

	Item	Purpose	Papers
1.1	AOB		
1.2	Apologies		
2.	Declarations of Interest		
3.	Updates		
4.	Minutes/Committees		
4.1	Draft Minute of the meeting held on 25 March 2021 Board Action Log and Workplan Matters Arising	Approval Review	Attached
4.2	Audit & Risk Committee		
4.2.1	• Draft Minute of Meeting held on 20 May 2021	Information	Attached
4.2.2	• Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report	Approval	
4.3	Nominations Committee – Draft Minute of meeting held on 28 April 2021	Information	Attached
4.4	Remuneration & Succession Planning Committee – Verbal update of meeting held on 23 June 2021	Information	Attached
	Reports		
5.	Chief Executive's Report	Noting	Attached
5.1	The Promise – Reporting and Governance Structure	Approval	Attached
6.	Data Report	Noting	Attached
7.	Senior Operational Manager Reviews 2020/21	Noting	Attached
8.	2020/21 Draft Budget Outturn	Approval	Attached
9.	Property Strategy	Noting	Attached
10.	Annual Procurement report	Noting	Attached
11.	Communications Plan - Update	Noting	Attached
12.	Annual Complaints Report	Noting	Attached
13.	Influencing Report 01 December 2020 to 01 June 2020	Noting	Attached
14.	Digital Strategy Review	Noting	Attached
15.	Board Governance Review	Noting	Attached
16.	Risk		
16.1	Strategic & Operational Risk Registers	Approval	Attached
16.2	New Risks	Discussion	
	Date of Next Meeting: Routine Board Meeting – Wednesday 22 September 2021		



Scottish Children's Reporter Administration

Minute of SCRA Board Meeting held on Thursday 25 March 2021 By Teams

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Lesley Sheppard (Deputy Director, Care and Justice, Scottish Government)
Neil Hunter (Principal Reporter/Chief Executive),
Ed Morrison (Head of Finance & Resources),
Susan Deery (Head of Human Resources),
Alistair Hogg (Head of Practice and Policy),
Lisa Bennett (Head of Strategy & OD),
Helen Etchells (Senior Operational Manager, North and West Scotland)
Paul Mulvanny (Senior Operational Manager, East and Central Scotland)
Monica Sweeny (UNISON Branch Secretary)
Pamela Armstrong (Governance Officer)

		Timescale	Action
1.1	AOB None		
1.2	Apologies None		
2.	Declarations of Interest None		
2.1	Welcome and Introductions Lesley Sheppard, Deputy Director, Care and Justice, Scottish Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesley advised that she has been thoughtful and reflective about what has and has not been achieved during this five year parliamentary session. This has also been a time to look forward, positively and constructively Achievements in the last period have been significant and include UNCRC, ACR, The Promise, expansion of early learning and childcare and school reform work. These were all which were achieved during a pandemic. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been significant steps forward for children and young people but there is still work to do. • We have yet to see the full impact on children and young people of all of the restrictions and we collectively need to be alert and responsive to this. • We need to get ready for a potential new set of Ministers, which provides a great opportunity to reset and refocus. • With so much change ahead we need to progress with strategic coherence across all areas. A paper will be issued setting out in more detail what needs to be done and how to do it. 		
3.	Minutes/Committees		
3.1	Minute of meeting held on 21 January 2021 Agreed as accurate.		
3.2	Board Action log and Work plan The action log and work plan were reviewed.		
3.3	Matters Arising All matters arising are covered within the agenda.		
3.4	Minute the Audit & Risk Committee held on Thursday 18 February 2021 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"> • Data Protection • Quality Assurance Update Report • External Audit – General Update • Internal Audit - Progress Report • Digital Strategy Joint Committee Update • Pensions Update Draft Minute of Private Meeting held on 18 February 2021 The minute was reviewed and noted. The proposed approach to the appointment of internal audit was supported by the Board.		
3.5	Nominations Committee – minute of meeting 20 January 2021 The minute was reviewed and noted.		
	Reports		
4.	Chief Executives Report The Board Chair introduced the report and the PR/CE provided an update in the following areas:		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Partnership • Strategic Partnerships • Scottish Government Liaison • The Promise • COVID 19 Recovery Plan • Improvements to Virtual Hearings • Understanding Child Exploitation in Scotland (UCES) • Disabled Children Child Protection Network • Research on the age of criminal responsibility • Stand Up For Siblings – third anniversary • Press and Communications Team update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Orkney – 30 years on • Incorporation of UNCRC • International Women's Day • Our Hearings, Our Voice • Sign Language Week • Virtual Hearings developments • Focus on staff health and wellbeing <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair passed on her thanks to all SCRA staff for the huge amount of work done, both in terms of business as usual and also in progressing initiatives during the pandemic. • Three random HSE spot checks have been conducted at SCRA offices, all were satisfactory. This will provide further assurance on the safe use of our buildings. • SCRA attends the weekly Children's Hearings Recovery Group. This provides assurance that we are in step with all partners in the hearings system and allows SCRA to continue to play its leadership role. SCRA's access to data allows a focus on both a timeline and progress against recovery • SCRA has retained access to face to face hearings where there is a requirement to secure a child/family's participation. • There will be a focus on widening access to face to face hearings over the spring and summer months, as public health restrictions gradually ease. • What has supported the organisation through COVID 19 has been the agility, commitment and flexibility of the staff group. Future reports to the Board will highlight staff group resilience and the high level of support provided by first line managers. • Work is ongoing with internal audit in response to a recent review of business continuity/emergency planning to ensure that COVID related learning is 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>captured and used to strengthen our overall approach in our business continuity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNCRC articles align with the Kilbrandon principles. A full audit is being planned in relation to UNCRC compliance and this offers an opportunity to refresh and modernise the Kilbrandon principles. • A joint session with the CHS Board is being planned to look at potential areas of common interest and coherence in relation to Keeping the Promise. 		
5.	<p>Draft Budget 2021/22</p> <p>The Head of Finance introduced the report which is seeking approval of the draft 2021/22 revenue and capital budgets, the staffing establishment, the delegation of the minor works capital budget to the Executive Management Team (EMT) and approval of the 2021/22 Efficiency Plan. The report also provides an update on the Financial Plan to illustrate the challenges in delivering a sustainable budget going into 2022/23.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report provides updates in the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draft Scottish Government Budget 2021/22 ○ Draft Budget 2021/22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revenue ▪ Staff Costs ▪ Non Staff Costs ▪ Digital Strategy ▪ Income ▪ Capital ○ Efficiency Plan ○ Financial Plan ○ Alignment with the business plan • Sponsor Team and Scottish Government Finance have indicated that revenue funding of up to £26.66m will be available to SCRA in 2021/22. This level of funding with the addition of £300k of carry forward have made it possible to present a balanced budget to the Board. • The impact of the pandemic on service delivery will continue into 2021/22 and further changes to budget allocations may be required in-year. Decisions to re-allocate budget will seek to support the delivery of the recovery plan whilst trying where possible to build future resilience. • The continuing one year nature of funding settlements creates risks in setting the revenue budget for 2021/22 due to the uncertainty of funding in future years. An updated five year Financial Plan 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>will be presented to the Board in June 2021.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the draft 2021/22 revenue and capital budgets. To approve the staffing establishment of 404.33 FTE's. To approve the Efficiency Plan for 2021/22. To delegate approval of the minor works capital budget to the Executive Management Team. 		
6.	<p>Budget Monitoring Report</p> <p>The Head of Finance introduced the report which provides a summary of SCRA's financial position for year to February 2021 and forecast (based on January results) for the full year 2020/21.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 provided very welcome additional funding The overall accruals based revenue underspend is forecast to be £582k (2.3%). This is mainly due to underspends on staffing and other operating charges resulting from reduced activity, budget hand-back notwithstanding. SCRA is required to safeguard £300k of this underspend to support 2021/22 budget plans. There may be a further hand-back of any remaining unused resource to Scottish Government in mid-April. The core capital budget is forecasting a £162k underspend. SCRA will require this resource mainly to support 2021/22 minor works plans delayed from 2020/21. The Digital budget shows a £82k overspend. EMT will consider the use of core revenue underspend to meet this pressure. 		
7.	<p>Corporate Plan 2020-23 - Draft SCRA Business Plan 2021/22</p> <p>The Head of Strategy & OD introduced the draft Business Plan.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every year SCRA publishes its Business Plan for the year ahead. The purpose of the plan is to: 		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set out the actions that will deliver SCRA's strategic outcomes and key priorities during the forthcoming year; ○ Outline the governance arrangements supporting the plan; and ○ Provide information about the ways in which SCRA will measure and monitor performance improvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Business Plan for 2021-22 is developed from the 3-year organisational strategies (2020-23) in consultation with the strategy leads and their teams. • The pandemic will continue to affect our services, and therefore, the Business Plan incorporates high level priorities for recovery planning throughout the year • The EHRIA has been drafted and the review arrangements will be completed following the ratified final version of the Business Plan by the Board in March. • The final, approved version will be sent for Ministerial noting ahead of publication on 6th April '21. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the final draft of the 2021/22 Business Plan for submission to Minister for noting and publication, subject to full completion of the equalities and human rights impact assessment (EHRIA) and retrospective confirmation to the Board. 		
8.	<p>Annual Workforce Planning Report</p> <p>The Head of HR introduced the Annual Workforce Plan for 2021/22, which aims to meet the second year of the three year People Strategy, which is a supporting strategy of SCRA's Corporate Plan. The actions planned for 2021/22 will be included in our Business Plan for the same period.</p> <p>Noted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA clearly recognises that in order to achieve its outcomes outlined in the 2020/23 Corporate Plan and People Strategy, it is important to put the workforce at the heart of SCRA. We are cognisant that 2021/22 is a year when we will be managing and supporting our workforce through COVID-19 restrictions as well starting our recovery and the Annual Workforce Plan recognises this and is developed accordingly. • This workforce plan will deliver the second year of the 2020/23 People Strategy. • The workforce plan and its implementation will be 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>discussed in partnership with UNISON.</p> <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should we be doing to create change and create it quicker with regard to make up of staff? Is it time to take affirmative action and think out the box in improving workforce diversity? What do we need to do differently? • Given the degree of training and input necessary to induct temporary staff it is anticipated that at least some of these staff will transition to permanent roles as they arise in the next period. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the workforce plan for 2021/22 in line with Year 2 of the 2020/2023 People Strategy. • To examine our overall approach to staff recruitment in order to demonstrate progress in relation to achieving increased diversity and representation in the workforce 		
9.	<p>Data and Performance Report</p> <p>The Head of Strategy & OD introduced the report, providing the Board with oversight of the data relating to the current operating environment.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report is an amalgam of data provided to the Scottish Government in relation to the use of the provisions set out in the emergency legislation, data in relation to Hearings and referrals as we track our progress against recovery plans and data manually collected by localities in relation to Hearings formats. • The report draws on data that is currently available for reporting and will be reviewed in line with indicators set out in the Business Plan 21/22 and the accompanying Recovery Plan to enable close monitoring of recovery activity over the coming year. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is continuing on a progress monitoring framework which will be presented at a future Board meeting for assurance on how recovery work is being advanced against milestones. • It would be helpful to show data over a longer period of time in order to show trends, in a line graph format. • It would be helpful to present what work remains outstanding and how this is shown against the 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>timeline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the pandemic we have tried to ensure the most complicated cases have been prioritised 		
10.	<p>Environmental Annual Report</p> <p>The Head of Finance introduced the report, providing the Board with an update on recent developments, changes to legislation and how SCRA is contributing towards our public sector environmental duties. The report also includes the outcome of Internal Audit's recent consideration of the Sustainability arrangements in place across SCRA.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Scottish Government declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and introduced new legislation bringing forward more ambitious emission reduction targets with challenging timescales. The objective is transformational change and public bodies are required to implement and lead on delivering this change. SCRA's Corporate Plan 2020-23 more prominently references Climate Change and Environmental considerations in our strategic aims. They also now form part of our organisational values and behaviours. Through these strategic aims and values we have committed to delivering our services in a way that demonstrates care and kindness to our environment as well as ensuring that the way we connect, and work together, minimises our impact on the environment. The recent Internal Audit review has identified areas where action and improvement is required. Without action there is a risk that SCRA are not fully supporting the Scotland wide emission reduction targets and climate change policies. The coronavirus pandemic has forced change and created new ways of delivering our services. There is an opportunity to develop and improve these new approaches rather than reverting to previous arrangements. Digital solutions offer greater flexibility and reduce the need for travel, our second highest source of emissions. 		
11.	<p>Health & Safety Annual Report</p> <p>The Head of HR introduced the report which covers the period from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, during which SCRA has been managing and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Noted: The report covers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 • Accident and Incident Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RIDDOR ○ Injuries ○ Assaults/aggression • Policy Development • Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E-Learning • Mental Health Awareness • Healthy Working Lives • Disability Confident Scheme • Flu Vaccination 		
12.	<p>Digital Strategy Update The PR/CE introduced the report, providing an update to the Board in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Operating Model • Post MVP CSAS Development Activity • Digital Finance • Governance arrangements • Security and Information Governance <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work has commenced on developing a Standard Operating Model (SOM) for SCRA which aims to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maximise the advantage of the design and build of the case management system itself. ○ The SOM will have a dynamic interplay with ongoing CSAS development and improvement to support how we wish the operational model to develop. • We awarded through a Change Control Notification (CCN) to the main contract an additional programme of work to develop further the CSAS MVP. • The budget for digital in 20/21 is on track, including full use of contingency and utilisation of the additional in year funding from the Scottish Government to support linked infrastructure activities • Revised joint governance arrangements across CHS and SCRA were approved by the respective CHS and SCRA Boards in December 2020. Digital Boards for CHS and SCRA are now being put in place and will define and scope future business needs and investment across the 2 bodies. • As previously reported to the Board decommissioning 		

		Timescale	Action
	of the legacy CMS, against external cyber security standards and independent verification is underway and will be completed within the scheduled end of March deadline.		
13.	<p>Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Mainstreaming Report 2020-2021</p> <p>The Head of HR introduced the Annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Mainstreaming Report in line with the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <p>The Report sets out the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Matters • Mainstreaming Equality, Diversity and Inclusion • Leadership, Governance and Business Planning • Streamlining our Approach: SCRA's Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2021 and Equality Outcomes 2021-2022 • SCRA's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Outcomes 2020-2021 • SCRA's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Outcomes 2021-2022 <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board acknowledged the significant equalities diversity and inclusion mainstreaming agenda which was ongoing. • The need to renew and refocus work on equalities which has stalled as a result of the pandemic was acknowledged 		
14.	<p>New Risks</p> <p>None</p>		
15.	<p>2021 Board/Committee Dates</p> <p>The Board noted the Board and Committee meeting dates for 2021.</p>		
	<p>Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>Board Development Day – Wednesday 28 April 2021</p> <p>Routine Board Meeting - Wednesday 23 June 2021</p>		

SCRA Board Meeting Workplan June 2021

Business Item	Wed 23/06/21	Wed 22/9/21	Wed 15/12/21	Jan 22 TBC	Mar 22 TBC
Strategic/Corporate					
Policy & Influencing Report	✓		✓		
Research Programme			✓		
Risk Register	✓		✓		
Governance					
Audit Committee 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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Complaints Review	✓				

Business Item	Wed 23/06/21	Wed 22/9/21	Wed 15/12/21	Jan 22 TBC	Mar 22 TBC
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		✓			

* Equalities Annual report was reviewed by the board as part of the mainstreaming report at its March 2021 meeting.

** 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.

Board Action Log as at June 2021

Meeting/ Item	Action	Timescale	Owner	Comments	Status
Dec 20 Overview of policies	Consider a change to governance and approach to reporting format, which more clearly set out policies in play and review schedules	Dec 21	PA		Not yet due

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION**Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report for 2020/21**

Accountable James Edgar
Board Member: Audit & Risk Committee Chair

Date: 23 June 2021

Report Author: Head of Finance & Resources

Recommendations:

1. To approve the Internal Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report for 2020/21.

Reason for Report:	For approval.
Resource Implications:	Not applicable
Strategy:	Not applicable
Equalities Duties:	Equalities Impact Assessment Not Required
Document Classification	Not protectively marked

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide evidence to the Board as to how the SCRA Audit & Risk Committee has fulfilled its remit, and how effectively it has discharged its responsibilities. It also supports preparation of the annual Governance Statement.

2. Context of the Audit and Risk Committee

- 2.1 The Audit & Risk Committee's Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 1. These were reviewed and updated in April 2020.
- 2.2 The Board appoints non-executive Board members to the Audit and Risk Committee. The Audit and Risk Committee's membership for 2020/21 was as follows:
- James Edgar, Chair
 - Catherine Robertson
 - Martin Toye
 - Tam Baillie

Where appropriate, the Committee augments the skills and experience of its members by seeking advice from Internal and External Auditors, and Executive Management Team.

- 2.3 The meetings of the Committee are attended by the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive, the Head of Finance & Resources and the Internal and External Auditors. Additionally, other members of the Executive Management Team attend on a regular basis with input from other officers as appropriate. The Governance Officer took minutes for the May 2020, August 2020 and November 2020. The Personal Information Officer took the minute for the February 2021 meeting.
- 2.4 The Committee met four times in 2020/21: May 2020, August 2020, November 2020 and February 2021.
- 2.5 The agenda for each Committee meeting is drafted by the Head of Finance & Resources and approved by the Audit & Risk Committee Chair. In addition a pre-agenda briefing (if required) is made available to the Audit & Risk Chair and involves the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive and Head of Finance & Resources. An overview of the 2020/21 meeting agendas is attached at Appendix 2. Appendix 3 shows delivery against planned outputs for the year.

