation.</p> <p>The response in full is on the SCRA website here.</p> <p>No summary document was prepared for Locality Reporter Managers in SCRA, as the full response is quite short.</p> <p>In summary, we support the proposals made, but feel that the focus on acquired gender is behind the curve by not taking into account gender fluidity and non-binary gender identity.</p> <p>This Bill is not live with any Parliamentary Committee as of 3rd December 2020.</p>
2.3	<p><u>The Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Bill</u></p> <p>This Bill was introduced to the Parliament on 29th May 2019.</p> <p>Neil Hunter gave oral evidence to the Equalities and Human Rights Committee.</p> <p>The Bill is currently at Stage 3 and SCRA are keeping a watching brief on progress.</p>
2.4	<p><u>Public Petitions Committee</u></p> <p>Some Relevant Current Business:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Inquiry into mental health support for young people in Scotland. 2) Raise the age of criminal responsibility 3) Regulation of non statutory child advocacy services 4) Criminalise the submission of misleading or false information in child protection cases 5) Children's hearing proceedings should be minuted and / or recorded
2.5	<p><u>Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Bill</u></p> <p>The Forensic Medical Services Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament on the 26th November 2019.</p> <p>Alistair Hogg had been due to give evidence in relation to the Bill on March 24th 2020, but the UK and Scottish Government Covid19 response has meant that the Health and Sport Committee have now planned to take evidence virtually, through the use of technology and with one witness per session.</p> <p>Instead of personal evidence SCRA supplied additional written evidence.</p> <p>We have already supplied written evidence to the committee, and this is on the SCRA website here.</p>

2.6	<p><u>The Children (Scotland) Bill</u> was introduced on 2nd September 2019.</p> <p>Alistair Hogg gave oral evidence to the Justice Committee on 21st January 2020. His evidence can be read here: http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12472&mode=pdf</p> <p>And viewed here (starting at 12:31pm as the morning business had to be re-arranged at the last minute): https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/justice-committee-january-21-2020</p> <p>Following the oral evidence on 21st January CELCIS submitted further written evidence on taking the views of very young children. This can be read here: https://www.parliament.scot/S5_JusticeCommittee/Inquiries/JS519CH72_CELCIS_supp.pdf</p> <p>The Stage 1 Report of the Bill is available here.</p> <p>The Bill was unanimously passed in Parliament on 25th August 2020 and became an Act on 1st October 2020.</p> <p>The full Act can be read here.</p>
2.7	<p><u>The Disclosure (Scotland) Bill</u> was introduced on 12th June 2019.</p> <p>Alistair Hogg gave oral evidence to the Education and Skills Committee on 13th November 2019. His oral evidence can be viewed here: https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/education-and-skills-committee-november-13-2019</p> <p>read here: http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12368&mode=pdf</p> <p>The Stage One Report from the Committee was published on 17th December 2019 and is available here. The Bill completed Stage 2 on 11th March 2020 and stage 3 on 10th June 2020. It became an Act on 14th July 2020.</p> <p>The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 can be read here. Neill Mitchell from SCRA's Practice Team is developing an amended Practice Note for Reporters on the combined effects of this Act, the Management of Offenders Act and the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1978. This is not yet finalised but will be circulated to SCRA staff alongside a news item on CONNECT.</p>

2.8	<p><u>Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019</u></p> <p>This Bill was passed on 7 May 2019 and became an Act on 11 June 2019.</p> <p>The commencement of the different provisions of the Act has not yet been determined. There are a number of different delivery groups for the Act where SCRA is represented and discussion is ongoing. The Independent Reviewer has been appointed, and Caroline Conway (who also has the same role in Northern Ireland) has taken the post. This article gives some information about Ms Conway and the post in Northern Ireland: https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/news/appointment-independent-reviewer-criminal-record-certificates.</p> <p>Alistair Hogg and Melissa Hunt are involved in discussions with Scottish Government colleagues about the place of safety aspects of the legislation. These discussions are ongoing.</p> <p>Alistair Hogg sits on the ACR Advisory Group, although due to the pandemic this group has not met since January 2020. There are, however, some sub-groups that have commenced and SCRA will be represented on at least 2 of those – in relation to victims, and in relation to implications of raising the age further. The current estimated implementation date for the full provisions of the Act is Autumn 2021, although some of the provisions are now in force with the effect that in practice the age of criminal responsibility has increased to 12.</p>
2.9	<p><u>Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) Act 2019</u></p> <p>This Bill was passed on 9th May 2019 and received Royal Assent on 13th June 2019.</p> <p>The commencement of the Act is staged, with Higher Court proceedings using and benefiting from the changes before other Courts.</p>
2.10	<p><u>Children (Equal Protection from Assault) Act 2019</u></p> <p>The Act became law on 7th November 2019 and SCRA welcomed it online when it came into force on 7th November 2020.</p> <p>Alistair Hogg is part of the implementation group for the Act and SCRA were involved in discussion around the media strategy being used to prepare for the Act commencing in November 2020. The Parent Club Building a Rewarding Relationship with your child forms part of this strategy: https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/building-a-rewarding-relationship-with-your-child.</p>

2.11	<p>United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill 2020</p> <p>Parliament have agreed that stage 1 consideration of this Bill be concluded by 22nd January 2021.</p> <p>SCRA provided a full written response to the Equalities and Human Rights Committee call for evidence on the Bill – it has not yet been published on line on SCRA's website, but is available here from the Scottish Parliament website. Children's Hearings Scotland also provided a full written response to the Committee which may be useful for the Board to see, it can be read here.</p> <p>Alistair Hogg was invited to give evidence to the Committee on 19th November 2020. His evidence can be viewed here (after 10:18) and read here from page 33/34. The current Scottish Children's Commissioner Bruce Adamson gave evidence as part of the first session.</p> <p>Alistair Hogg and Melissa Hunt also engaged with the Bill team prior to the consultation as part of their survey of readiness across public service organisations.</p>
2.11	<p><u>The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020</u></p> <p>This emergency piece of legislation has been used since coming into force on the 7th April. It remains in force until September 2021 but will be reviewed in March 2021.</p> <p>SCRA were involved in discussion with Scottish Government about the provisions in the Act and we remain involved in regular discussions about the statutory reporting duty under the Act.</p> <p>Melissa Hunt and Donald Lamb have co-ordinated SCRA's input to the Scottish Government report to Parliament on the provisions which apply to us and SCRA and CHS also produce a joint report, with more contextual detail, which is published on the CHIP website.</p> <p>The Coronavirus Act reporting commitment is considerable and the task of reconciling live data across two case management systems is a huge undertaking for Donald.</p> <p>The Scottish Government Report can be found here: Report 1 Report 2 Report 3</p> <p>SCRA's reports can be found here: Report 1 Report 2 Report 3</p> <p>Report 4 is due for publication on 7th December 2020. SCRA has continued to operate throughout 2020 largely as a result of the provisions contained within the Coronavirus Act 2020. This Act has not gathered universal support and the Government are continually reviewing the necessity of the provisions – which has resulted in SCRA continually justifying the reasons why the provisions continue to be required. This dialogue continues.</p>

4	<h2>Other Consultation Responses</h2>
4.1	<h3>Secure Care Pathways and Standards</h3> <p>Published by the Scottish Government on 5th October 2020 and can be read here.</p>
4.2	<h3>Youth Justice Standards</h3> <p>The Scottish Government has published a report on this consultation which can be read here.</p> <p>SCRA previously submitted a consultation response in relation to the Youth Justice Standards.</p> <p>The response in full is on the SCRA website here.</p> <p>The summary prepared for Locality Reporter Managers in SCRA is available as well:</p> <div data-bbox="371 790 422 851">  </div> <p>Youth Justice Standards - SCRA Ke</p> <p>In summary, SCRA warmly welcome these Youth Justice Standards. This framework supports the holistic approach taken by the Children's Hearing. The standards are flexible and take account of local needs.</p>
4.3	<h3>Raising the Age of Referral to the Principal Reporter</h3> <p>SCRA did some extensive work on this to gather views from across all of SCRA's staff group prior to developing an organisational response alongside the Board. Sincere thanks to Board Members for their time and commitment to engaging so fruitfully in this discussion.</p> <p>The collated views from SCRA can be read in this document:</p> <div data-bbox="371 1377 422 1438">  </div> <p>Raising the age of referral - 11.08.20.pc</p> <p>We have not yet published SCRA's consultation response but it can be read in this document:</p> <div data-bbox="367 1615 422 1675">  </div> <p>FINAL - SCRA Consultation Respon</p> <p>SCRA fully support this proposal and think it aligns with our commitment to UNCRC incorporation and with the principles and vision of The Promise report from the Independent Care Review.</p> <p>Neil Hunter continues to chair a multi-agency group to examine and prepare for the possibility of all 16 & 17 year olds coming into the children's hearing system.</p>