3. Assurance

3.1 The Audit & Risk Committee gains assurance from the reports submitted by the two audit leads and from the management response to audit recommendations and in person at Committee meetings. The audit plans, developed using SCRA's current strategic objectives and a risk based approach to identification of priority areas for audit review, between them cover a wide range of operational, financial and governance systems. Over and above this the Audit and Risk Committee approves each year a programme of Quality Assurance Audits which are undertaken by SCRA's Quality Assurance Manager. The Quality Assurance programme focusses on issues related to SCRA's compliance with its statutory duties (usually described via Practice Direction from the Principal Reporter) and other practice or organisational guidance and direction. In agreement with the Audit & Risk Committee the Quality Assurance case sampling programme was put on hold in recognition of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the implementation of CSAS on Localities. The Audit and Risk Committee considered an annual report on 2019/20 case sampling activity and received update reports on plans to resume the programme in 2021/22.

3.2 The focus of financial reporting in the year was the presentation of the 2019/20 Annual Accounts and the External Auditor's report in August 2020. The Financial Accounts showed SCRA's net expenditure of £30,495k exceeded revenue Grant in Aid of £23,942k by £6,553k. This position reflects inclusion of non-cash items such as depreciation (£1,266k), IAS adjustment to pension scheme contributions (£3,887k) and pension scheme finance cost (£1,108k). The Auditor expressed an unqualified opinion on the 2019/20 financial statements.

The Pension Reserve had a deficit of £22,021k as at March 2020. Due to the pension deficit SCRA's reserves have been in deficit since 2009 and in May 2020 SCRA received a letter from Scottish Government to address concerns in this area.

In the year to 31 March 2020 the Management Accounts showed SCRA expenditure (excluding depreciation, unfunded pensions and Digital) of £23,809k which was £164k less than the approved revenue budget. Capital spend of £668k was £82k under the approved budget. The revenue and capital underspends were carried forward to support the 2020/21 budget plans.

3.3 The external and internal auditors have delivered to plans and timelines throughout 2020/21. There has been co-operation between both sets of auditors and between the auditors and SCRA staff and this has been acknowledged in audit reports. Having assessed the Internal Audit function the external auditors were able to place reliance on the work of the internal auditors in a number of areas. Management has agreed with all audit recommendations identified in 2020/21. Progress against delivery of these recommendations is reported annually to the Committee by Internal Audit progress reports

- 3.4 Risk management is a key priority for the Board, alongside performance and financial management. The Audit & Risk Committee oversees, on behalf of the Board, the risk management process through co-ordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Risk Management Policy. This includes reviewing Strategic and Operational Risk Registers every six months and as necessary, reviewing the work undertaken on identified high risk areas and the action plans to mitigate the effects of such risks. Risk is a standing item at Board, Committee and Management Team (including Locality Management) meetings.
- 3.5 SCRA's Revised Risk Management Policy was approved by the Board at its meeting in June 2019. The Board has responsibility for the system of internal control and risk management within SCRA. The Risk Management Policy will next be reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee in February 2022 and taken to the March 2022 Board for approval.
- 3.6 The Planning and Performance Network (PPN) oversee Locality risk management. The network is chaired by the Senior Operational Manager and will co-ordinate the operational and locality approach to risk, including the development and maintenance of risks (linked and aligned to locality plans).

The PPN's role also includes:

- identifying and sharing good practice
- assessing whether risks are being adequately managed within agreed appetites and tolerances across SCRA
- ensuring that each business area and locality is regularly carrying out risk identification and assessment exercises to ensure that risk registers are accurate and up-to-date.

A risk workshop, facilitated by the internal auditors, was held in summer 2020 and was attended by SCRA risk leads.

4. Impact

- 4.1 Throughout the year as well as the routine business for the Audit & Risk Committee there was a continuing focus on information governance and the Digital Programme. The Audit & Risk Committee Chair is co-Chair of the Digital Delivery Oversight Committee and provides a verbal update at each Audit & Risk Committee meeting.
- 4.2 Feedback from the Executive Management Team is that it welcomes the rigour of the Audit & Risk Committee's scrutiny and advice which has maintained an appropriate balance between scrutiny and support.
- 4.3 The Audit and Risk Committee has achieved the following during 2020/21.
 - Tracking and influencing progress on non-disclosure and case information breaches.
 - Scrutinising the organisation's risk profile, providing input and scrutiny on the application and review of SCRA's risk management approach to embed risk management arrangements at locality level.
 - Approving and overseeing Internal and External Audit programme plans.
 - Providing scrutiny and direction to SCRA Senior Managers on implementation of Internal and External Audit recommendations across the year.
 - Approving SCRA's Quality Assurance programme and subsequent monitoring of follow-up actions.
 - Assessing the work of the Audit and Risk Committee against relevant standards as developed by Audit Scotland and aligning practice as required.
 - Tracking progress with Digital Strategy and delivery of CSAS MVP.
 - Receiving and responding to reports in relation to progress and risks in relation to the SCRA Pension Fund (Falkirk LGPS).

5. Audit and Risk Committee Self-Assessment

- 5.1 In August 2020, the Audit & Risk Committee undertook its annual self-assessment exercise. Individual assessments informed the Committee's discussion, following which it was agreed that the Committee's approach was largely compliant.
- 5.2 Audit and Risk Committee members will undertake its annual self-assessment exercise in May 2021.

6. Plans for 2021/22

- 6.1 The Audit and Risk Committee will meet in May 2021, August 2021, November 2021 and February 2022. The focus of the meetings will be as follows:

May 2021

Internal Audit - Annual Report 2020/21
 Internal Audit - Forward Plan
 Internal Audit - Covid-19 Health & Safety
 Internal Audit - Complaints Management
 Internal Audit – Follow Up
 External Audit – Annual Audit Plan
 External Audit – Annual Accounts 2020/21, including Accounting Policies
 External Audit – General Updates
 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2020/21
 Case Sampling Programme 2021/22
 Digital Strategy Oversight Committee update
 Review of standing items including topical/regulatory/governance issues.
 Audit & Risk Committee Self-Assessment

August 2021

External Audit Report on the Annual Accounts
 Annual Accounts 2020/21
 External Audit – General Updates
 Internal Audit Reviews (per Annual Plan)
 Case Sampling Reviews – per Annual Plan
 Pensions Update
 Information Governance
 Digital Strategy Oversight Committee update
 Review of standing items including topical/regulatory/governance issues.
 Private Meetings with Internal/External Auditors (Audit and Risk Committee Members only)

November 2021

External Audit – General Updates
 Internal Audit Reviews (per Annual Plan)
 Case sampling Reviews – per Annual Plan
 Risk Management
 Annual Fraud Report
 Digital Strategy Oversight Committee update
 Review of standing items including topical/regulatory/governance issues.

February 2022

Annual Audit Plan (External Audit)
 Internal Audit – Annual Plan 2021/22
 Internal Audit Reviews (per Annual Plan)
 Quality Assurance – Annual Progress Report
 Case sampling Reviews – per Annual Plan
 Pensions Update
 Digital Strategy Oversight Committee update
 Review of standing items including topical/regulatory/governance issues.

- 6.2 Regular Progress Reports will be presented throughout the year by the Internal and External Auditors. Regular reports on Information Governance, Quality Assurance & Performance and Audit Recommendations will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee.

- 6.3 To ensure that the Audit and Risk Committee has a mechanism to keep it aware of topical, legal and regulatory issues, the External Auditors will continue to provide a regular update report detailing issues relevant to SCRA.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 To approve the Internal Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report for 2020/21.

APPENDIX 1**Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference**

The Board has established an Audit and Risk Committee to support them in their responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance and associated assurance through a process of constructive challenge.

Constitution

1. The Audit and Risk Committee shall consist of four members of the Board. Attendance by non-members is at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee but, the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive will be in attendance and the Chair of the Board by invitation.
2. The Committee will meet four times per year with meetings scheduled in May, August, November and February.
3. The Chair of the Committee will be at the discretion of the Board and membership of the Committee will be reviewed as required by the Board annually
4. The quorum shall be two Committee members.
5. The Internal Auditor and External Auditor will attend meetings of the Committee at the request of the Chair and other officers as appropriate. The Committee will meet at least annually with the Internal Auditor and External Auditor in private.
6. The Committee will report to the Board on its deliberations and will take any directions from the Board on any course of action which it should take, either generally or on any specific matter. A copy of the Minutes will normally form the basis of the Report.
7. The Committee will review its own effectiveness and provide an overview report to the Board annually on the Committee's work and key considerations.
8. The Audit and Risk Committee may
 - (i) co-opt additional members for a period not exceeding a year to provide specialist skills, knowledge and experience , and
 - (ii) procure specialist ad-hoc advice at the expense of the organisation, subject to budgets agreed by the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive

The Remit

To promote and demonstrate high standards of corporate governance, by:

- Helping the Board address the key risks facing the SCRA in carrying out its statutory functions and working towards its strategic objectives;

Providing assurances relating to:

- corporate governance requirements for the organisation
- strategic processes for risk, control and governance
- the Governance statement
- the effectiveness of the internal control environment
- Based on a needs assessment, agreeing a regular and responsive programme of audit on the management and control of work within the Administration and receiving reports on that audit;
- Deciding on the most efficient and effective means of carrying out the agreed programme of audit;
- Reporting on the planned activity and results of both internal and external audit, and on the adequacy of management response to issues identified by audit activity, including external audit's management letter/report,
- Overseeing the finalisation and submission of the accounting policies, the accounts, including the process for review of the accounts and governance statement prior to submission for audit, levels of error identified, and the management's letter of representation to the external auditors
- Alerting the Board and, where necessary, Scottish Ministers to factors which might affect the ability of the Administration to carry out its statutory functions and achieve its strategic objectives.
- Consider any proposals for tendering for internal services or for the purchase of non-audit services from contractors who provide audit services.
- Overseeing and alerting the Board, where appropriate on anti-fraud policies, whistle-blowing processes, and arrangements for special investigations

Date: April 2020

Appendix 2

Agenda items in 2020/21

Lead	May 20	August 20	November 20	February 21
External Audit	➤ General Update	➤ Report to those Charged with Governance on the 19/20 Audit (ISA 260), Management Representation Letter ➤ General update	➤ General Update	➤ External Audit Plan 20/21 ➤ General Update
Internal Audit	➤ Wellbeing Review ➤ Board Effectiveness Review ➤ Recommendations Follow Up Review ➤ Annual Report 19/20	➤ Data Protection ➤ Attendance Management ➤ Progress Report	➤ Sustainability ➤ Business Continuity Plan and Covid-19 ➤ Freedom of Information ➤ Progress Report	➤ Progress Report 20/21
Head of Finance & Resources	➤ Annual Accounts 19/20 ➤ Strategic & Operational Risk Registers	➤ Pensions Update ➤ Draft 19/20 Accounts	➤ Strategic & Operational Risk Registers ➤ Annual Fraud Report	➤ Pensions Update
Head of Strategy/OD	➤ Annual Progress Report ➤ Case Sampling Programme 2020-22	➤ SCRA Annual Report 19/20	➤ Quality Assurance Update Report ➤	➤ 21/22 Case Sampling Programme
Head of Practice & Policy		➤ Information Governance Report		➤ Information Governance Report
Audit and Risk Committee Chair	➤ Committee Annual Report 19/20	➤ Review of Topical, Regulatory & Governance Issues	➤ Digital Delivery Oversight Committee Update.	➤ Digital Delivery Oversight Committee Update.

Lead	May 20	August 20	November 20	February 21
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review of Topical, Regulatory & Governance Issues ➤ Digital Delivery Oversight Committee Update. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Private Meetings with Internal/External Auditors (Committee Members only) ➤ Digital Delivery Oversight Committee Update. ➤ Committee Self Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review of Topical, Regulatory, & Governance Issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review of Topical, Regulatory, & Governance Issues

Delivery of 2020/21 Audit plans

APPENDIX 3

Report Type	Date Delivered
Quality Assurance Planned Outputs	
Annual Progress Report	May 20
SCRA's Quality Assurance Framework & Work Programme	Feb 21
Outcomes of Case Sampling	On hold
Internal Audit Planned Outputs	
Internal Audit Recommendations Follow Up Review	May 20
Annual Report 19/20	May 20
Wellbeing Review	May 20
Board Effectiveness Review	May 20
Data Protection	Aug 20
Attendance Management	Aug 20
Sustainability	Nov 20
Business Continuity Plan and Covid-19	Nov 20
Freedom of Information	Nov 20
Progress Report	May, Aug, Nov 20 & Feb 21
External Audit Planned Outputs	
Progress Reports	May, Aug, Nov 20 & Feb 21
Report to those Charged with Governance on the 2019/20 Accounts and Management Representation Letter	Aug 20
Annual Plan 20/21	Feb 21



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Chief Executives Report

**Accountable
Director:**

Neil Hunter

Date: 23 June 2021

Recommendation:

1. To note the Chief Executives update report

Reason for Report	At request of Board
Resource Implications	In line with revised budget
Strategy	In line with Corporate Plan
Equalities Duties	<p>Indicate whether an Equalities and Human Rights Impact assessment (HRIA) is required and has been completed. Describe in the body of the report any issues/findings/adjustments that have been made.</p> <p>Equalities Impact Assessment Required/Completed</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes </p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No </p> <p>Issues/action points:-</p>
Consultation	EMT/Communications Manager/Information and Research Manager
Document Classification	Open

1. Staff Partnership

1.1 The National Partnership Forum has continued to meet regularly. The partnership arrangements between UNISON and SCRA have been a critical aspect of our ability to steer through the challenges of the pandemic, with open, trusting and transparent relationships. The input of the UNISON Branch on behalf of members, the advice that has been offered to us by the Branch Secretary on our policy and operational development and delivery priorities has been invaluable in ensuring that SCRA decision making reflects the concerns of trade union members and the wider staff group and is integrated in our approach. In turn this has ensured a positive, balanced and informed approach to our navigation through these last 15 months. At the last National Partnership Forum the agenda focussed on:-

- COVID/operational recovery plan
- Hearing Centre and Office risk assessments – including the most up to date advice from Public Health Scotland
- Agile Working Policy development (see below)
- Virtual Hearings pilot arrangements - as we come to the end of the evaluation period and towards roll out of the staffing and technical model
- CSAS update – including the conclusion of the transition period and priorities for consolidation and optimisation
- Staff health and wellbeing group – including an update on the extensive array of activity happening in teams across the organisation and the continued focus on employee mental health

2. Agile Working Policy

2.1 COVID bounced SCRA very quickly into working from home – something that might have taken us a few years to achieve on a planned basis, happened almost overnight. Not everyone has found it easy and there are still some challenges around for some staff in working from home and are recognising and acknowledging that. However, staff have told us through the staff survey at the end of 2020 that they would like to retain the ability to work flexibly. We have developed, in partnership with UNISON, a draft Agile Working Policy as a result of the learning from the pandemic and in response to the staff survey.

2.2 It's a policy that fundamentally changes the way we work as an organisation and as such we have been consulting extensively with managers and staff on the policy. We have heard how important it is to still feel and be part of a team – the social, learning and support aspects of working together as a team and feeling part of that can't be lost as a result of this policy. So we are seeking to achieve a balance about that sense of team belonging and development versus the opportunities to work more flexibly, alongside the delivery of our services and the wellbeing of our staff – these are the most important areas of how this policy has and will be further developed.

2.3 Agile working isn't just about working from home – but a much broader concept. It's about considering the task (such as a project, a complex case or something staff need to learn about) and making the choice about where and

who we need to work with to do that. We might need to find a quiet space to concentrate, or might need to work with others in our team (or even another team) and it's about being empowered and taking responsibility for delivering our individual roles in the best, most efficient and effective ways possible. We will see investment in the SCRA estate over the coming years to support staff to work differently in our office spaces, making them a more welcoming, flexible and collaborative environments.

- 2.4 We recognise that the Agile Working Policy is one that will grow and adapt as we develop as an agile enabled workforce – we will learn what works for us and what doesn't and the aim is to keep this policy alive whilst we do that. The current terms of the draft policy set out the direction of travel and gives us a starting framework to use whilst we learn and become more confident in the approach. We as an organisation are not starting from scratch – we have had 15 months experience of working flexibly and our experience it can work and meet our individual, collective and organisational needs.
- 2.5 As we see some of the restrictions easing and localities are starting to think about moving back to more face to face hearings over the next few months, we will see more people returning to offices. We have asking our managers to adopt the principles of this policy during this period whilst we continue to finalise it – the direction of travel is there for us and we don't expect that we return to offices staffed in the way they were pre-pandemic.