4.4	<p>Child Protection Guidance 2014 - Review</p> <p>Interim guidance linked to the Covid 19 emergency response has been published and can be read here.</p> <p>The review of national child protection guidelines concluded this year, and the reviewed guidance has now been presented for consultation. This guidance was a major undertaking and has produced a significant on-line resource for anyone seeking child protection advice or guidance.</p> <p>The public consultation about the Guidance is ongoing and is due to close in January. Alistair Hogg and Melissa Hunt have been involved in some public engagement events about the Guidance and several Locality Reporter Managers have also been involved in the engagement events.</p> <p>Melissa Hunt and Alistair Hogg are still to determine if an organisational response to the Guidance consultation should be submitted – SCRA were represented on the steering group for the re-draft of the document so we have commented extensively on it throughout the drafting.</p> <p>The document is now ready for publication – subject to consultation and revision as a result of consultation responses.</p> <p>It can be read here – from the consultation site.</p>
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5	Current partnership & collaborative work
5.1	<p>New Joint Investigative Interview Training</p> <p>Gordon Bell from the Practice Team has been leading for SCRA in this work. This new approach to the Joint Investigative Interview is built on the recommendations from the Evidence and Procedure Review, and is now well underway. This entry on the Social Work Scotland website gives a clear description of the work - https://socialworkscotland.org/projects/joint-investigative-interviews/.</p> <p>The first training cohort has begun. SCRA were heavily involved in developing parts of the training; have been recently involved in the delivery of some of the training and we will be involved in feedback and discussion with the course developers about any changes that will be required after the first 'outing' of the course.</p>
5.2	<p>Child Trafficking and Exploitation</p> <p>Melissa Hunt continues to be a member of this working group which has recently got a new Chair, chaired by the Scottish Government.</p>
5.3	<p>Systemic Oppression and Children's Rights</p> <p>Melissa Hunt and Elaine Adams (CELCIS CHIP Learning and Development Lead) are currently working on an academic piece / essay which seeks to balance rights and protections and to consider how these can co-exist within the Children's Hearing.</p> <p>This is one piece of work from a larger planned approach to rights based working in the children's hearing system, which is still being developed by Melissa and Elaine, with input and oversight from Alistair Hogg.</p>

6	Research
6.1	<p>All SCRA Research proposals (and external research requiring access to SCRA staff / data) are scrutinised by SCRA's Research Ethics Committee (REC) before approval is granted for the work. This scrutiny is extensive and appropriate for research projects.</p> <p>Additional scrutiny in the form of EHRIA for SCRA's research is normally not required – although there is the possibility that the REC could consider an EHRIA is required and could consult with the Equalities Review Group (ERG) in relation to this – before making a recommendation that EHRIA is required before approval can be granted, or that an EHRIA is recommended (but not required).</p>
6.2	<p>SCRA and Barnardo's Scotland published their research, and accompanying policy paper, on 'Sexual Exploitation of Children Involved in the Children's Hearings System' on 26th October 2020. As well as generating extensive coverage on television, radio, national and local newspapers and social media, the research is already proving to be influential.</p> <p>To date (18th November):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29th October - there was a First Minister's Question (Question S5F-04496) from Kenneth Gibson MSP to ask the First Minister for her response to the report. • Barnardo's Scotland and SCRA have been invited to present the research to Child Protection Committees, the first is Aberdeen City Council on 10th December. • We have also been asked to present the research to Police Scotland's CSE Advisors Operational Group on 21st January 2021. • SCRA has been approached by Common Thread in Texas, USA about using the toolkit, we developed as part of the research, for them to use as a tool to assess the vulnerabilities of children to sexual exploitation that their service supports. • The research report is now part of the materials for practitioners completing the Pg. Certificate on Child Welfare and Protection at University of Stirling. <p>The Research can be read in full here.</p> <p>The Policy paper can be read here.</p>

6.2	<p>SCRA and Barnardo's Scotland are continuing to work together to further raise awareness and influence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are developing a presentation that both organisations can use and that could also be used by LRMs within their areas. • We hope to be able to input to the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership on the research findings around decision making in the Hearings System on children who are vulnerable to CSE. • Some of the findings and recommendations are relevant to The Promise and we would like to ensure that they are aware of these, particularly those around the vulnerabilities of boys. • Tam Baillie has made Child Protection Committees Scotland aware of the research for future discussion at CPCS.
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7	Additional Work
7.1	<p>Safeguarder Court Training</p> <p>Children 1st have commissioned some online introductory court training for safeguarders.</p> <p>Melissa Hunt was filmed as part of this training package – which will feature 'talking heads' from key partners in the children's hearing system court process.</p> <p>SCRA have had some discussion with one service manager about additional training which could be developed / delivered – but this is at a very early stage and will depend in part on the online programme content which is developed.</p>
7.2	<p>Children's Hearing – Training for schools / information for staff and pupils</p> <p>Work has halted in relation to this and will need to be re-visited in 2021. Elaine Adams and Melissa Hunt have a plan for this, which will begin with re-formatting the sample lessons included below.</p> <p>A package of training to be used as part of personal and social development in High School has been developed and is being trialled by Armadale Academy, West Lothian. This trial was due to start after an initial planning meeting after the school Easter break.</p> <p>As a result of Covid 19 this hasn't happened and will be progressed in January 2021.</p> <p>The sample lessons are included here for information:</p> <div data-bbox="363 1854 422 1921" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>School Materials - Children's Hearing 5</p>

7.3	<p>Scoping of External Training Delivery</p> <p>This scoping work has been done and is scheduled to be discussed at a PPN meeting, although it has yet to be confirmed on the agenda.</p> <div data-bbox="363 365 422 427" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>External Training Provision - PIN Discu</p>
7.4	<p>Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP)</p> <p>The Policy Scanning and Action Group has been reformed and met on 11th February 2020 to consider the findings of the Independent Care Review.</p> <p>It is still to work further on these findings.</p> <p>The CHIP members have been meeting regularly on a Tuesday afternoon – and Alistair Hogg alongside other senior SCRA staff members has attended these meetings. This group has now published a Children's Hearings COVID Recovery Plan, which can be read here, and will monitor and oversee the progress of this plan. The group consists of representation from SCRA, CHS, CELCIS, Social Work Scotland, COSLA, and Scottish Government. There has been wider engagement with other partners at various stages. This group is now called the Children's Hearings COVID Recovery Group (CHCRG).</p>
7.5	<p>Advocacy for Children's Hearings</p> <p>The UK and Scottish Government response to the Covid 19 emergency has had an effect on the timing of the roll out of Children's Hearing Advocacy Service provisions across Scotland. On 11th May 2020 an email was sent to SCRA Senior Operational Managers, to be cascaded to Locality Reporter Managers, so that Localities could:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) see who had been awarded the contract for the provision of services in their area(s) 2) communicate directly with service providers in cases where additional supports may be necessary for children and young people to engage effectively with the virtual children's hearing. <p>The full provisions came into force on 21st November 2020 and the Practice Note drafted by Gill Short (Practice Manager) was circulated to staff. The Practice Note can be read here. Locality Reporter Managers are engaging with local advocacy service providers who are keen to speak to Reporters and Panel Members about the service they will offer.</p> <p>SCRA's Press and Communications Team worked with the Government Advocacy Team to design and deliver a national website and SCRA is in the process of amending the key statutory notifications we send to children and relevant persons to include information about the availability of advocacy services.</p>

7.7	<p>Other legislative Reform</p> <p>With the encouragement of Scottish Government we continue to manage a log of legislative changes we would like to see to the 2011 Act in case there is any opportunity to introduce them. This has not been updated in the last 6 months – partly as a result of the pace of change across our service delivery. This will be a priority for Melissa Hunt when she returns to her substantive post as Policy Manager after the turn of the year. There will be learning from Covid19 and our new ways of working which we would want to recognise in this log.</p>
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8	Horizon Scanning
8.1	<p>Barnahus in Scotland:</p> <p>Children 1st paper – summarises and sets out the Scottish landscape around the Barnahus: https://www.children1st.org.uk/media/6701/trauma-free-justice-care-and-protection-for-scotlands-children.pdf</p> <p>Children 1st have received £1.5 million from the People’s Postcode Lottery to build a Child’s House for Healing. https://www.children1st.org.uk/who-we-are/news/news/childs-house-for-healing/</p> <p>These changes will also benefit children involved in the Children’s Hearing – we need to keep up to date with the details and be alert to things which are transferable and which we can implement within the Hearing System. There has been work led by health Improvement Scotland to develop Scottish Standards for the development of Barnahus. The Practice team have been involved in this work with Gill Short (Practice Team Manager) and Gordon Bell (Practice Reporter) reviewing the standards and providing comment. Comments were submitted to the latest draft in March but progress of the standards has been affected by Covid19.</p>
8.2	<p>Independent Care Review</p> <p>Reported its findings in a series of reports at the beginning of 2020.</p> <p>The reports are a promise to the children and families of Scotland that Care will improve and change. This is a challenge for the whole sector and requires considerable investment and time to get right. The implementation phase of the review has been delayed as a result of Covid19, and it is important this phase begins and explains some of the more ambiguous findings of the review – so that the direction of travel for work becomes clearer. The implementation team is now forming and starting to engage with key partners.</p> <p>Joe Hamilton (Operational Development Manager) started to work on SCRA’s official response to the review and how our work in this area will link in with ‘Better Hearings’. The two areas of work will need to progress in tandem and should support each other.</p> <p>Lisa Bennet, Head of Strategy, Alistair Hogg and Neil Hunter have had initial meetings with the Promise delivery team, with more meetings planned.</p> <p>The Promise has an ambitious ten year delivery plan – and the details of that plan are being worked out at the moment. SCRA are keen to be involved in this work and to be able to see and plan for the short, medium and long term impact of what delivering The Promise will mean.</p>