3. Strategic Partnerships

3.1 Youth Justice Improvement Board

- 3.1.1 [A Rights Respecting Approach to Justice for Children and Young People: Scotland's Vision & Priorities](#) was published on Wednesday 16th June and will mark a further step towards a rights compliant approach to children and young people in conflict with the law. Whilst much progress has been made since the 5 year Youth Justice Strategy was published in 2015, Ministers have been keen to move to focus on actions and quicken the pace of delivery, an aspiration that SCRA supports. SCRA has had a key role in chairing the Whole System Approach for the last 5 years and we have been asked to do so again over the next period. The Youth Justice Vision sets out revised priorities including:

- Refresh our approach to early and Effective Intervention – by embedding revised core elements for implementation across Scotland
- Ensuring that the rights of children and young people are upheld across youth justice services
- Additional support for victims of offending by young people and a fuller reflection of victims' rights in our work
- Diversion of children and young people away from criminal processes and disposals
- A focus on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing as well as additional capacity for speech, language and communication supports
- Improved data and evidence across youth justice services
- Extend the age of referral to the Principal Reporter to age 18

- Extending the whole system approach to young people 18- 25, with a focus on high risk offending and mental health pathways
- 3.1.2 SCRA will continue to play an active role in the Youth Justice Improvement Board and its substructure.

3.2 Childrens Hearings Improvement Partnership

- 3.2.1 The CHIP met in late April 2021 and largely focussed on how Hearing system agencies and partners intended to Keep the Promise. The Head of Strategy and Organisational Development produced a comprehensive paper on the alignment of Better Hearings, the OHOV 40 Calls to Action and the Promise, which was welcomed by most CHIP members as a practical way of ensuring that existing programmes have a contributory role to play in the overarching obligations to the Promise. Further work is underway in relation to this. A fuller discussion on the Promise is on the Board agenda at item 5(a).

4. Scottish Government Liaison

- 4.1 There have been no further accountability meetings since 10 March 2021 the details of which were reported to the March Board. However day to day liaison with Scottish Government is extensive and is focused on areas such as
- Age of Criminal Responsibility – full implementation by October 2021
 - S.122 Childrens Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 – Advocacy provisions delivery
 - Children (Scotland) Act 2020 – arrangements for representation of brothers and sisters
 - COVID 19 Recovery Planning
 - Financial planning and accountability
 - Digital Strategy Oversight reporting
- 4.2 Most recently SCRA staff have been providing advice on our role in respect of the recently published report on [Statutory Duties in Secure Accommodation : Unlocking Childrens Rights](#) from the Childrens Commissioner which found breaches in the process of notification, recording, explanation of decisions and information on appeal rights where the CSWO decides to implement a secure admission authorised by a Hearing. Whilst these duties to consult, notify and explain fall to Chief Social Work Officers in Local Authorities, there is a requirement to notify the Principal Reporter of the decision to enact a secure authorisation. Practice in relation to such notifications can be inconsistent and this is an area SCRA has agreed to strengthen monitoring on at local and national level.

5. COVID 19 Recovery Plan

- 5.1 This item is covered extensively in the Senior Operational Managers Review Report at agenda item 13.

6. Research

6.1 OHOV evaluation

- 6.1.1 This started in May. It had been delayed due to vacancy in the research team. A new SCRA Research Officer, Dr Kirsty Deacon, is leading on the evaluation. We would like to interview SCRA's Board Chair and CHS's Board Chair (or another appropriate Board member from each organisation) as part of the evaluation. Our aim is to report to CHIP on the results of evaluation by end September.

6.2 Home CSOs – Educational attendance and offending outcomes

- 6.2.1 The seventh report in the series on our research on the effectiveness of home CSOs was published in May. This report focuses on the outcomes for children's school attendance and offending from the intervention of a home CSO. This part of the research was done in collaboration with Robert Gordon University. <https://www.scra.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Report-7-Offending-and-Education-May-2021.pdf>
- 6.2.2 The main findings are that home CSOs resulted in a significant increase in school attendance for children where non-attendance was a concern but that there was no change in the gravity or volume of offending by children referred on offence grounds.

6.3 Development and piloting of a disability toolkit

- 6.3.1 In late 2020, SCRA was approached by the Chair of the Disabled Children Child Protection Network (DCCPN) on how to develop a tool to collect data on safeguarding concerns for disabled children.
- 6.3.2 We have developed a toolkit to do this which is based around vulnerability, functioning and contextual factors. Vulnerability factors cover adversity in perinatal period and wider childhood, parental adversity and ACES. The functioning factors were adapted from domains of functioning in the UNICEF Child Functioning Module screening tool. The contextual measures cover factors such as the socioeconomic and educational circumstances of children, as well as exposure to victimisation and isolation.
- 6.3.3 We piloted the toolkit on 40 children's cases. The toolkit was successful in identifying children who have been previously recorded as having a disability, as well as recognising children who may have undiagnosed disability or are experiencing difficulties across a number of functioning domains.
- 6.3.4 To the best of our knowledge this is the first toolkit developed and piloted (anywhere) that assesses functioning in the wider context of vulnerabilities and contextual factors, and as such it has the potential to provide practitioners with a valuable and robust tool for quickly assessing children's safeguarding and support needs. The strength and novel contribution of this toolkit, is to identify difficulties in functioning which can impact a child's life, beyond diagnosed disability

6.3.5 The DCCPN Chair has shared the SCRA report on development and testing of toolkit with the Scottish Government's Disabled Children and Young People Advisory Group, and (at time of writing) we await their feedback on how the DCCPN and Scottish Government wish to proceed.

7. SCRA Corporate Parenting survey

7.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires Scottish Ministers to report on how public bodies have discharged their Corporate Parenting Duties. One such way they do this is via a regular Corporate Parenting Survey, from which they then report results. SCRA responds routinely and fully to the survey. Our latest return is shown [here](#).

7.2 The SCRA return highlights the work we have done over the last period in relation to

- Consultation work with children and young people
- Participation and communication tools development
- Support for advocacy and representation in hearings
- Partnership working across the children's sector
- Support for voice – including OHOV
- Research on a wide range of powerful issues
- Improvements to the hearing room environment
- Support for children's rights
- Access to records

7.3 Scottish Ministers will publish their summary report in the next few months on how these important duties are being upheld across Scotland. .



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Head of Service: Lisa Bennett, Head of Strategy/OD

Date: 23rd June 2021

Report Author: Lisa Bennett

The Promise – Reporting and Governance Structure

Recommendation:

- 1. For Board consideration, discussion and approval of approach**

Reason for Report: For discussion and approval

Resource Implications: Resource implications were outlined in Challenge and Review and approved

Strategy/Service Plan Implications: Cross service and in particular Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy

Consultation: EMT, Project Team

EHRIA Duties: A full EHRIA will be required once the model is approved in draft for further development. EHRIAs have been undertaken on component parts of this structure such as the Rights, Inclusions and Corporate Parenting Strategy with no negative impact to report

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

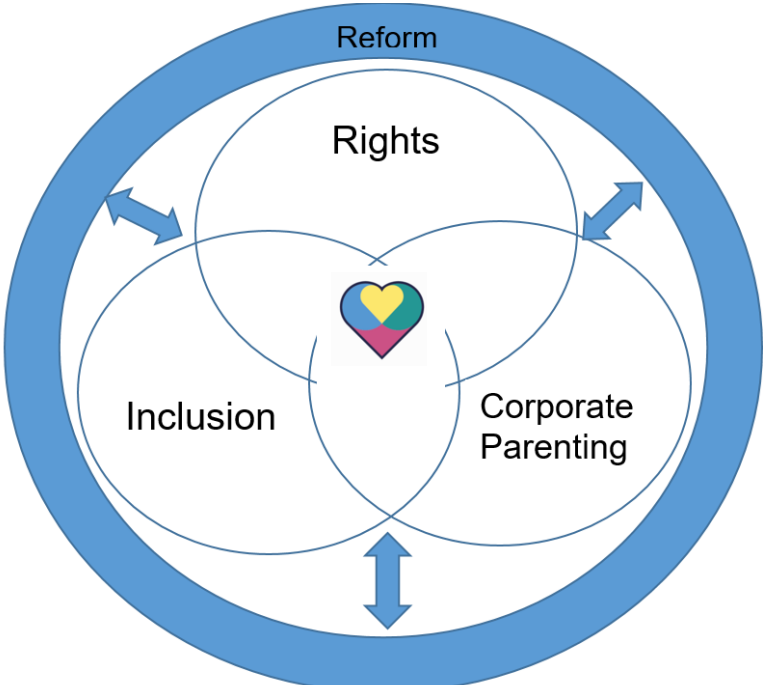
1	Background and Introduction
1.1	Between 2016 and 2019 the Independent Care Review (ICR) spoke to 5500 people who had direct experience of care in Scotland to understand what 'Care' should look and feel like, and what would need to change to make that happen.
1.2	In February 2020, the Independent Care Review completed its review of care in Scotland and published a series of reports called The Promise . The Promise received cross party support and a commitment to #keepthepromise from public, private and 3 rd sector organisations. The Promise is made to all those who experience 'care' in Scotland and is a call for change to be made.
1.3	A Promise Scotland Team was recruited and more recently, the Promise Oversight Board – one of their first tasks being to develop and validate the Plan 2021-24.
1.4	Plan 2021-24 was published in April 21 and the 2021-24 Change Programme is in development to be published 25 th June 21.
1.5	This paper sets out a brief summary of the asks of the Promise, the work and agreements to date, the proposed SCRA approach and governance structure, along with some points for discussion/approval.

2	Engagement and structure.
2.1	Following the publication of the Promise in February 2020, we spent time digesting and interpreting the asks and intentions. Shortly after its publication however, the country moved into lockdown and organisations were forced to change the way that they worked overnight. Organisational focus, rightly, moved to respond to the pandemic and support the teams as they ensured the system was still able to carry out its statutory functions albeit in a very different way.
2.2	By late Autumn 2020, we were in a position to begin dialogue with the Promise team and partners around the Promise – aligned too with recruitment to the Promise team and oversight Board.
2.3	Summary of engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several meetings with the Promise team took place through Autumn / Winter 2020 to ensure a full understanding of the current Hearings Systems, the work underway and the Promise intentions. • A workshop with the Promise team to look at some of the crossover and interplay required in the change programme. • A Promise workshop with CHS to begin to unpack some of the Promise intentions and its potential implications for the service along with exploration of our approach.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting with Scottish Government to consider the intentions following publication of the 2021-24 plan and their role in working with us and partners as we explored reform. • EMT workshop to look in detail at the intentions and at proposed governance structure required internally to meet these. • Board development session to work through the intentions and to hear early thoughts around the proposed governance structure. • Internal communication issued and presentations given to internal networks to set out our initial thoughts, plans and ambitions for engagement. • Joint Board session with CHS/Promise Team/Scottish Government to consider a paper that laid out proposals for: a group of core statutory partners to be formed, topics to be explored by that group, and to consider appropriate joint governance to see through the programme of external work
	2.4	<p>Next steps for engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA Board for approval of approach and proposed structure • Locality sessions • Tri-partite meeting (SCRA/CHS/Promise) to develop overarching governance structures and practical application of these to support the two Board's joint intentions and the accountability to the Promise Oversight Board. • Initial meeting of the Core group planned for July

3	Plan 2021-24	
	3.1	The Promise Plan 2021-24 was published in April 21. It is the first in a series of three that comprise the ten year Promise Plan.
	3.2	<p>In relation to The Children's Hearings System, Plan 21-24 specifies that by 2024 the Hearings system will have undergone a redesign process underpinned by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving effect to the Promise • Ensuring compliance with the UNCRC • Upholding the original intention of The Kilbrandon Review that children involved in offending need care and protection; and • Ensuring The Children's Hearings System and The Courts can facilitate child friendly justice that upholds children's rights and enables their effective participation.
	3.3	In developing the change programme to support Plan 2021-24, the Promise are clear that in relation to The Children's Hearing System there needs to be collaborative, legislative planning over that time to ensure it can operate as a legal forum that upholds the totality of children's rights.

	<p>3.4 It is anticipated that the legislative process will take place over Plan 25-27. The Promise is a ten year plan, and is one of transformation and reform. It is also one of improvement – that seeks to improve on the quality of the current service, as we work towards transformation.</p>
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4	<p>SCRA's Route Map</p>
4.1	<p>SCRA will be developing a Keeping The Promise Route Map – this will be a ten year plan aligned to the Scotland Promise plans, that will define the end vision and will break down the steps that will get us there, how we will work and who we will work with to deliver it. It will cover the three component stages that the Promise have outlined with detailed planning around Plan 2021-24 and specifically Year One.</p>
4.2	<p>The plan will take into account the agenda for reform as well as improvement and will set out clearly the interplay between them – how they will interact, complement and inform each other</p>
	
4.3	<p>The Route Map will set the direction for what and how we are going to deliver and will become our blueprint for all related work. It will describe our approach to working in partnership with others – internally, with partners and importantly, with Children and Families.</p>
4.4	<p>The Route Map will set a clear vision and objectives and every member of staff should be able to see the role that they play to deliver it. The inclusion of all staff as we take forward the work of improvement and transition to transformation is critical.</p>
4.5	<p>Once developed, the Route Map will be presented to the Board for approval.</p>

	4.6	<p>Ahead of the Route Map being developed and fuller plans being put in place. We will continue in the key areas that we are already committed to in Year One – cognisant of organisational recovery leaving the pandemic as we do so, and these are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope for reform – Establishment of a group of core partners to unpack the ‘bigger’ asks of the Promise and determine the areas of potential reform • Implementation of UNCRC in SCRA • Roll out of trauma, inclusion, rights and corporate parenting training • Improvement work through the Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy • To develop and work in partnership with staff, partners and children and families in our planning.
	4.7	<p>To support this, a set of high level priorities has been developed to work to and to support communications with staff. These can be seen at Appendix A.</p>
	4.8	<p>A staff briefing was issued at the start of June and the priorities/key messages have since been communicated to all managers. These are to be followed up by individual team meetings with the Project Team for further discussion.</p>
	5	Reform Work
	5.1	<p>The ask for reform is very clear in the Promise. They ask that we do not ‘remove and polish’ parts and slot them back in, more that we consider the core principles and foundations on which the system is built and the way in which it functions in order that we can describe a ‘system’ that is able to respond to the needs and asks of children and families in Scotland in order to protect, support and care for their best interests.</p>
	5.2	<p>SCRA has already been undertaking work through our current strategies and local plans to contribute to the Keeping The Promise reform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the development of legislation and policy in relation to the age of criminal responsibility and for Children’s Hearings to extend to 18 the age of which young people can be referred • Rights of siblings through implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 2020 • UNCRC incorporation – to uphold and promote the rights of Children and Young People • Children’s Hearings have been prioritised in National Trauma Training Programme and have developed a training course to be rolled out 2021

	<p data-bbox="261 197 1394 376">5.3 Whilst this work will continue, there is a need to now move into the area of even greater change and transition. The Boards of SCRA and CHS met with the Promise team and Scottish Government on 14th June where a number of proposals were presented and agreed at a high level to allow the management teams to further develop:</p> <p data-bbox="261 416 1394 1375">5.4 Agreed:</p> <ul data-bbox="384 456 1394 1375" style="list-style-type: none"> • It was proposed and agreed that in order to take forward the reform agenda, a core group of statutory partners would be required to be formed – to agree a vision, to agree a list of areas for exploration and ultimately to agree the founding points on which to hang a re-designed system. • That the group of partners comprise: SCRA, CHS, Police Scotland, Local Authorities (representation) and that others be brought in as appropriate. • That the group consider how to work in partnership with children and families to take forward this work – drawing upon the vast amounts of evidence and voice already gathered so as not to replicate or be tokenistic in this effort. • That there are many existing groups of lived experience change makers that we and others are already engaging with and we should consider how to effectively involve them in the planning and delivery of this work • The Promise Scotland will provide resource for an independent Chair to be appointed to lead and coordinate the work of the group and that governance structures be designed to support them in this work – linking to organisational Boards as well as the Promise Oversight Board. <p data-bbox="261 1415 1394 1778">5.5 For discussion:</p> <p data-bbox="336 1456 1394 1599">Further detail was presented in the paper that was sent to the joint board meeting (in table below), proposing a series of topics for exploration by the core statutory partners. If agreed, these will be put forward to the core group for further development.</p> <p data-bbox="336 1639 1394 1778">Ask: The Board is asked to consider the topics proposed in the table above – are we asking the right questions? Are there areas that you would have expected to see that aren't there? Are there any areas that feel too uncomfortable and warrant further internal discussion?</p>
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Area	Questions
Structural/scaffolding	<p>What is the vision – what should the hearings system look at feel like?</p> <p>What is the purpose of the Hearings System – now and in the future?</p> <p>What do we understand by the principles of Kilbrandon – are we all on same page?</p>
Referral <i>Who comes to a Hearing?</i>	<p>What are the appropriate referral routes to a Hearing and what threshold should be applied?</p> <p>When should a child/family appear at/attend a Hearing?</p> <p>What should be the role of the Reporter? What should be respective roles of others?</p> <p>Inclusion of 16/17-year-olds being referred to the Reporter – on any grounds.</p>
Hearing <i>Who is at a Hearing?</i> <i>What happens at the Hearing?</i>	<p>How are children and families' views heard? How are they supported to participate? How are their views reflected in decision making?</p> <p>Should children always have an obligation to attend their hearing, do they have the right to not attend or could there be different ways to participate?</p> <p>How are Children and families prepared for the Hearing, and by whom?</p> <p>What is the role of professionals at Hearing? Advocates, Lawyers, Safeguarders, Social Work/Local Authorities.</p> <p>How can we be sure that professional standards are upheld in the Hearings?</p> <p>What role do feedback loops play in continuous improvement of hearings?</p> <p>What should the format of a hearing be? How do we organise to ensure children and young people have a choice?</p> <p>Can we enhance voice and participation through enabling digital tools and technology?</p> <p>How can meetings be minimised? Could one meeting attend to a number of issues?</p> <p>What is the role of the Reporter throughout and after the process?</p>