8.3	<p><u>Improving the Management of Sexual Offences Cases</u></p> <p>This Judicial-led Working Group is chaired by Lady Dorrian and has involved Gordon Bell from the Practice Team for the last 12 months. This is helpful to keep our separate Children's Hearings proceedings on the radar. Offending by children is within the scope of the group, but the focus of the group has been on improvement across criminal justice proceedings. It is important, however, that improvements in criminal justice can be transferred into the Children's Hearing. It would not be satisfactory to have one way of dealing with witnesses in criminal proceedings and another for the Hearing (for example) – particularly if a witness required to be involved in both.</p> <p>SCRA's Practice Team are also developing specific training for Reporters on Harmful Sexual Behaviour and that work is ongoing.</p>
8.5	<p>Victims Taskforce</p> <p>The <u>Victims Taskforce</u> has been established by the Scottish Government "to co-ordinate and drive action to improve the experiences of victims and witnesses within the criminal justice system, whilst ensuring a fair justice system for those accused of crime."</p> <p>The Scottish Government in the 2019 programme for Government - Protecting Scotland's Future stated that it wants to put victims at the heart of the justice system.</p> <p>This is difficult in the Children's Hearing – as the referred child is always at the centre of the system and as such victims whose cases are dealt with in the Hearing may not get the same experience as they would in a system which is focused more on them.</p> <p>Pauline Proudfoot, SCRA Operational Development Manager is sitting as part of the taskforce and SCRA's Youth Justice Co-ordination meeting are considering victims in the Children's Hearing System in some detail. Pauline also sits on the 'Trauma Informed Workforce' work stream of the Taskforce – which is hoping to circulate a self-assessment questionnaire to organisations so that a bench mark and targets for a trauma informed and sensitive workforce can be developed nationally. This will be very useful for SCRA and will inform our approach and our training plan going forward.</p> <p>A small group involving SCRA (Alistair Hogg), CHS and COPFS has been meeting to examine improvements that can be made in the Children's Hearing system to the experience of victims. This group reports to the group formed by Neil Hunter to consider the potential implications of increasing the age of referral to 18, which in turn reports to the Youth Justice Improvement Board.</p>

9	Other Influencing Work & Training
9.1	SCRA continues to be involved in the National Child Protection Strategic Group, the Youth Justice Improvement Board and the National Stop and Search Steering Group. We are also involved in the Monitoring and Evaluating Rights, Respect and Recovery for health and social harms advisory groups – and a baseline report is due to be issued on 15 th December.
9.2	<p>SCRA continues to actively consider the ways in which the Digital Improvement Programme will impact on our service delivery and specifically whether legislative change will be required in order for us to deliver all of the objectives we have under this plan.</p> <p>The Covid 19 response of SCRA and CHS will require feedback and review – but will add much information to the delivery of this programme.</p> <p>The Policy Manager is continuing to work with the Digital Delivery Team and the Government on this.</p>

10	Recommendation
a)	The Board is asked to note the contents of this report.



SCRA Research Plans for 2021-22

Accountable Director: Head of Practice & Policy **Date:** 16 December 2020
Report Author: Information & Research Manager

Recommendation:

1. To recommend that the Board approves the proposed changes to SCRA's plans for research in 2021-22.

Reason for Report: *Board Approval*

Resource Implications: *Within approved budgets*

Strategy: *Change to approved plans*

Consultation: *EMT*

Equalities Duties: *No Equalities Impact assessment has been carried out yet. This will be carried out for each project as part of the research ethical approval process.*

Document Classification: *Not protectively marked*

1. Introduction

- 1.1 SCRA's research plans for period 2020-2023 are set out in the Practice & Policy Strategy 2020-2023 which is linked to SCRA's current Corporate Plan. These plans were developed prior to the COVID-19 restrictions. It is proposed, that instead of the published plans, that SCRA's research team carry out a programme of research on the impact (positive and negative) of COVID restrictions on the operation of the Children's Hearings System and on the children involved in it. The Board is asked to consider and approve these changes to SCRA's research plans for 2021-22. Subject to Board approval, this new research programme will be included in the Practice & Policy team plan and SCRA's Business Plan for 2021-22.

This report also provides a brief update on SCRA's research activities in 2020-21.

2. Proposed programme of research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on the Children's Hearings System

- 2.1 The overarching purpose of this research programme will be to explore how the COVID period has impacted on the operation of the Children's Hearings System, on the rights of children, on their relationships with family and care providers, and on their wellbeing. It will analyse both positive and negative impacts, and identify the changes that should be retained post COVID.

This means that these four research projects in the current Practice & Policy Strategy will not go ahead:

- Explore how the Children's Hearings System responds to 16 and 17 year olds referred and those who commit more serious offences to inform how such young people could be diverted from the criminal justice system.
- Positive destinations for children on termination of their CSOs – identification of good practice
- Who are child victims? Impact on child victims of offences by other children or adults.
- What is the challenge for SCRA staff between working within a legal framework and balancing the best interests of the child? Tests of change on non-disclosure and content of reports.

2.2 We propose that the new programme covers the following areas of research:

Virtual Hearings – to find out what worked well and what should be taken forward post COVID in terms of changes in practice and provision of greater flexibility for children and families in how they can participate. This research will inform the on-going development of Better Hearings.

Contact and maintaining relationships – this part of the programme will examine the effect of the COVID restrictions on looked after children's contact with their parents and other family members. This research will be carried out in the context of children's right to family life.

Stability of placements – there is growing anecdotal evidence that the COVID restrictions may have resulted in greater stability and wellbeing for some children in care - through having fewer Children's Hearings and LAC reviews, not being moved, and spending more time with those caring for them. We would like to explore this to find out if there is evidence to support these observations. This part of the research could have wider implications on how children's care is managed and planned in the future.

Emergency legislation and the impact on children's rights, particularly the ability to express and have their views heard in Children's Hearings.

The research programme will be overseen by a **Research Advisory Group** (RAG). It is proposed that the RAG includes representation from the Commissioner for Children & Young People Scotland, Children's Hearings Scotland, Scottish Government, CELCIS, Social Work Scotland, SCRA LRM or SOM, and external researcher/academic.

Next steps – If the proposed programme is approved, detailed proposals on each research area will be developed, and these will include Equalities Impact Assessments. The proposals will be submitted to SCRA's Research Ethics Committee for approval. It is aimed that the research programme will start in early 2021-22, and will have reported in full by end March 2023.

3. Update on research underway in 2020-21

3.1 Child Sexual Exploitation of Children Involved in the Children's Hearings System, joint with Barnardo's Scotland – the research report and policy paper were published on 26th October 2020.

3.2 Children aged under 12 years in residential care – an interim report on the findings from quantitative analysis of the 101 (out of 136) cases examined to date has been circulated to the RAG for this project. Interviews with Panel Members, residential care workers, social workers and foster carers are on-going. The interim findings and plans for further analyses and interviews will be discussed at the RAG meeting on 2nd December 2020.

3.3 Children aged 12 to 15 years involved in offending (Age of Criminal Responsibility). There was a delay to the start of this research due to the COVID lockdown. Progress has been made with a literature review and analyses of trends completed. Much of the research is based on analysis of data to be extracted from 400 children's case files. To date 50/50 cases jointly reported to the Reporter, 22/50 cases jointly reported to the Procurator Fiscal, and 75/300 standard offence cases have been examined. This has highlighted a paucity of information available on victims. There are also potential issues with obtaining data on Procurator Fiscal's decision making if the COVID restrictions are to continue. On 6th November 2020, these issues and a progress report were put to the RAG for this project for comment.

3.4 Home CSOs. Most of the findings from this research were published in March 2019. However, analyses on **outcomes on school attendance and gravity and volume of offending** were not. In 2020, SCRA has been working with colleagues at Robert Gordon University to complete these analyses. We've found that there was a statistically significant increase in school attendance after a year with home CSOs but no change in offending. A paper will shortly be submitted to an academic journal.

Wellbeing outcomes measurement tool. SCRA has been developing the tool, used in the research to measure changes in children's wellbeing outcomes, to one that can be routinely used in practice. We hope that this practice tool can be used to assess and monitor changes in looked after children's wellbeing over time and as a result of interventions, and to be applicable at individual child and aggregated levels. We aim to publish early in 2021.

4. Conclusion & Recommendation

4.1 To recommend that the Board approves SCRA's proposals for changes to its plans for research in 2021-22.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Overview of Policies

**Accountable
Director:**

Principal Reporter/Chief Executive

Date: 16 December 2020

Report prepared by: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive
and Governance Officer

Recommendation:

The Board is asked to:-

- a) Note the programme of policy reviews undertaken in 2020
- b) Review and agree that the current approach remains in line with Board requirements and agreements on policy development outlined at paragraph 2.5
- c) Review and agree the schedule planned for 2021 and the proposed delegations for approval.

Reason for Report: Board discussion/approval

Resource Implications: Within available resources

Strategy: Within agreed plans

Equalities Duties: Equalities Impact Assessment not required (individual policies are subject to EQIA on agreement and/or point of review)

**Document
Classification:** Not protectively marked

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Board agreed at its September 2013 meeting that an annual overview report on policies be presented for noting by the Board.
- 1.2 This report covers the period from January to November 2020.

2. Overview of Policies

- 2.1 Major SCRA Policies currently in place include:

- Human Resources Policies
- Health & Safety Policies
- Information Security Policies
- Data Protection Policies
- Risk Management Policy
- Fraud Policy
- Location Policy (part of Property Strategy)
- Procurement Policy
- Media Handling Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Complaints Policy

- 2.2 The policies are available to staff via Connect (SCRA's intranet).

- 2.3 The HR Sub-Group of the National Partnership Forum deals with policies that affect employment and/or that may have an impact on staff at work e.g. Information Security Policy/Absence Management Policy etc. where there is a requirement for staff to sign up to the policy.

All SCRA policies are routed via the Partnership Forum for consultation.