	<p>Decision</p> <p><i>How are decisions made?</i></p>	<p>How are decisions made?</p> <p>How to ensure consistency of decision making with appropriate review?</p> <p>How can decision makers be held to account?</p> <p>What is the role of volunteer panel members? Are their other models we should be collectively exploring ?</p> <p>What is the best decision-making model?</p> <p>What is the status of 'voluntary measures' decisions?</p> <p>What rights do children and young people have to participate in decision making?</p>
	<p>Implementation of decisions</p> <p><i>How are decisions implemented and if necessary enforced?</i></p>	<p>How to ensure decisions are enforced and support is achieved across multiple organisations- Local Authority, Health etc?</p> <p>What are the duties on implementation authorities?</p> <p>What improvements can be made to 'home supervision'?</p> <p>What rights do children, young people (and potentially families) have to services whilst on CSO?</p> <p>What are the duties on public authorities to support children and young people's rights?</p> <p>Who is subject to a decision-child? Family? Agencies?</p>
	<p>Review</p> <p><i>How are decisions reviewed?</i></p>	<p>How to ensure decisions are reviewed appropriately and checked?</p> <p>What should the frequency of review be?</p>
	<p>Relationships</p> <p><i>How does The Hearings System relate to other legal forums?</i></p>	<p>How can children and families' lives be considered holistically with other tribunals (Additional Support for Learning, Criminal Courts etc)</p> <p>How is the legislative and operational relationship with the Sheriff Court working?</p>

6	Improvement to the 'as is'/ current system	
	6.1	<p>The qualitative asks of the promise allows for and promotes improvement to continue to the system that children are experiencing now. This message was further reinforced by Fiona Duncan in her presentation to the joint Boards – Fiona talked of successful 'Radical change' that can occur in existing structures as well as an encouragement to continue to work (together) using what we already know, to drive improvement.</p>
	6.2	<p>There are a number of contributory programmes that exist and that we will continue to promote - and supports that are key to this as we move towards reform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better Hearings – a set of standards, aligned to the asks that lay out what everyone in the Hearings agree, would make it better. • Our Hearings, Our Voice – 40 calls to Action – tangible actions, aligned to the asks that can be enacted now or can feed the reform discussions • The professional views and expertise of our SCRA staff that can feed both reform and improvement • Participation and Engagement work programme – work that is underway with children, young people and our care experienced modern apprentices to take forward the improvement related to Better Hearings, 40 Calls, Property Programme, and communication charter. • SCRA Research programme – learning from the research and applying that to practice • Renewed Learning and Development focus across SCRA to ensure staff are skilled and motivated for change
	6.3	<p>It is proposed that the improvement work be taken forward under our Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting strategies – now aligned to enable a full capture of evidence and learning, a refreshed and relevant approach and a participative model of engagement.</p>
	6.4	<p>We will be approaching the improvement work through the lens of Better Hearings and inclusive service – Before, During and After the Hearing – but looking ahead to 2024 with what we know now - focus on voice, choice, support and empowerment.</p>

6.5	The internal Promise Project team will be driving this work forward across the next six months (in partnership) to allow localities to focus primarily on their recovery and stabilisation coming out of the pandemic.
6.6	Localities are part of local multi-agency discussions around the Promise, and each agency has its own drive, agenda and priorities for improvement. We are supporting localities to focus on recovery, to focus on the improvement work that they are already part of through Better Hearings and to work to ensure that solid foundations are set to allow us to move with further improvement work into year two.
6.7	It is envisaged that come March 22 (or perhaps even earlier dependent upon the move out of pandemic) localities will be able to segue from recovery and stabilisation into improvement.
6.8	There is a lot of work that can be taken forward as a single agency to aid improvement however a lot of the change has to happen across the system to take forward the collective asks of improvement – the Language of the system, the options and choices that we can enable – and how we communicate these, how we work with and prepare children to participate in their Hearings and in the key decisions being made. It is critical that we work in partnership – with staff, partners and, with children and families as we progress these important elements.
6.9	Further consultation on what is needed is not required around the ‘what’ – we have been told this, over years of research, consultation, evidence, participation work and now the Promise – what is important is how we work with children and families to take these asks forward, more detail of our approach can be found at 7.
6.10	It will be important for the creation of a strategic multi-agency group tasked with improvement – taking what we have, what we know and what we have learned and working to agree the priorities for improvement in year one and beyond. SCRA are working with Scottish Government to take this forward.
6.11	Whilst distinct from the core group of statutory partners looking at reform, this group will have clear lines to and from it, with a dynamic interplay that can test change, report on success/learning and can inform and feed into the group areas for consideration in reform discussion. This group will rely on working groups to mobilise test and change.
6.12	A working group has already been established of CHS/SCRA/OHOV, to develop some of the improvement work that links the 40 Calls to Action

		and the Promise – the first Priority being Language, followed by Communication.
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7	Participation and Engagement	
7.1	Communication and Engagement	It was mentioned earlier at 4.5 in the report that each member of staff should be able to see the role that they play in Keeping the Promise and we will be developing a communications and engagement strategy for Keeping the Promise that will describe this in more detail.
7.2		We will be looking to have all roles involved in the work to Keep the Promise and are looking at an approach that is fully transparent – from planning to decisions, meetings to debate.
7.3		A website will be developed internally where all documentation will be held and visible; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme of all meetings and events will be on the site with descriptions of the purpose and aims • Open invitations will be going out to join conversations, working groups and standard methods of consultation will also be employed through surveys, briefings etc for those who want to be involved but play a less active role.
7.4		As the strategy develops we will consult with staff to ensure that we are capturing views and suggestions.
7.5	Model of Participation	We are privileged in Scotland to have a nation of young people so willing to champion change – and especially in the area in which we work as these are young people who have had to live through the care system and who are determined to make it better for others.
7.6		Years of research and evidence have provided us with direction around what would make things better – the 10 years' worth of research that fed the Better Hearings standards, work with Who Cares?, the Care Council and many others and the Care Review with 1000 Voices re-affirmed all of this. Champions Boards, Our Hearings Our Voice, and many more

	groups of Young People continue to tell us – and in great detail, what is needed.
7.7	The past year has been one of the most complex and difficult that anyone will have worked through however has also provided opportunities to test and to learn more about what young people have been asking for – different methods of Hearings, shorter reports, options to attend.. as well as to gather further evidence through research undertaken by CELCIS, SCRA and work carried out by OHOV to continue to inform and support this work.
7.8	The Stop Go work that the Care Review carried out with us and our Partners during the review asked us to Stop asking and Start acting.. and that is what we intend to do – but in partnership.
7.9	As we move forward with our planning and development of the asks of the Promise, we will be forming a model of partnership working with young people and families, empowering them to be part of the change – from Planning and innovation, to testing and implementation through creating open and inclusive opportunities to be part of the work.
7.10	We have made connections with the Design School, that are working with young people and families on their Scottish Approach to Design training, to understand better what the programme offers and how we can play a part. The training ensures that graduates are fully skilled and able to engage in the discussions around change and design on the same level as workers.
7.11	We are working closely with groups of young people to understand their priorities and the role that they want to play in their delivery – is it oversight, is it design, is it something else. We want the young people to see the part that they have played and the change that they had helped to make.
7.12	We have made links across to CHS and are working on a number of joint actions in relation to improvement that their steering group of young people will be working with us on along with our Modern Apprentices.
7.13	It is an evolving model and as the areas of work are identified and scoped, so too will the partnership aspect be fully considered. We will be working with others, experienced in effective participation methods to support us in this work.

8	Development of proposed Internal Governance structure	
	8.1	Working across the Reform and Improvement agenda described in Plan 2021-24 and, taking findings from the original Promise reports alongside aims from our own Corporate Plan, we have mapped out an internal structure of what needs to be in place in order to take forward the asks.
	8.2	The Internal Governance structure will provide a solid mechanism for delivering / keeping the promise through the development and enactment of a clear and agreed vision, detailed plans, full engagement and the ability to evidence work and improvement.
	8.3	We will be using the internal 'Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting' as the key vehicle for delivery and this will be approached as a programme of work with a series of inter-related work streams sitting below it.
	8.4	Included in that, will be the work internally to consider reform and this group will link out to the core statutory group. The internal reform group will work across the organisation to garner views and learning to inform this work.
	8.5	<p>The SCRA Keeping The Promise governance structure will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Programme Board (chaired by SCRA Board member) – to own, monitor and report on the Keeping The Promise Route Map. • A Project Team (with a designated Programme Manager) – will develop the Keeping the Promise Route, the work streams and related plans to deliver it. • Work streams – will be identified to take forward work to deliver on the plan – these will take many forms depending on what has to be delivered and will include localities / Head Office / Partners / Children and Families through a variety of approaches. • Programme Office to facilitate and support the planning, governance and provide secretariat support to the work streams.
	8.6	The high-level strategy for delivery is part of the Corporate and Business Plans, and once developed, the Route Map will be approved by the Board in relation to more detailed plans and implementation.
	8.7	The Keeping the Promise programme in SCRA will report progress against the Route Map through EMT to the Board.
	8.8	We have designed a model of governance that is robust but allows maximum flexibility to bring on or close of streams of work as and when

	required, all linked to the three key themes of 'Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting'
8.9	<p>We will be recruiting to a Programme Manager to see through the Plan 2021-24, they will take the work and planning that has happened to date and work with the Head of Strategy, Head of Practice and the Project team to critically review the approach and develop more detailed planning.</p> <p>Throughout the programme, they will be working across the themes with the work stream leads to develop work plans and ensure duplication / dependencies and information flow is well managed.</p>
8.10	Following feedback from the Board and from EMT, it is proposed that an Operational Delivery group be 'brought in' to the Promise work – linked out the SCRA's standard operating model and with clear lines to all localities.
8.11	This group will work with the Project Team and out with localities – understanding local practice and learning, relating that to the national scope. They will support local partnership discussions and will work with groups of staff to develop and test change to begin to determine models for operational improvement.
8.12	This group would be responsible for working with the Practice Team to develop direction and with operational managers to develop guidance. They would ensure organisational capture of operational perspectives are fed into any change and would lead out implementation and 'operationalisation' of the Promise.
8.13	This group will work closely with the Business Integration manager to ensure robust methodology is used for change and implementation and would link through this role to national partners
8.14	A diagram to summarise the proposed internal structure for governance is at Appendix B with some further detail below it.
	<u>For Discussion/Approval –</u>
8.15	<p>SCRA Governance</p> <p>1. Are the Board satisfied that the proposed approach and Governance structure can provide adequate assurance of direction, planning, monitoring and reporting? For approval.</p>
8.16	<p>Joint Governance</p> <p>At the joint CHS/SCRA Board meeting with the Promise, it was agreed that suitable arrangements should be in place to oversee the broader reform work – that of the core-statutory partners and where our organisations had shared interest.</p>

		<p>There were a few suggestions for a model of joint oversight;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One similar to the Digital Committee – with representation from both Boards along with Scottish Government. • A series of further joint board meetings as oversight and for the reform work to set the agenda • A third was around the two Chairs meeting regularly with the Promise/Oversight • Is there another model? <p>2. Does the Board have a view on this? For discussion/recommendation</p>
9	Conclusion and recommendation	
	9.1	Set out in the report is a summary of the intended approach that SCRA are taking, internally and with Partners to Keep the Promise. It is viewed as an agenda of Reform and of Improvement with a critical interplay between them, it is proposed that the described model will take this forward to delivery.
	9.2	<p>The Board have been asked to discuss, consider and approve three areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.5 Areas for Reform • 8.15 Proposed SCRA approach and Governance Structure • 8.16 Proposal for a joint governance structure
	9.3	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>1. For Board consideration, discussion and approval</p>

Appendix A - Year One Priorities (set out in more detail at 5 and 6):

Reform:

- Work with Promise team to appoint an Independent Chair
- Creation and development of core group of statutory partners to:
 - Agree the end point vision for the Hearings system, as described by [‘the promise’](#)
 - Agree on the scope of exploration – alongside the above suggested ‘topics’ will come others from partners.
 - Clarify elements of legislative change that allow reform to happen – and change to be tested.
 - Agree sequencing and priority, approach and methodology for exploration and approach to consultation and partnership.
- Develop internal networks for consultation and innovation

Improvement – Local level:

- Our focus in on recovery and stability – we need to prioritise the children going through and awaiting decisions/hearings/court currently
- Continuation of Better Hearings where capacity,
- Improvement focussed on getting the foundations right to enable participation – well equipped and designed hearings rooms, good tech, stable platform.
- Working with the project team to consider of what a bespoke Hearing is and feels like – and how we would facilitate this – what is a Better Hearing 24?
- Smooth transition into Promise improvement work once stable – and that this will also resonate with local authorities that are going through recovery like us.
- Permission not to be drawn into ‘new’ improvement projects unless aligned, of benefit and have resource to do so.

Improvement - Project Level:

- Development of ten year Route map and supporting structures
- Collation of learning and evidence across Promise/Better Hearings/OHOV’s 40 Calls to action/COVID/Research coupled with the implementation of UNCRC to describe ‘Better Hearings 24’,
- Work with localities to develop this vision based on local knowledge and experience – and learning from their improvement work to date.
- Take forward the asks of OHOV that can be actioned without draw on operational teams.

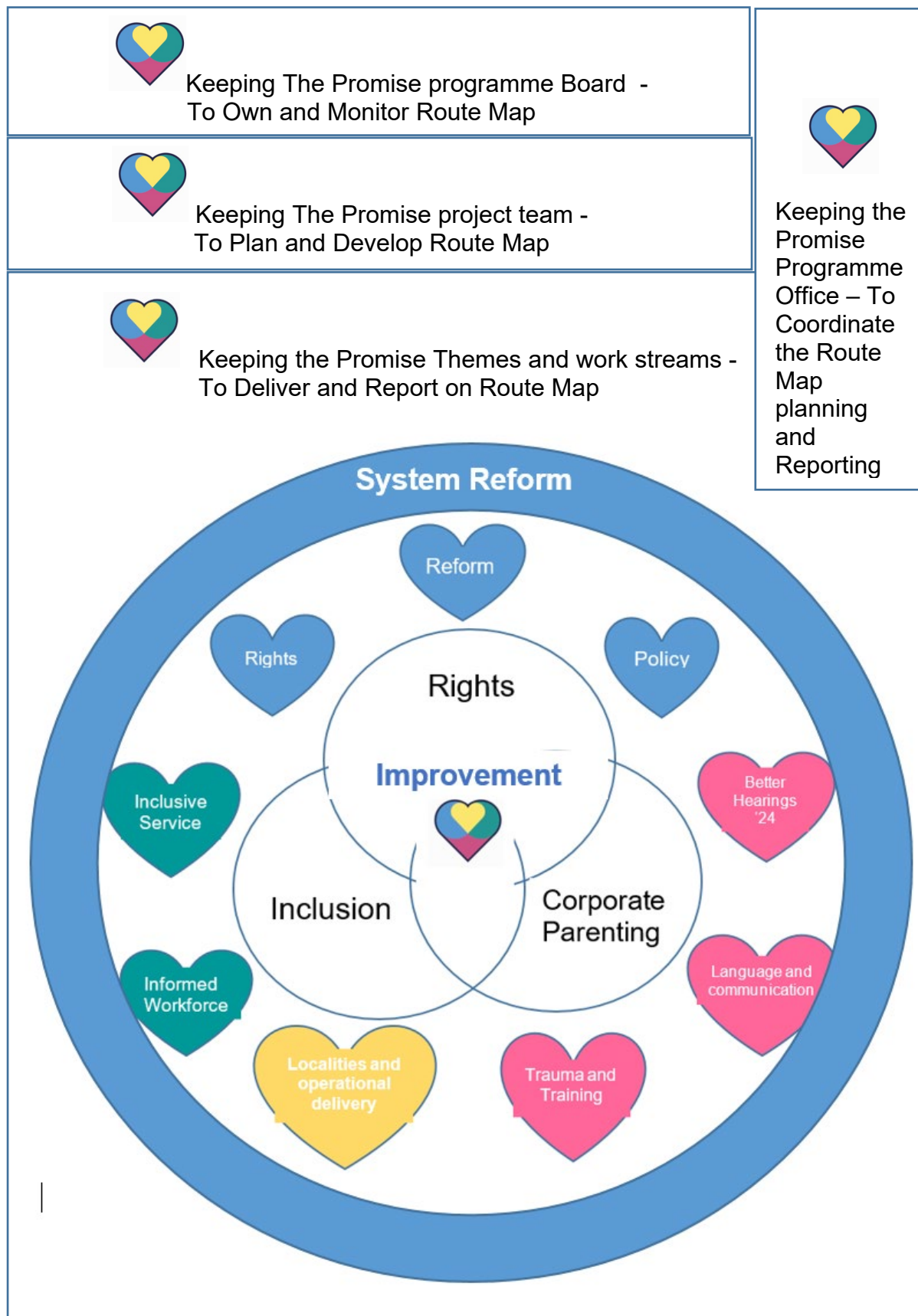
In partnership with children, families and partners the key areas for improvement identified for early priority are:

- Language and communication,
- Preparation for Hearings
- Hearings reports.

Planning and Governance (taken forward by the Project Team / Office)

- Recruitment of Programme Manager, project office and re-alignment of some internal operational capacity to sit within the Promise team
- Develop plans to take forward the identified improvement work year 2 and 3.
- Development of a communications and engagement strategy to support the Route map
- Develop a model of working to ensure clear lines of communication and across the breadth and depth of the programme to ensure a continuous internal and external feedback loop.

Appendix B - Proposed Internal Governance Structure to Keep The Promise 2021-24



Description of structure

Keeping The Promise Programme Board –

- **Chair** - SCRA Board Member
- **Members** - EMT Sponsors, Programme Manager, work stream leads as required, OHOV.
- **Remit** - The Programme Board will own and monitor the Keeping The Promise Route Map – SCRA's vision and strategy for delivery of the Promise, and will oversee progress through the programme plans and delivery.
- **Reporting** - The Programme Board will report through EMT to SCRA's Board quarterly.

Keeping The Promise Project team

- **Lead** – Programme Manager
- **Members** – Work stream leads/co-leads/project office
- **Remit** – The Promise Project Team will develop the Keeping The Promise Route Map as the strategy for SCRA's delivery of the Promise and will develop the detailed related plans. As a team they will determine the scope of work to be undertaken and the identification of the most appropriate workstreams to do so. The Project team will work together and with the programme office, to assess the dependencies and cross-over activity and agree and approach to address these.
- The Promise Project team will report to the Programme Manager monthly who, in turn, will report to the Programme Board quarterly.

Keeping The Promise Programme Office –

- **Lead** – Programme Manager
- **Members** – Programme Manager, Planning Manager, Project Coordinators, Comms manager.
- **Remit** - To facilitate and support the planning and the governance and will provide administrative support to the work streams. The Planning Manager will ensure alignment to other groups/plans and strategies.
- To develop and own a communication and engagement strategy for the Promise – to work across the work streams to develop appropriate communications and engagement models.

The role of **project coordinator(s)** will work across the work streams to support the leads in capturing actions and dependencies, arrange meetings, monitor activity and actions, coordinate cross work stream actions and will work to the programme manager to support reporting to the Programme Board and SCRA Board.

Keeping The Promise Themes and Work streams

The work required to deliver the 2021-24 Promise plan will be undertaken across the three key themes of the RICP strategy – Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting.

As the vision, plans and approach are developed through the creation of the Route Map, coordinated work streams will be identified to take forward the work - that will

work together to ensure dependencies are met, crossovers are enabled and that learning is shared. The work streams will take different forms/approaches and resourcing.

The model allows for work streams to come on / off board as required given the focus of the programme but still managed and coordinated within the themes.

The work streams will work across the wider organisation to ensure all roles, experience and views are captured through working groups/consultations/surveys etc and they will (depending on remit) work with partners, and/or children and families.

The Project team (themes) are currently looking at the year one priorities alongside development of the Route Map to begin to map out the structures and arrangements for taking forward the needed actions.

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SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Head of Service: Lisa Bennett, Head of Strategy and Organisational Development

Date: 23rd June 2021

Report Author: Lisa Bennett

SCRA Data Report

Recommendation:

1. To note the data in support of the current operating environment – response and recovery.

Reason for Report:	For noting
Resource Implications:	Within current budget
Strategy/Service Plan Implications:	Within current plans
Consultation:	Data Manager, Planning Manager
EHRIA Duties:	Not required
Document Classification:	Not protectively marked

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides the Board with oversight of the data relating to the current operating environment.
- 1.2 It is an amalgam of data provided to the Scottish Government in relation to the use of the provisions set out in the emergency legislation and data in relation to Hearings and referrals as we track our progress against recovery plans.
- 1.3 This report draws on data that is currently available for reporting through Power BI and provides a data set against the indicators set out in the Business Plan 21/22 for monitoring recovery activity across the year.

2 Reporting against provisions

- 2.1 On the 7th April, the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 came into force with a number of emergency provisions for the Children's Hearing System, including the following:
 - removal of requirement to hold 2nd working day Hearings for CPOs;
 - the ability to extend CSOs administratively by 6 months;
 - more time for appellants to lodge and appeal; and
 - interim orders from Hearings lasting up to 44 days as opposed to 22 and interim orders issued at court lasting for a period determined by the court.
- 2.2 Reporting to the Scottish Government and partner agencies throughout the pandemic has been driven by a set of requirements to report against the provisions as set out in the emergency legislation passed in April 20.
- 2.3 Updates were previously provided to the Board in September, December and March 21 about the use of the provisions set out in the legislation. The below table provides a further update, bringing data up to May 2021

Table 1	No of continued CPOs without requirement for a 2nd working day Hearing	No of CSOs extended beyond expiry date	No of interim orders where provision has been used
7 Apr 20 to 20 May 20	83	467	644
21 May 20 to 15 Jul 20	99	865	784
16 Jul 20 to 13 Sep 20	92	956	917
14 Sep 20 to 15 Nov 20	105	1,039	908
16 Nov 20 to 17 Jan 21	80	471	988
18 Jan 21 to 16 Mar 21	92	847	1,029
17 Mar 21 to 11 May 21	81	182	965

3 Reporting against Recovery

- 3.1 In September 2020 we developed an approach to recovery planning that saw us forecast minimum numbers of Hearings to be held across all localities to ensure that every Hearing that had to be held in line with legislation was able to be held and that there was capacity for all other prioritised cases.
- 3.2 Work has since been undertaken to update the forecast, looking at Recovery into March 22. This forecast was based on the assumption that the emergency powers would be extended until September 21 (which they have been), and that restrictions would remain throughout April to June but, that from July, we would be able to give greater focus to increasing volumes of face to face Hearings again – coupled with virtual ones.
- 3.3 A third update of the forecast is underway at time of writing based on updated assumptions and updated data to reflect the progress made by localities and to consider in detail the second quarter of 21/22.
- 3.4 The indicators in the business plan support us to monitor our Recovery – concerned with delay at different parts of the process. On top, the contextual data that we monitor, allows us to prepare for increasing volumes coming in or through court.
- 3.5 Appendix 1 provides a graphical summary of the indicators as detailed below, alongside a series of supplementary indicators which are included for context such as referral information with a very brief analysis of trends. Further detail can be considered during board session using the interactive tool – Power BI.

Recovery Indicators from Business Plan:

- Number of decisions over 100 days
- % of decisions within 50 working days
- % of Hearings in 20 days
- Forecast versus actual slots
- Number of decisions to arrange Hearing with no Hearing schedule

Supplementary indicators:

- Open court applications to establish grounds for referral
- Grounds established at court awaiting Hearing
- Referrals received – offence and non-offence
- Open referrals
- Referrals open for 100+ days

4 Use of data

- 4.1** We are currently running data on a monthly basis to monitor and track progress through the recovery plan. On top we are running a full data set each month to analyse the context and profile of our activity as well as to manage workload.
- 4.2** Data is shared with CHS on a monthly basis and with the Covid Recovery group quarterly to report on the progress against the system wide plan
- 4.3** Data is now being used and shared internally to support managers and staff to manage their workload and team performance. Managers have access to reports via CSAS and through Power BI – as demonstrated in data session with the Board.

5 Business Plan

- 5.1** A full report on progress against the Business Plan 2020/21 will come to the Board through both the Annual Accounts and Performance report and SCRA's Annual Report and statistics.
- 5.2** A mid-year progress report against the current Business Plan 2021/22 will be presented to the September Board

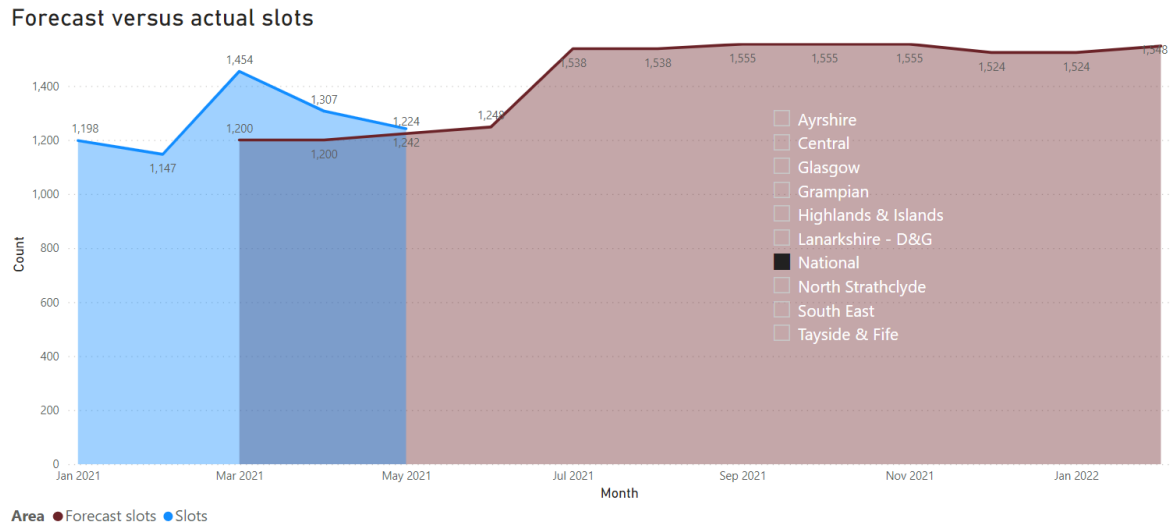
6 Recommendation

- 1. To note the data in support of the current operating environment response and recovery.**

Appendix 1

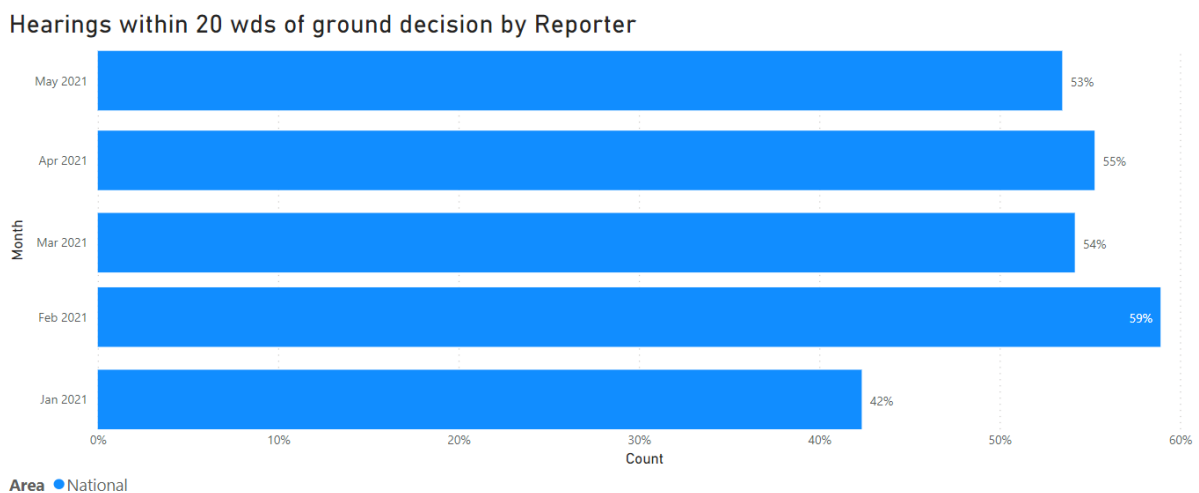
Figure 1: Forecast versus actual slots

Slot profiles (one slot = one family attending a Hearing)



In terms of slots against recovery profile, slots delivered have exceeded forecast for the three months of data which we have but there is a convergence of lines meaning that the amount which we are above forecast has been decreasing.

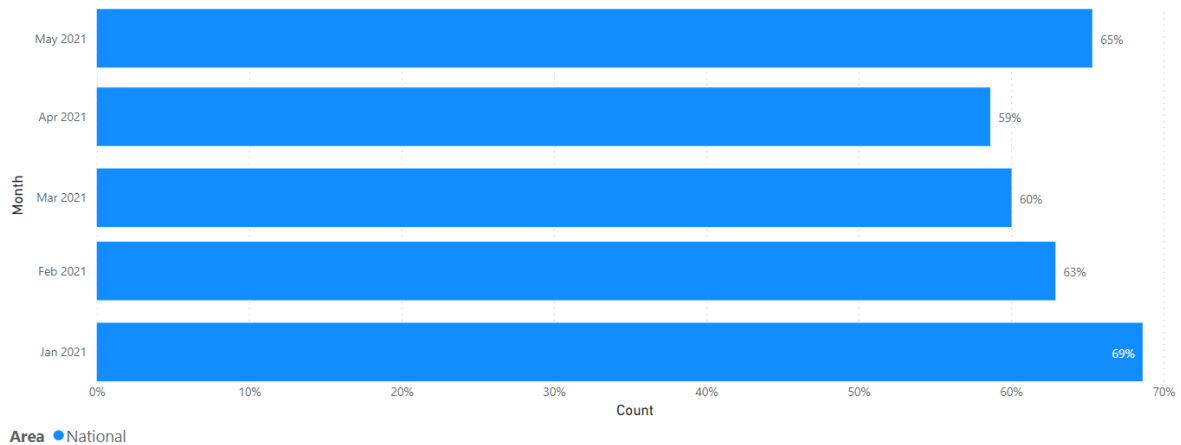
Figure 2: Ground Hearing scheduling



Ground Hearing scheduling within 20 working day performance is mixed. A standard average pre-pandemic was around 74% which shows the challenges in scheduling grounds Hearings currently.

Figure 3: Reporter decision making

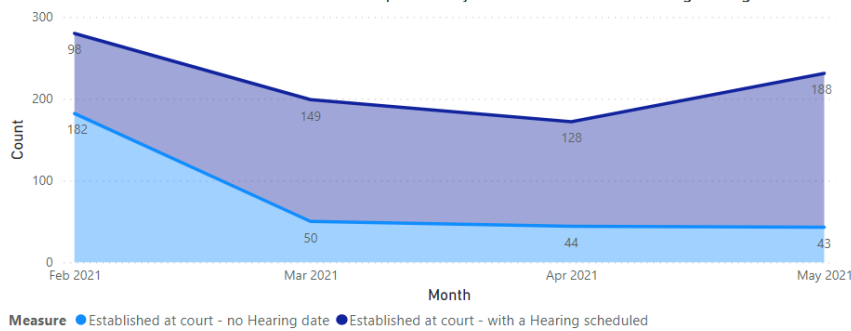
Reporter decisions within 50 wds of receipt



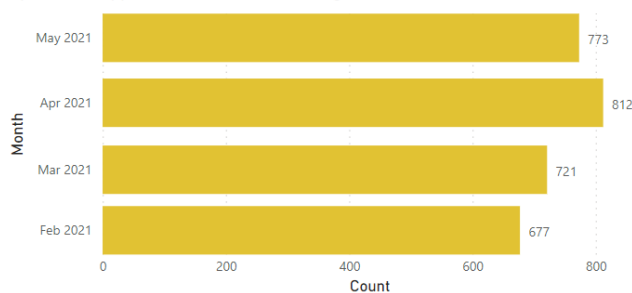
May has seen an improvement in Reporter decision making within 50 working days of receipt, it is still below the average pre-pandemic level of 75%.

Figure 4: High level recovery metrics

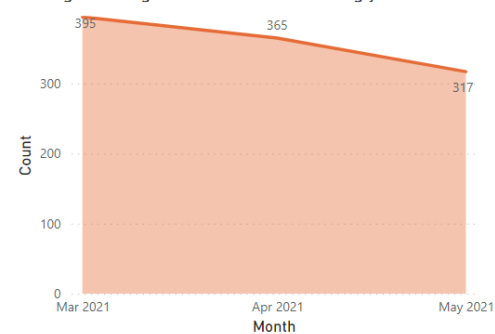
Grounds which have been established at court profiled by whether there is a Hearing arranged for them



Open court applications to establish the grounds of referral



Arrange Hearing decisions with no Hearing yet scheduled

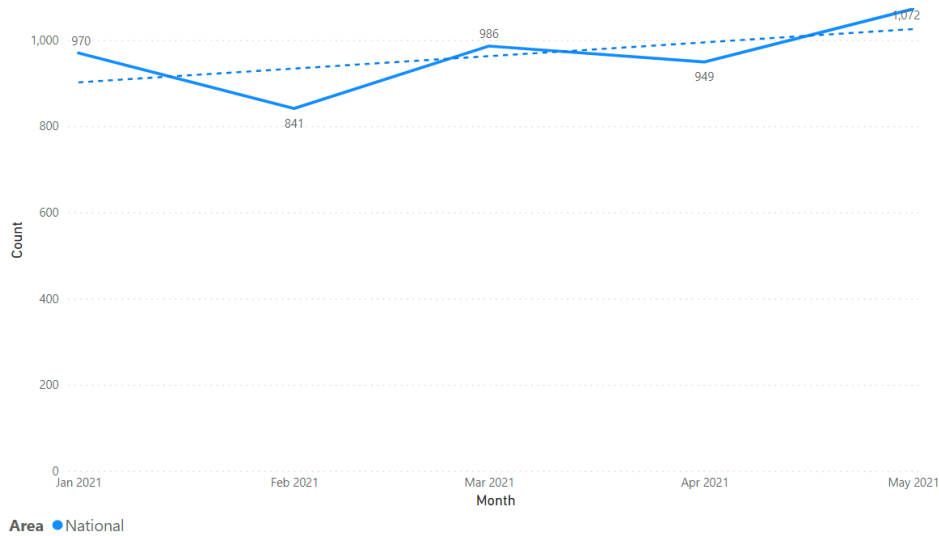


The data on this sheet is indicative data which will improve in quality over time as migration issues are resolved and improved methodologies understood.