- 2.4 Health and Safety policies are monitored and tracked by the Health & Safety Committee and there is currently a schedule which sets out all policies and review dates and this is overseen by the Committee.
- 2.5 The Board agreed in 2013 that policies which set direction, require specific high-level scrutiny and governance arrangements or are of a novel/controversial, public interest nature will be routed via the Board – for example:
 - Whistleblowing, Risk Management, Fraud Policies
 - Complaints
 - Media Handling
 - Organisational Change, Voluntary Severance/Redundancy Policy and other major revisions to SCRA terms and conditions
 - Overall Health & Safety Policy Statement

3. Review of Policies

- 3.1 Over the reporting period (January – November 2020) work undertaken on policies is as follows:

HR Policies

Policy	Update information
Revised Recruitment and Selection Policy	Launched
Supervision Framework	Complete – updated to include reference to wellbeing, case and court work discussions within supervision as well as the inclusion of hearings observations
Learning and Development Policy	Complete – modernised and includes reference to an annual learning plan, personal development, further education opportunities
Probationary Policy	New and complete – implementation of 6 months' probation period for all new starts to SCRA
Organisational Change Policy	Revised, updated and approved by the Board – modernised and included updated guidance on SG voluntary exit schemes and change policy
Interim Annual Leave arrangements as a result of COVID19	Complete – to encourage the use of leave but in recognition of challenge in taking leave a higher than normal carry over into 2021

Gender neutral language update across all policies is ongoing.

Health & Safety Policies

Policy	Update information
Asbestos Policy	Minor changes to wording.
COSHH Policy and Statutory Duties	No material changes made to policy
Display Screen Equipment	Re-written and included reference to dual screens now employed
Manual Handling	No material changes made to policy
First Aid Policy	Only minor changes made to policy regarding details on Connect
Substance Misuse	Contacts organisations updated
Accident & Incident	Changes to reporting procedure hierarchy made
Eye Test	Minor changes to text but no material change to overall policy
No Smoking	Broken link to Employee Assistance updated and minor changes to text
Sharps Bodily Fluids	Removed Carillion and replaced FES. Minor alteration to text in places
Lone Working	Updated links and gender neutral terminology (has been sent over to Nicky to update on Connect today)

In addition to the above the following guidance was also updated

- Accident & Incident Guidance Notes March 2020
- Accident & Incident Form March 2020
- Contact form for Lone working March 2020
- Locality Managers Monthly Checklist March 2020
- Conducting the annual fire risk assessment guidance March 2020
- Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) short form March 2020
- FRA Short form Office example March 2020
- FRA Short form Outreach hearing centre example March 2020
- Pregnancy risk assessment form 2020 (sent to Nicky to go on Connect today)
- New Start safety checklist 2020 (to go onto Connect today)
- Modern Apprentice Risk Assessment form 2020 (to go onto Connect today)
- Generic Manual Handling blank risk pro-forma 2020 (to go onto Connect today)

Most of the above were minor changes to text or layout.

Checking the asbestos register and pipework was added to the Locality Manager Monthly checklist.

Also completed in 2020

Flu Vaccination programme for staff

Note - this is likely to be repeated towards the end of 2021. The first year was through Optima Health but is now arranged directly through Boots Corporate Flu scheme as this offers a saving of approximately £4 per vaccination for staff. 2021 will be the 4th year we will have offered this service to staff within SCRA.

Finance updates in 2020

- Schedule of Delegated Authority (annual review)
- Procurement Policy
- Fraud and Corruption Policy – complete

The Corporate Procurement Strategy 2020 – 2023 was reviewed and approved by EMT in May. The main changes to the Strategy were:

- to reflect a more inclusive approach to procurement throughout the Strategy, including our Procurement Vision and the inclusion of a new priority setting out how we will ensure inclusive procurement.
- to review and update our key priorities.
- To reflect the work we are carrying out to improve the cyber security and resilience of our suppliers
- to update regarding our compliance with EU Directive 2014/55/EU on e-invoicing

Information Policies

- New guidance and materials has been produced on how to make subject access requests. These include an animation, easy read guide and guide for care experienced people. These were developed with Who Cares?Scotland and the ICO - See new section on SCRA web site on Asking for Your Information <https://www.scra.gov.uk/contact-us/asking-for-your-information/>
- Revised and updated the Information Sharing Guidance was revised and updated
- The Records Management Plan is currently being revised and updated.

IT Security Policies

At the beginning of the year the IT priority was ensuring that we had all the policies and guidance in place for CSAS going live. SCRA were awarded full accreditation by Arcanum for CSAS on 2 Sept 2020.

The CSAS accreditation document set was finalised during 2020 and consisted of;

- CHS T&Cs for access to the Community Hub*
- CSAS Accreditation Policy
- CSAS Baseline Control Set (Evidence of ISO 27001 Compliance)
- CSAS Forensic Readiness Policy
- CSAS Remediation Plan
- CSAS Risk Assessment
- CSAS Risk Management and Accreditation Document Set (RMADS)
- CSAS Risk Treatment Plan
- CSAS Security Monitoring Policy
- CSAS Security Operating Procedures - System Admin
- CSAS Security Policy
- CSAS Security Risk Register
- SCRA Incident Response Plan (to include CSAS)
- Security Operating Procedures (SyOps) for SCRA Users of CSAS

* As CHS staff and volunteers access case data on CSAS we need to ensure that the T&Cs of their access meet SCRA's security requirements.