In terms of high level recovery metrics, though the data is indicative due to the complexity of it, there is positive data in there:

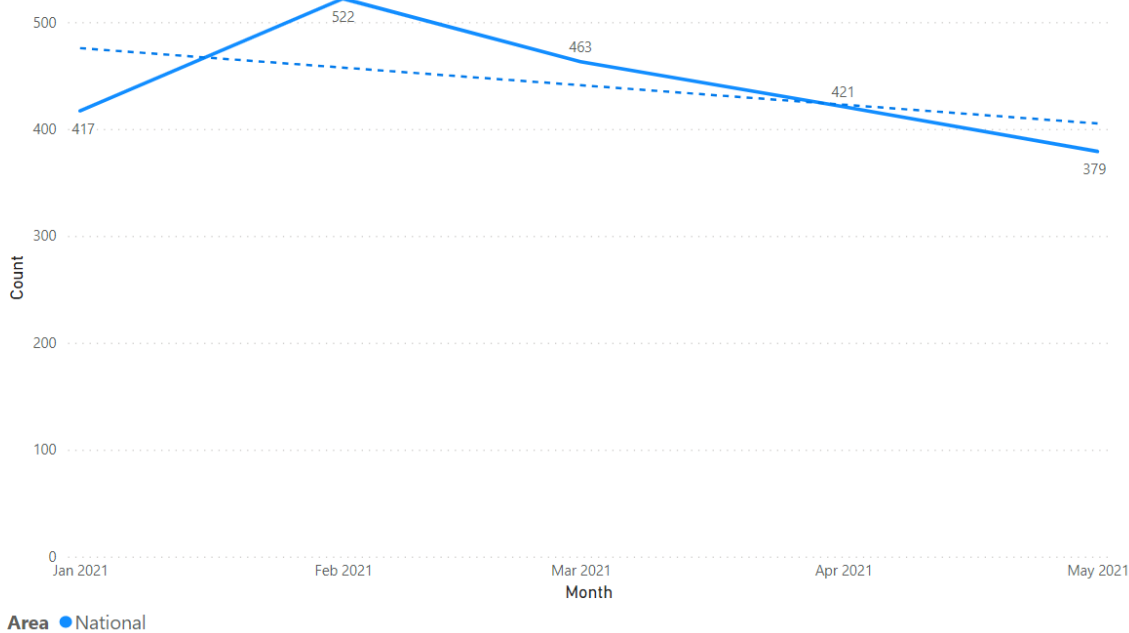
- Most established grounds have a Hearing scheduled. The increase in overall numbers may be due to increased numbers of applications being determined;
- The number of Reporter decisions to arrange a Hearing where no Hearing is scheduled has come down and will come down further as data quality improves; and
- The number of open court applications has come down in May. Some of this is due to improved data quality but the fact that the number of open applications isn't increasing is positive.

Figure 5: Non-offence referrals received

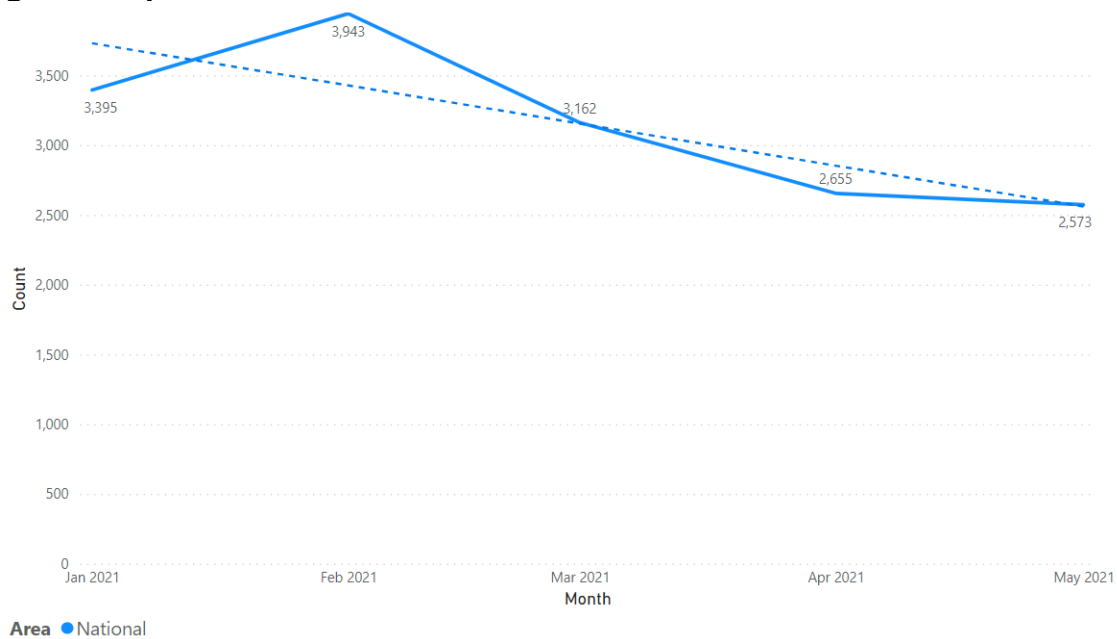


Non-offence referrals are generally showing an upward trend. For context, the monthly average for the six months prior to the pandemic (Sep 19 to Feb 20) was 1,230 so we are currently 13% below this.

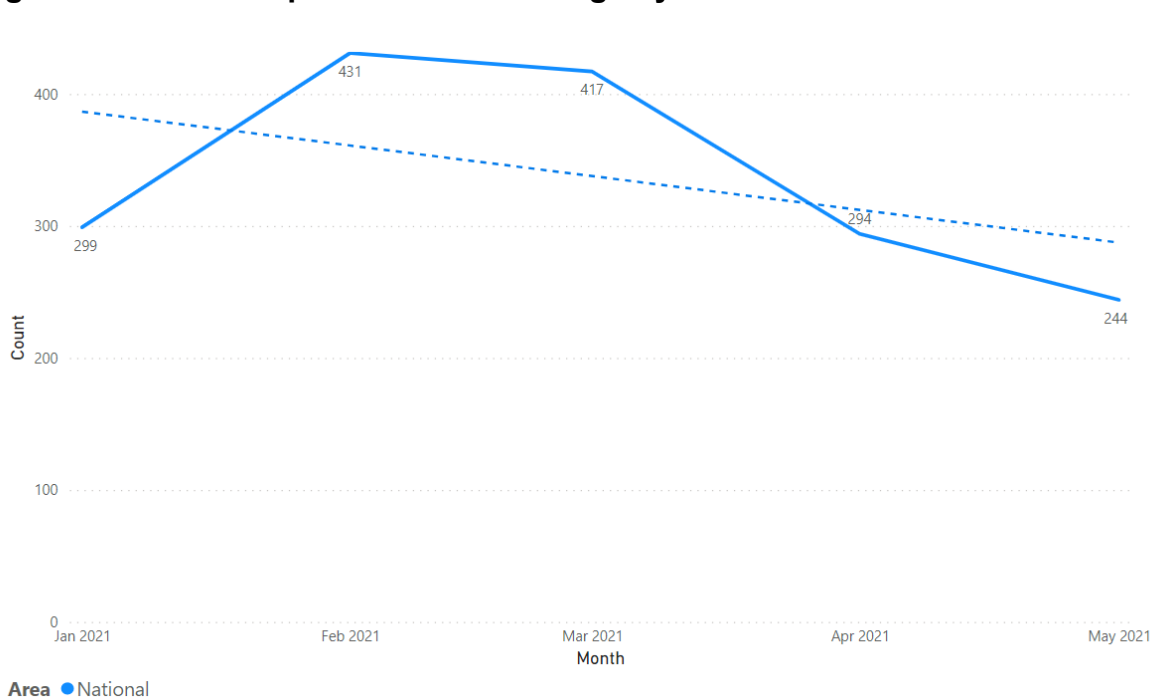
Figure 6: Offence referrals received



Offence referrals are generally showing a downward trend (February data was skewed by referrals which had been deleted in error requiring to be reprocessed). The monthly average for the six months prior to the pandemic (Sep 19 to Feb 20) was 591 so we are currently 36% below this.

Figure 7: Open referrals

Open referrals are generally showing a downward trend. As at 2nd March 2021 there were 2,475 open referrals so we are just 100 above that number currently.

Figure 8: Referrals open for 100+ working days

Referrals open for 100 or more working days are just about showing a downward trend. As at 2nd March 2021 there were 42 open referrals in this category so we are still significantly above that number currently despite the improvements seen.



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Senior Operational Manager Reviews 2020/21

Accountable Director : SOMs North West and East Central

Date : 23 June 2021

Report Author : Helen Etchells and Paul Mulvanny

Recommendation:

1. To note the outcome of the 2020/21 SOM reviews.

Reason for report : For noting.

Resource implications : Within approved budgets.

Strategy : Within approved plans.

Consultation : LMTs

Equalities duties : EHRIA not required.

Document classification : Not protectively marked.

1. Introduction

The annual Senior Operational Manager (SOM) reviews are part of the established cycle of Locality Performance Reviews (LPRs) which cover all aspects of operations. This year, the SOM reviews have been carried out against the background of the Covid19 pandemic and the organisational response to that. This reports sets out the approach to and findings of the reviews which were carried out between January and April 2021.

2. Approach and focus

In previous years, the LPRs have been formally structured meetings between the SOMs and Locality Management Teams (LMTs) which have been conducted twice yearly. The March review focusses on locality planning for the year ahead. The review in the autumn covers review of progress against the locality plan, including key organisational and local initiatives. The approach is one of constructive challenge in which the SOMs seek assurance on progress and to identify how to further assist localities with any objectives that are making slow progress. It is also a chance to re-assess the priorities within the locality plan and to adjust them to reflect changing circumstances.

The usual locality planning process did not happen in March 2020 as the organisation responded to lockdown. Due to the ongoing response to the pandemic and the implementation of CSAS in autumn 2020, the time was not right to undertake LPRs. However, by the start of January, and notwithstanding a second lockdown, there was felt to be value in reviewing the organisational response to the pandemic and undertaking a forward look at locality planning for 2021. The SOM reviews were undertaken in January to April 2021 on that basis.

The SOMs asked LMTs to focus on :

- Business Continuity/ Pandemic Recovery (staff issues, property, equipment, recovery planning, partnerships)
- CSAS implementation and embedding.
- Staff support and wellbeing

LMT were asked :

- What worked well in the last year and what key practices do you want to keep post pandemic? What were the Locality's achievements in 2020?
- What are the main challenges for the Locality in the year ahead?

LMTs were also asked to provide comments on the draft Operational Plan and areas for development and support.

3. What worked well and what key practices do you want to keep post pandemic? What were the Locality's achievements in 2020?

3.1 Flexibility, agility, speed of response, adaptability, resilience

LMTs told us about the incredible flexibility, agility, speed of response, adaptability and resilience which their teams demonstrated throughout the response to the pandemic but particularly at the start of the first lockdown. New ways of working were introduced overnight, including remodelling the delivery of hearings from in-person to virtual to ensure continued service delivery. Individuals had to adapt at pace to new ways of

performing their roles. Teams tried new things to adapt existing processes to remote working, such as the introduction of print hubs to provide printing capacity with the minimum number of staff to keep staff safe at the height of the original restrictions. Some localities have kept these processes. Managers told us that changes to processes worked best when communicated clearly within localities. Initially, change was constant and the level of information was overwhelming. Managers quickly adapted, acting as a filter to regulate the flow of information to teams. In addition, good communications emerged to help teams stay connected. Teams adapted to the challenges of remote team meetings, meeting in smaller groups and setting up WhatsApp groups to stay connected. Managers described learning from each other and sharing best practice to assist the response.

3.2 Protection of the most vulnerable Children and Young People

Managers told us that the Business Continuity Plan provided a good immediate response to the pandemic and enabled us to keep the hearing system going as the initial restrictions were put in place. The operation of the prioritisation criteria which were implemented early in response to the pandemic, has enabled us to protect the most vulnerable children and young people, safeguarding them during the pandemic.

3.3 Team Work

Across the whole organisation, there were high levels of praise, genuine respect and admiration for each other and for the way people performed as teams. LMTs told us that it brought out the best in folk, that individuals played to their strengths and that teams pulled together. There was a strong sense of people across the organisation rolling up their sleeves, getting stuck in and doing whatever was asked of them to keep the service going. In a reflection which was echoed by many, one manager told us that at times it was very hard, “the hardest year ever”, and that team and peer support were essential. We heard that the response to the pandemic brought out the best in folk and that people were “phenomenal”, checking in and looking after one another.

3.4 Remote v office working

There were challenges in getting staff set up for remote working initially, particularly support staff, many of whom did not have laptops, and that placed an additional burden on those members of staff who were able to work remotely. This was exacerbated by the additional pressures faced by those with caring responsibilities and particularly staff members who were home schooling. Office working was generally viewed as better for CSAS training and deployment, particularly for the provision of peer support. For the future, remote working was viewed as a challenge and an opportunity and it was noted that a limited return to the offices in the course of 2020 helped the mental health of some.

3.5 Leadership

Managers told us that managing in a pandemic has presented a significant challenge. Remote working was very hard at the start of the first lockdown. It was a completely new way of working for most and remote management and support of staff at a time of significant change and uncertainty was particularly difficult. The scope of the role of managers has increased and there is increased demand on them and what they are being asked to do. What was clear from their responses, and from the responses of their teams, is that they provided the highest level of support for the people in their teams, including individuals requiring a high degree of one to one support. We heard

evidence of calm and positive leadership despite managers' own and significant challenges during the pandemic.

Managers had to learn very quickly, and with no advance opportunity for learning and development, how to manage teams remotely and have developed new ways of working and new techniques to engage with people, ensure individual development and build team cohesion. Despite the significant progress that has been made in the last 14 months, managers have themselves identified managing remotely as an area for further development. Clearly delineated LMT roles and responsibilities and a clear direction from the LMT were valued by teams.

As a result of their leadership, managers were able to bring staff with them during a period of unprecedented and exponential change.

3.6 Recovery response

Throughout 2020 and into the start of 2021, there was not a point at which we moved from Covid response into recovery however, work has continued across all activity, decisions, hearings and court. As a result of the pandemic affecting teams differently, progress has though been variable across the organisation. Some localities have stayed on top of all areas of activity while others have focused on specific types of activity. All aspects of all roles have changed since the start of the pandemic and that change continues. Some Reporter work has changed significantly in the past year such as in court where there is now an increased reliance on witness statements so much of the preparation for court is front loaded. There are elements of our recovery response which are out with our control, such as the speed with which individual Sheriff Courts are adopting Webex for proofs.

The recovery work which is now underway and deployment of the recovery team, seek to ensure that all localities will have reached a return to a steady state by the end of 2021/22.

3.7 Partnership

Localities have been able to capitalise on rich and longstanding local relationships and these have stood us in good stead during Covid19. In response to the pandemic, strategic and operational relationships have been service focused which has been essential to maintaining a child focused service. There has been extensive partnership work across all localities and this work was supported by national partnership work, particularly the regular SCRA/CHS joint resilience meetings and the broader Children's Hearings Covid Response Group which included SG, SCRA, CHS, SWS and CELCIS.

Close relationships with Unison, nationally and locally, have been incredibly helpful.

3.8 Wellbeing

SCRA's response to the pandemic kept people safe. One manager commented that, to our knowledge, no one has caught Covid, either in an office or a hearing centre. Prioritising staff health and safety by closing offices and having an absolute bare minimum of staff in offices in the first lockdown was acknowledged and appreciated. The quality of the response by managers to the impact of the pandemic on staff was praised. Managers know their staff and handled one to one conversations with them with sensitivity. There was regular dialogue between managers and staff and managers took on an increasingly pastoral role, with one manager describing themselves as a therapist in this period.

The value of established wellbeing groups and structures in localities where these exist was apparent.

It is clear that there has been a huge variation in how individuals have coped with the pandemic and its myriad impacts including school closures, caring responsibilities, shielding, uncertainty and change. Managers told us about supporting individuals who were showing impacts of stress, burnout, anxiety, low mood and reduced cognition. This in turn has had a significant impact on managers who are providing high levels of support to these individuals.

The closure of schools presented a particular challenge to our predominantly female workforce and we heard many examples of the mothers in the organisation bearing the brunt of caring responsibilities and home schooling while doing their best to continue to work. Initially, our people were largely unable to access key worker childcare for their children and when spaces were made available in the second lockdown, they were not universally available. In many cases, other employers took advantage of our flexibility and put pressure on non-SCRA parents to work without caring for their children, placing the burden on SCRA parents who are predominantly women. There was a clear equalities issue which we were unable to resolve during the pandemic. The disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women has been widely researched and there would be value in exploring this further within our EDI network.

3.9 CSAS

Localities reflected on the challenges faced during the deployment of CSAS including the timing of the deployment, the training model, the level of digital skills, the level of confidence, learning styles and the ongoing embedding and training approach. The Staff Survey reflected the depth of feeling and the significant impact that these challenges had on teams. There is agreement that lessons must be learned from that process and brought into future IT deployments and other change processes.

Despite the challenge presented by the timing, CSAS deployment was noted as a success by some localities and in particular they noted the value and success of their transition plan approach. All localities reflected that confidence is growing, the work flow is now clearer and their office processes are developing. Vanguard localities were noted as particular standouts in their early efforts to implement the new system and the support they have provided for other localities. This support and the recovery groupings which were put in place to provide ongoing support have promoted inter locality working.

4. What are the main challenges for the Locality in the year ahead?

In addition to identifying the challenges facing teams in 2021/22, LMTs reflected that in 2020, change happened at a pace that would have taken years in normal times. They recognise that in 2021/22 there is an opportunity to embrace the positives and embed them in service delivery for the future.

4.1 Reshaped teams

Support from SG enabled us to bring forward the programme of recruitment of Assistant Reporters, providing opportunities for individuals for progression and a valuable opportunity to re-shape the locality staffing model. For those teams who previously operated with few Assistant Reporters, the benefits are being felt already and there is an opportunity to consolidate the role within teams and realise the benefit for Reporters of this additional resource.

In addition, deployment of the Recovery Team provides a significant additional resource for the organisation (equivalent to roughly one additional locality in terms of Reporter and AR resource.) There were resourcing challenges identified linked to managing a significant temporary resource which are detailed below (Staffing and Temporary Staff).

4.2 Staffing and Temporary Staff

One manager summed up the prevailing view very succinctly with the comment that : “Everything flows from staffing”. There has been significant staff movement in some teams, including the loss of experienced staff and the introduction of high numbers of new staff on temporary contracts. There is a need for careful planning for the medium and longer term, both to have reassurance about the shape of localities and to provide certainty for temporary staff. All locality plans refer to a regular workforce planning mechanism to ensure early, prospective planning and review.

The number of temporary staff in the organisation requires careful management and a look to the future shape of the organisation given the policy and legislative developments on the horizon. At the end of 2021/22 we are likely to be in the fortunate and unusual position of having a surplus of individuals trained in the specialised reporter and assistant reporter roles within the organisation and should plan now for their retention in order to be prepared for and contribute to meeting the challenges which will be upon us over the next 2-3 years in relation to, as one example expansion of the age of referral to the Reporter.

While recognising the value of resuming learning and development, some teams identified as a challenge the impact of releasing Reporters for study days to resume the Professional Development Award at a time when resourcing is under pressure to meet the demands of the recovery.

4.3 Physical space

LMTs articulated the fundamental change in the way in which we use our offices and hearing centres and identified challenges and opportunities for the future. While physical distancing remains in place, we will continue to use offices and hearing centres differently. With the embedding of CSAS, localities are beginning to fully envisage the benefits of paperless offices and to plan to realise those benefits. (*Consultation on the draft Agile Working Policy, post-dates these reviews and will have a significant impact on future use of offices.*)

Beyond physical distancing restrictions, managers are considering how physical spaces will be used in the long term, both for hearings and by teams. Future need for hearings and staff use and how they intersect with sustainability objectives require further consideration.

At the time of the reviews, we were in a second lockdown and the impact of that on face to face hearings and the likely impact on hearings in the longer term was being considered. Managers reflected on their experience of ensuring existing hearing centres were tech enabled during the first lockdown and, from their comments, there remains a challenge for the organisation to ensure that managers feel supported to ensure that localities have the infrastructure, technology and training required to provide a reliable digital offering in hearings.

At a time when Outreach Hearing Centres are largely unavailable, consideration of the future use of OHCs is underway including what digital solutions could be employed to provide a better alternative for participation for children, young people and families.

4.4 Use of technology and digital solutions

2020 saw a seismic shift in our use of technology. Managers, particularly those outside the central belt, are keen to embed the opportunities which digital solutions give them to participate more widely within the organisation. When the country suffered bad weather in the winter, the organisation shrugged it off as teams worked from home and were able to deliver hearings virtually. Many of the challenges of bad weather and geography can be largely mitigated by the use of technology in the future. The advantage of Teams over Skype was recognised immediately but there is further work to be done to fully realise the benefits it offers.

Technology and digital solutions are now key to delivery of children's hearings. Managers recognise that digital skills within the organisation remain a challenge and that further development and upskilling is required in localities to ensure we have a fully digitally confident workforce who are able to completely realise the benefits of all digital solutions. There remain challenges with infrastructure and technology and work is ongoing to deliver fully functional, reliable technology supported by expert technical support.

4.5 Delivery of bespoke hearings

Technology and digital solutions will have an ongoing impact on the delivery of children's hearings. Children and young people now have choices about how they participate in a children's hearing and these choices are here to stay. While the benefits for children and young people are welcomed, the challenges for localities of delivering a bespoke service to every child and young person cannot be understated, particularly given that all hearing participants have become accustomed to different means of participation. What was once a straightforward model of delivering a hearing has become much more complicated and localities are still navigating the implications of that. A reliable digital platform is essential alongside a staffing model for delivery of virtual hearings which ensures that the resource required to support them is provided sustainably for localities.

4.6 Wellbeing

Managers told us that the pandemic has had a massive impact on all staff and this is ongoing. By the time the reviews were being carried out in the second lockdown, the protracted effect of the pandemic and ongoing uncertainty were causing fatigue and stress within teams and the impact of burnout and exhaustion were apparent.

Managers reported anxiety within their teams about backlog and recovery, particularly concerns about capacity, the volume of work at court and children awaiting grounds. There was concern amongst managers about visibility on workloads and that something would be missed although increasing familiarity with CSAS and the introduction of the PowerBI tool within CSAS have materially reduced those anxieties. Between January and April the environment was reported to remain challenging.

Anxiety was also reported about re-opening offices and restarting face to face hearings. Reflecting on the experiences of 2020, the view was that it was easier to close offices than it was to re-open them. Some teams were planning locality events to welcome staff back when they were able to return to offices.

All recognise that we are in it for the long term. Wellbeing is central to locality planning for 2021/22 and managers described matching the pace of recovery to the ability of staff to respond. Responding to the period of intense and unrelenting pressure, there is a desire to make the job interesting again and for teams and individuals to experience job satisfaction once more.

4.7 Working differently/flexibly/hybrid working

The reviews were carried out before the draft Agile Working Policy had been circulated but already managers were considering the impact of working differently on them and their teams and what a more flexible model would look like in the future.

Some expressed concern about the impact on individuals, particularly dislocation and isolation. They described the need for a nuanced and individual response to individual members of staff. They considered what remote working means for teams and the importance of providing some shape and structure for teams as a whole. Managers were concerned about the impact on the management of teams and team cohesion. On-boarding new starts and learning and development were raised as challenges under an agile model, in particular ensuring that the value of peer support and soft knowledge transfer is not lost as a means to enable and accelerate learning. A minority of staff have significant anxiety about a move to agile working, wishing instead for a return to pre-pandemic “normal”.

Managers spoke about the impact on the social side of office based working, building relationships and peer support. They reflected that friendships went virtual during the first lockdown and that those virtual friendships are harder to achieve when you're new in a team. Some managers reflected on the challenges of gauging mood and morale and responding appropriately when individuals are remote and they were concerned about their own ability to appropriately support individuals who may be suffering low mood and are disengaged. The challenges of virtual team meetings were noted by some as were concerns about productivity.

4.8 Moving from re-active to pro-active

Managers commented on the impact of ongoing uncertainty on them and their teams. This was well summed up as a sense of being on a runaway train; there have been so many changes, CSAS, virtual hearings, hybrid working, and this has impacted on confidence and the feeling of being able to do the job. There was a stated desire to get into a period of relative stability so that managers and teams could get their collective breath back. This includes a desire to refocus on quality rather than working one day at a time. There is a clear desire to move from a reactive phase to a proactive phase as against the environment in which we have been operating where there has been a constant shift. Of necessity, many decisions were taken at the centre in the initial response to the pandemic. There is a desire now to rebalance from central to local. It is hoped that the locality planning process will be a first step in that rebalancing, looking to the future and placing forward planning back in the hands of local management teams.

There was a sense amongst managers of feeling less part of a national organisation than pre-pandemic and a desire to get back to the usual cross organisational networks and cross locality contact with other LRMs. Managers expressed a desire to be more involved in the usual consultative processes and decision making that are the norm in SCRA.

Managers also reflected on their own challenges and felt that these are beginning to be resolved. Confidence is felt to be growing.

4.9 CSAS and the Standard Operating Model

CSAS is now embedded in localities and, as confidence grows, teams are beginning to realise the benefits and gains of the new system. Managers reflected that increased confidence on CSAS and the development of data reporting is increasing their confidence that they can track and manage the performance of individuals and teams. There has been a high level of engagement with the consultation on the Standard Operating Model. For some localities there will be further work to ensure alignment with the SOM.

5. Next steps

Significant efforts continue to be made to respond to the pandemic. As restrictions begin to ease, the focus moves to recovery across all areas of activity. The long term impact of the pandemic on everyone in the organisation cannot be understated and the wellbeing of the people who will ensure the recovery must be prioritised in the coming year.

The SOMs have worked extremely closely with LRMs throughout the response to Covid to ensure regular and timely communication of organisational priorities and decisions and full and detailed feedback of the operational position in all nine localities. This has ensured that operational insights were fed into decision making and planning by EMT, both for Covid response and recovery. LRMs were involved in developing the Operational Plan for 2021/22 (attached at Annexure 1) which operationalises the recovery response and addresses the challenges and obstacles to recovery which were identified in 2020 and highlighted during the SOM reviews. The objectives in the Operational Plan have been adopted in the nine Locality Plans for 2021/22.

The SOMs remain in regular contact with all localities through fortnightly Covid Response calls. In addition to regular supervision with LRMs, reviews of progress against the Locality Plans will be monitored at regular Locality Team Meetings. We have begun using ZOHO, online project management software, which will enable us to track progress against the Locality Plans. Local recovery is being tracked on an ongoing basis to inform allocation of the resource in the Recovery Team and to ensure that it is employed most appropriately. The SOMs will undertake LPRs in the autumn to seek assurance on progress and offer assistance. There remains an ongoing awareness of shifting priorities and circumstances, and a readiness to re-adjust as required.

Planning and performance are the domain of the Planning and Performance Network (PPN), previously the Performance Improvement Network. That network met again in January to initiate the SOM reviews, for locality feedback and engagement on the Operational Plan and to begin the locality planning process. That network has now resumed and will provide the forum for LRMs to come together to keep the Operational Plan under review in a changing environment and to ensure that its aims and objectives remain current. The PPN will be the forum for ongoing planning and consideration of the operational recovery. The experience of the last 15 months has shown us that we must expect uncertainty and change.

6. Conclusion

The response of our people to the pandemic and all of the personal and professional pressures that came with it was extraordinary.

The SOM reviews were an opportunity to recognise and thank locality teams for their hard work, dedication and adaptability in responding to the pandemic. They were an

opportunity to gather detailed feedback from the frontline, to reflect on the organisational response to the pandemic, to identify challenges and to capture the gains that should be embedded.

The SOMs are able to assure the Board that, notwithstanding the significant challenges presented by Covid, the operational response to the pandemic ensured that a continuous service was provided and the most vulnerable children and young people were protected and safeguarded. Work has continued throughout the pandemic across all areas of activity and the focus is now on ensuring recovery across decision making, hearings and court activity in the course of 2021/22.

7. Recommendation

To note the outcome of the SOM reviews.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Budget Monitoring Report Period 12 2020-21

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive **Date:** 23 June 2021

Report prepared by: Head of Finance and Resources

Recommendations:

1. To consider the draft revenue and capital outturn positions for the year to March 2021.
2. To approve the draft revenue underspend of £775k of which £300k required to balance the 2021/22 revenue budget and the balance of £475k held in reserves.
3. To approve allocation of capital underspend up to £220k to complete 2020/21 projects in 2021/22 and support 2021/22 capital plans.
4. To note the Digital forecast for the year to March 2021.

Reason for Report: Board review and approval

Resource Implications: Within available resources

Strategy: Within agreed plans

Consultation: Sponsor Team, EMT and Budget Holders

Equalities Duties: An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides a summary of SCRA's financial position for year to March 2021.

2. Background

2.1 The total available revenue grant funding for 2020/21 was £25,250k allocated by Scottish Government for core activity and £658k for the SCRA revenue costs of the Digital Delivery Plan. In addition £481k of other income (shared services, rents and secondments) was generated.

2.2 Depreciation is a non-cash charge and is excluded from the expenditure tables in section 3.

2.3 The total available capital resource for 2020/21 is £1.4m. This comprises Core Grant in Aid of £650k, 2019/20 underspend carried forward of £160k, and funding for the Digital Delivery Plan of £590k.

3. Revenue

3.1 The following table summarises the position, excluding Digital, depreciation and unfunded pensions, to March 2021 by expense head:

Previous Full Year Actual £000	Expense Head	Budget Year to March £000	Actual Year to March £000	Variance Year to March £000	Full Year Budget £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Forecast Variance £000	Forecast Variance %
18,614	Staff Costs	19,903	19,500	-403	19,903	19,468	-435	-2.2%
3,005	Property Costs	3,037	2,982	-55	3,037	3,053	+16	0.5%
253	Travel Costs	69	38	-31	69	48	-21	-30.4%
2,374	Other Operating Charges	2,411	2,262	-149	2,411	2,283	-128	-5.3%
5	Capital Financing	3	3	+0	3	3	+0	0.0%
-442	Other Income	-343	-481	-138	-343	-357	-14	4.1%
23,809	Sub-total	25,080	24,304	-776	25,080	24,498	-582	-2.3%
-23,728	Grant In Aid	-25,250	-25,250	0	-25,250	-25,250	+0	0.0%
81	Net Total for SCRA	-170	-946	-776	-170	-752	-582	

3.2 Revenue expenditure in the year to date is £776k under budget. Further late journals will increase the underspend by around £65k, particularly as a result of releasing the £50k provision for Aberdeen dilapidations. A sum of £300k is required to balance the 2021/22 budget as approved in March 2021. Discussions have taken place with Sponsor Team and Scottish Government Finance about hand back of 2020/21 grant funding and it has been agreed that SCRA retain the revenue underspend and review in the autumn the requirement for the additional in-year funding of £1.5m assumed in setting the 2021/22 revenue budget.

3.3 The following table summarises the position, excluding Digital, depreciation and unfunded pensions, to March 2021 by budget centre.

Previous Full Year Actual £000	Cost centre	Budget Year to March £000	Actual Year to March £000	Variance Year to March £000	Full Year Budget £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Forecast Variance £000	Forecast Variance %
297	Communications	344	249	-95	344	250	-94	-27.3%
8679	East And Central Scotland Area	8,882	9,001	+119	8,882	8,983	+101	1.1%
338	Executive	419	313	-106	419	319	-100	-23.9%
6941	North West Scotland Area	7,053	6,886	-167	7,053	6,903	-150	-2.1%
1258	Practice And Policy	1,228	1,170	-58	1,228	1,174	-54	-4.4%
6295	Support services	7,155	6,687	-468	7,155	6,871	-284	-4.0%
23,808	Net Total for SCRA	25,081	24,306	-775	25,081	24,500	-581	-2.3%

3.4 The forecast spend by Locality is detailed as follows:

Locality	Variance Year to March £000	Forecast Variance to March £000	Variance %
East & Central Scotland Office	42	44	2.62%
Tayside And Fife Locality	-12	-22	-0.06%
South East Locality	35	34	0.20%
Central Locality	65	43	0.46%
Lanarkshire Dumfries & Galloway Locality	-25	-8	-0.12%
Ayrshire Locality	14	10	0.09%
North West Area Office	-31	7	-1.62%
Highlands And Islands Locality	-11	-10	-0.10%
Grampian Locality	-7	-12	-0.07%
North Strathclyde Locality	-34	-70	-0.17%
Glasgow Locality	-85	-66	-0.31%
	-48	-49	-0.30%

The Locality and Head Office position is shown in greater detail in Appendix A.

3.5 East and Central Scotland

East and Central Scotland area is currently overspent by £119k (1.3%). As previously reported, staff costs were expected to significantly exceed budget with the final overspend being £286k. The forecast overspend is due to extending contracts and additional hours to support SCRA's Recovery Plan. The staff costs overspend has been partly offset by savings across non-staffing costs of £120k and secondment income of £47k.

3.6 North West

North West area is currently underspent by £167k (2.4%). As expected staff costs underspend is currently £60k and savings on Property costs (£38k) and Other Operating Charges (£76k) are only marginally offset by an overspend of £5k against the revised travel costs budget.

3.7 Head Office

The following paragraphs set out the main factors in the current underspend of £727k (7.9%).

Support Services

The underspend of £468k in Support Services is mainly in HR staff costs underspends (£437k) where costs related to workforce sustainability and Recovery Task Team are reflected in locality forecasts. There is a net underspend of £14k on other Support Services staff cost budgets (Finance, IT, Planning and Property). An overspend on Other Operating Charges of £131k (mainly IT £114k) is more than offset by underspends on Property costs (£17k), Travel costs (£21k) and additional income (£110k).