The CSAS Operational Support Team have created the CSAS Hub document library on Connect with gives CSAS users access to a comprehensive set of guidance and training materials including induction materials, user guides and examples.

4. Programme for 2021

4.1 The programme for 2021 in relation to the HR Policies

- Supervision Framework
- Organisational Change Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Investigation Guidelines
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Youth Employment Strategy
- Smart/Flexible working policy (including flexi time)
- Exit Interview Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Exemption Policy for Professional Development Award Candidate
- Looking at gender neutral language across all policies

4.2 The Equalities Network will be reviewing the Equalities and Mainstreaming Report and considering its policy requirements for the 2021/22.

4.3 Finance and Procurement Policies due for review in 2021 include:

- Schedule of Delegated Authority (annual review)
- Procurement Policy

4.4 Health and Safety Policies that are due for review via the Health and Safety Committee in 2021 include:

- Fire Safety
- Stress Policy
- Violence in the Workplace Manual

In addition, the following courses are planned (subject to Covid19 meeting restrictions being lifted)

- Mental Health First Aid Refresher course for staff
- Mental Health First Aid 2 day course (to recruit new first aiders)

4.5 Information Policies due for review in 2021 include:

- Freedom of Information Policy.
- Complaints Handling Procedure

4.6 IT

As a result of the ongoing work with CSAS the revision of existing policies was not considered a priority during 2020. As all operational staff will be using CSAS by the end of the year, the IT team will return to business as usual activities and this will include revising existing policies. The revision of the Information Security Handbook and the Information Asset Owners Handbook will be the priority in 2021.

**Review Schedule of IT Team Policies, Procedures and Management Documents
Nov 2020**

Document Title	Version	Issued	Review Date
Information Asset Owner Handbook	V1.0	20-Oct-15	Jul-21
SCRA Incident Response Plan	V1.1	16-Aug-19	Feb-21
Information Security Handbook	V3.4	29-Oct-18	Apr-21
SCRA Off-boarding Policy	V1.0	04-May-18	May-21
Email Signatures - Examples of Good Practice	V1.0	Feb-15	Jun-21
Protective Marking Emails on SCOTS V	V1.1	Apr-14	Jun-21
Introduction of the Government Security Classifications	-	Mar-14	Jul-21
SCRA Staff Handling Visually Recorded Interviews	V1.0	19-Aug-19	Aug-21
CHS T&Cs for access to the Community Hub*	V1.0	14-Aug-20	Aug-21
CSAS Accreditation Policy	V1.2	22-Jan-20	Jan-21
CSAS Baseline Control Set (Evidence of ISO 27001 Compliance)	V1.0	29-May-20	Apr-21
CSAS Forensic Readiness Policy	V1.0	14-Aug-20	Jul-21
CSAS Remediation Plan	V1.0	07-Jul-20	Jun-21
CSAS Password Policy	V1.01	31-Aug-20	Jul-21
CSAS Risk Assessment	V1.3	21-May-20	May-22
CSAS Risk Management and Accreditation Document Set (RMADS)	V1.0	15-Sep-20	Sep-22
CSAS Risk Treatment Plan	V1.0	14-Aug-20	Aug-22
CSAS Security Monitoring Policy	V1.0	14-Aug-20	Jan-21
CSAS Security Operating Procedures - System Admin	V1.0	14-Aug-20	Aug-21
CSAS Security Policy	V1.0	19-Aug-20	Aug-21
CSAS Security Risk Register	Current	14-Sep-20	Dec-20
SCRA Incident Response Plan (to include CSAS)	V1.2	05-Jun-20	Feb-21
Security Operating Procedures (SyOps) for SCRA Users of CSAS	V1.0	19-Aug-20	Aug-21
CMS Security Assurance Case	V1.1a	23-Nov-17	Mar-21
CMS / DW Risk Register	Current	22-Oct-20	Mar-21

Once SCRA realised that lockdown was inevitable due to rising cases of Coronavirus across the Scotland, the IT team were called upon to put in technical solutions so that we could hold virtual hearings, and to provide additional laptops so as many of their staff could work from home. The IT Team produced technical guidance to assist staff with the new way of working, and this guidance has been published on Connect and is accessible through the Coronavirus – Practice and other materials web page.

5. Recommendation:

5.1 The Board is asked to:-

- a) Note the programme of policy review undertaken in 2019.
- b) Review and agree that the current approach is in line with Board requirements and agreements on policy development outlined at paragraph 2.5
- c) Review and agree the schedule planned for 2020 and the proposed delegations for approval.