Practice and Policy

The underspend of £57k is largely due to £43k underspend on legal costs this year due to the impact of COVID-19 on hearings and court activity, a £17k saving on staff costs, £16k savings on travel due to increased working from home during lockdown, offset by a net shortfall on income of £20k, largely due to deferring income from SG for research work is now taking place in 2021/22.

Executive

Executive are underspent by £106k, primarily staff savings due to the decision to delay recruitment to new senior team posts until the start of 2021/22. There is also an expected underspend in Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV) operating costs.

Press and Communications

Press and Communications are underspent by £95k due to delayed recruitment of two OHOV posts and underspends on staff event budget no longer required in 2020/21 and travel costs.

4. Efficiencies

- 4.1 As approved by the Board in March 2020 efficiency savings of £124k (0.5%) have been targeted in 2020/21 (vacant space savings £15k, procurement savings £50k, Head Office staff savings £30k, Interpreting & Translating £4k, Locality initiatives £25k). The target was significantly exceeded, without a negative impact on operations, as a result of additional Head Office staff cost savings (excluding HR) of £193k and additional Head Office income of £90k. The Locality budget savings resulting from reduced hearings activity in 2020/21 are not included as efficiency savings.
- 4.2 The Scottish Government notify SCRA each year of savings achieved by increased usage of Scottish Government Frameworks. Scottish Procurement have not yet confirmed the Q4 savings that SCRA made from SCRA's use of Scottish Government collaborative framework agreements, however savings of £174.2k had been confirmed to end of Q3 2020/21. It should be noted that these are not savings which reduce SCRA's costs or help SCRA to operate within the approved level of Grant in Aid so are not counted as efficiency savings.

The Procurement Officer has developed a Savings Tracker to capture savings from SCRA contracts (as distinct from Frameworks above). Information on these savings have been captured throughout 2020-21 for regulated and non-regulated procurements, and the accumulated savings, largely based on the difference

between the average of all tenders less the winning bid, amount to around £12.8k across 2 procurement exercises where savings were calculated.

5. Core Capital

5.1 Net expenditure in the period to March 2021 is £590k. Details of the budgets, actual spend and forecast are as follows:

	Board-approved Budget March 2020	Adjustments	Available Budget 2020/21	Actual YTD Mar	Full Year Forecast	Variance actual to budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Aberdeen - changes to meeting room/admin areas	25	-25	0	0	0	0
Glasgow - 4th Floor	100	-80	20	4	4	-16
Hamilton - potential release of surplus space at lease renewal	50	-50	0	0	0	0
Livingston - capital element of rent	45	0	45	45	45	0
LED Lighting Retrofits	50	0	50	40	41	-10
Hearing Room Improvements	100	0	100	107	113	7
Kilmarnock - Ground floor	0	20	20	26	26	6
Spraying Machines	0	47	47	40	40	-7
Property alterations	0	50	50	71	71	21
Minor works	100	123	223	101	122	-122
2019/20 accruals	0	0	0	-4	0	-4
Corporate Projects	13	10	23	8	9	-15
Corporate Project – Enabling Tech	30	0	30	15	17	-15
VC Replacement	55	0	55	61	61	6
Mobile Device Replacement	32	0	32	0	0	-32
New IT Projects - Chrome books	0	25	25	0	0	-25
New IT Projects - Staff Laptops	0	43	43	36	36	-7
New IT Projects - Hearing Room Laptops	0	47	47	40	40	-7
Laptops for recruitment & refresh	0	0	0	0	23	0
Total capital	600	210	810	590	648	-220

5.2 The capital plan above reflects decisions taken by EMT to amend plans in response to the COVID-19 pandemic made possible by allocating the 2019/20 budget underspend of £160k, deferring some property projects (Aberdeen, Glasgow, Hamilton) and additional Scottish Government funding of £50k.

5.3 EMT and the Board approved a substantial Minor Works programme to ensure essential and desirable projects identified by the Property Team could be

delivered in 2020/21 however, the pandemic created problems in carrying out these projects, due mainly to resourcing issues experienced by contractors.

- 5.4 COVID-19 related recovery plan projects approved by EMT have been funded from reprioritisation within the capital plan and £50k additional funding from Scottish Government for property alterations. The VC replacement programme and elements of the Corporate Projects programme also supported implementation of the recovery plan.
- 5.5 Smaller capital items were transferred to revenue in quarter 4, including mobile device replacements and Chromebooks.
- 5.6 The Hearing Rooms Improvement projects were completed on time delivering very impressive results in Selkirk, Ayr, Glasgow, Cumbernauld, Paisley and Thurso.
- 5.7 The £125k underspend on Property capital projects relates mainly to Minor Works project delays and as such will be allocated to the 2021/22 Minor Works programme, the detail of which will be considered by EMT in quarter 1. After accounting for the Property underspend (£125k) EMT will consider options for the final additional underspend post-audit, currently sitting at £95k and any necessary updates to the 2021/22 capital budget will be presented at the September Board.

6. Digital Delivery

- 6.1 The allocation of Digital funding is as follows:

Programme Aims	Budget 2020/21 £k	Forecast 2020/21 £k	Variance 2020/21 £k
CSAS Development	135	182	47
Transition Costs	192	191	-1
Support Costs	257	271	14
Licence Costs	293	293	0
Hosting Costs	85	60	-25
Contingency	181	192	11
Organisation contributions	-147	0	147
Internal Costs	96	0	-96
Agency staff costs	28	28	0
Sub-total	1,120	1,217	97
Additional in year funding			
CSAS Core Development	75	60	-15
Digitizing hearing room capacity	140	35	-105
Virtual hearings capacity	0	38	38
Improving connectivity	125	122	-3
Total	1,460	1,472	12

- 6.2 The Digital funding, including in-year funding of £340k, is £1.34m, of which £750k is revenue (including £92k CHS funding) and £590k is capital. The available budget includes a further £120k carry forward from 2019/20.
- 6.3 The forecast submitted by the Programme Director confirms spend is on track with savings on some lines being redeployed within the programme to further develop the utility of CSAS. Excluding internal transfer lines (organisation contributions, internal costs and digital training) the forecast underspend on core project lines is £39k which will be required in 2021/22 to fund purchase of VCs and TVs not delivered by 31st March 2021. The Finance Team are reconciling

actual expenditure across the digital ledger codes with the Programme Director's forecast as part of year-end work. Any resulting changes to the outturn position will be reported at the June Board.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The overall accruals based revenue underspend is £776k (3%). Further late journals will increase the underspend by around £65k, particularly as a result of releasing the £50k provision for Aberdeen dilapidations. Agreement has been reached to retain the revenue underspend and review in the autumn the requirement for the additional in-year funding of £1.5m assumed in setting the 2021/22 revenue budget. The Property capital budget is currently underspent by £125k principally due to slippage on Minor Works. Corporate capital projects are underspent by £95k largely due to expensing some smaller items of IT equipment.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 To consider the draft revenue and capital outturn positions for the year to March 2021.
- 8.2 To approve the draft revenue underspend of £775k of which £300k required to balance the 2021/22 revenue budget and the balance of £475k held in reserves.
- 8.3 To approve allocation of capital underspend up to £220k to complete 2020/21 projects in 2021/22 and support 2021/22 capital plans.
- 8.4 To note the Digital forecast for the year to March 2021.

East And Central Scotland Area

	Ayrshire Locality	East & Central Scotland Office	Central Locality	Lanarks Dumfs Gallwy Locality	South East Locality	Tayside And Fife Locality	Total
Staff Costs	40.6	38.5	83.8	17.6	101.1	4.4	286.0
Property Costs	-9.1	5.5	-0.6	1.1	2.0	-8.4	-9.4
Travel Costs	0.0	-2.5	6.1	0.0	1.6	0.7	6.0
Other Operating Charges	-17.7	0.2	-24.5	-43.3	-22.8	-8.6	-116.7
Income	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-47.4	0.0	-47.4
Total	13.9	41.7	64.7	-24.6	34.6	-11.9	118.5

North And West Scotland Area

	North West Area Office	Highlands And Islands Locality	Grampian Locality	North Strathclyde Locality	Glasgow Locality	Total
Staff Costs	-44.4	-1.4	-1.6	-7.9	-4.2	-59.5
Property Costs	-3.8	-2.5	0.0	-9.2	-22.0	-37.6
Travel Costs	-2.9	5.1	0.0	2.9	0.6	5.7
Other Operating Charges	20.0	-12.0	-5.1	-19.3	-59.1	-75.5
Total	-31.1	-10.8	-6.7	-33.5	-84.8	-166.9

Head Office

	Communi- cations	Executive	Finance	Human Resources	Information Systems	Planning	Practice & Policy	Property	Total
Staff Costs	-76.9	-84.7	49.1	-437.1	15.2	-100.4	-16.6	21.5	-629.9
Property Costs	1.9	7.7	-4.5					-12.4	-7.3
Travel Costs	-2.1	-3.8	-1.7	-2.6	-7.6	-7.1	-16.3	-1.9	-43.1
Other Operating Charges	-17.6	-24.9	-6.3	12.7	113.9	-13.0	-44.5	23.4	43.7
Capital Financing									0
Other Income			-11.4	-23.2	-25.0		20.0	-50.0	-89.6
Total	-94.7	-105.7	25.2	-450.2	96.5	-120.5	-57.4	-19.4	-726.2

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Property Strategy 2017 to 2022 - Update

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter / Chief Executive **Date:** 23rd June 2021

Report Author: Head of Property

Recommendation:

1. To note recent progress implementing SCRA's Property Strategy and the planned actions for 2021/22.
2. A new Property Strategy will be developed over the coming year and the Board are invited to comment on the expected direction of travel set out in sections 5 and 6.

Reason for Report: To Update Board On Progress

Resource Implications: Within available resources

Strategy: Within agreed plans

Equalities Duties: Not Required

Consultation: Principal Reporter/ Chief Executive
Head of Finance and Resources

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Property Strategy was approved by the Board in June 2017 and covers the period 2017 to 2022.
- 1.2 This report is intended to provide the Board with an update on the work carried out over the last year along with the actions that are planned for the current financial year. Attached to the report is information on the current estate and its performance.
- 1.3 The coronavirus pandemic brought huge overnight change to how our organisation operates and delivers its services. These changes will influence how we wish to develop our Property Strategy and some of these early thoughts will be set out for Board consideration to help inform development of our strategy.

2.0 Background and Context

- 2.1 SCRA's current estate comprises of 34 core properties of which 19 are owned. Details of these core properties are attached at Appendix A. In addition, prior to the pandemic, SCRA used ad-hoc daily hire facilities in around 24 locations for children's hearings. From March 2020, the use of these ad-hoc centres largely stopped and hearings were delivered through digital/ hybrid solutions allowing participants to attend remotely.
- 2.2 The Corporate Plan 2020-23 sets out our three strategic aims – to Care, Connect and Protect. The five key themes of the Property Strategy, set out below, are consistent with the strategic aims of the Corporate Plan.
 - Meeting the Needs of Property Users
 - Flexible Service Delivery
 - Location and Quality of Hearing Centres
 - Sustainability
 - Working in Partnership

Property objectives for 2021-22 are included in the Finance and Resources Strategy which is aligned with the organisations other key strategies, particularly People and Digital strategies.

- 2.3 The Property Team provides support for the delivery of these themes and the strategic aims of the Corporate Plan. Our buildings need to provide suitable well maintained spaces for the staff, partners, children, young people and families who use them. Physical changes to our buildings are needed to ensure that they are flexible and support the delivery of our services. The capital programme allows us to allocate resources to develop and deliver projects that support the organisation's strategic aims and the participation of children and young people in hearings.
- 2.4 For 2021/22, available property funding consists of c.£0.7M for capital projects and a revenue budget of c.£3M. Revenue budgets include significant committed costs, such as rents, rates, utilities and contracted maintenance costs. A relatively modest discretionary revenue spend is allocated to the cost of emerging repairs.

- 2.5 The Coronavirus pandemic has created a unique opportunity for SCRA to consider how it can sustainably develop the future delivery of children's hearings and provide our services. Through necessity the uptake in digital solutions has accelerated in the last 12 months and whilst they will not be appropriate in every situation it has demonstrated the opportunities for agile working and flexible delivery of services. Over time, as technology solutions improve, the quality and reliability of the equipment and the supporting infrastructure will become more robust.

3.0 Review of Recent Activity

- 3.1 The initial expectation that the pandemic would bring a relatively short period of service interruption has since led to more fundamental questions around how our services can be developed and how our properties will support these changes. This is discussed further in sections 4 and 5 below.
- 3.2 Work carried out during 2020/21 was directed towards our response to the pandemic and ensuring that our premises could be safely brought back into operation following closure for several months. A number of projects were completed over the last year and progress is summarised under the five objectives of the property strategy:

3.4 Meeting the Needs of Property Users

Continuous investment in our properties is needed to support new ways of working and to improve the services we deliver. We must provide a safe, suitable and appropriate environment for everyone who works in or uses our properties. Often this requires internal reconfiguration of our properties as our operational needs adapt and change. The work undertaken to alter and improve our properties across the country is aligned with our 3rd Corporate aim – to Protect.

A number of alteration and improvement projects were completed around our estate over the last year:

- Smart working feasibility studies for Hamilton and Stirling
- Hearing room improvements in Ayr, Cumbernauld, Glasgow, Paisley, Selkirk and Thurso
- Researching and deploying specialist equipment for regular disinfection of our premises
- Hearing Room alteration and enlargement works to increase capacity in Dumbarton, Irvine, Kilmarnock and Paisley
- LED lighting upgrades as a part of environmental works
- Minor works

To keep our buildings operational, a range of facilities management services are provided that includes planned and reactive maintenance along with office cleaning. Three new contracts were completed and awarded to FES FM Ltd during 2020 that cover Hard and Soft FM services on mainland Scotland along with a separate Total FM contract for our three island locations.

3.5 Flexible Service Delivery

Flexible service delivery and how we work in our premises, along with our partners, supports our 2nd Corporate aim – to Connect. Flexible service delivery is tied to the Government's expectation that all public bodies make the best use of their resources and only occupy the office space that is needed. This also relates to how we deliver our services to children, young people and families. One impact of the pandemic is that it has forced creativity and flexibility in the delivery of our services and how we work. Prior to the pandemic many SCRA staff only had access to a desktop PC, now laptops provide greater flexibility to work remotely or in alternative locations within the office.

Social distancing requirements meant that many of our hearing rooms could not safely accommodate enough people to allow hearings to go ahead. Virtual and hybrid hearings were achieved by using the available space in our buildings differently or through participation from a remote location. To create capacity for face to face hearings works were carried out to enlarge existing rooms or convert alternative rooms in our buildings in Irvine, Dumbarton, Kilmarnock and Paisley. In other locations, existing open plan offices or vacant space was repurposed to provide larger spaces for children's hearings.

As we reoccupy our buildings they will need to provide greater flexibility for our workforce and we will also need to use the space within our buildings more flexibly. In response to feedback from staff in the annual survey an agile working policy is being developed that will formalise some of the benefits of working from home. This along with a smart working approach to our use of space will see a move away from the large areas of open plan desks seen in our offices.

During 20/21 our Stirling lease was renewed for a further 10 year period and a project is now under way to redesign the office and introduce a smart working approach. By moving away from "owned" workstations, a more varied and interesting workspace can be created that includes spaces for collaboration as well as both formal and informal work and meeting spaces.

When space becomes surplus or underutilised we will either remove it from our estate or look at alternative uses. Leasing out vacant space is beneficial as it allows the running costs of these buildings to be shared and rental income received when leased to a non-government body. Between rent and shared costs, this income currently amounts to around £199K per annum. Appendix B provides a breakdown of the current tenancies created within our estate. Appendix C provides a breakdown of the vacant space that is either available to lease or is not currently capable of being let.

3.6 Location and Quality of Hearing Centres

The design of our hearing rooms has always reflected the needs of the hearings system and, in particular, to create safe, well located and confidential spaces. To support Better Hearings and promote participation, three contemporary designs were developed with the involvement of young people in 2017/18. This built upon the ideas of the original model hearing room created in Glasgow which introduced the use of less formal furniture and the removal of the "big table".

In our core hearing centres (those that are either owned or leased) we have much more control over the configuration and design of space. During 2020/21, a further 6 hearing room upgrades were completed. A selection of photos from the refurbishments is attached at Appendix D. Since the hearing room improvement programme commenced 30 hearing rooms have now been refurbished of which 18 are to one of the new design routes. Many of our hearing centres are frequently used and the decoration, carpets and soft furnishings will see a lot of wear and tear over time. A continuous rolling programme of upgrades is envisaged along with a refresh of the design routes to ensure that they remain contemporary. This work to encourage greater participation in the hearing is aligned with our 2nd Corporate aim – to Connect.

In locations where SCRA does not own or lease any core hearing centres, daily hire premises were used on an informal basis. These premises do not achieve the same quality standards as our core hearing centres and their suitability for continued use has been under constant consideration. One impact of the pandemic has been to accelerate the use of virtual and hybrid hearings, which provides an alternative to these daily hire facilities.

To measure the quality, efficiency and cost effectiveness of our estate we have a number of property KPI's. The quality KPI's concentrates on our core hearing centres, as the main focus of service delivery. The updated KPI's for 2020/21 are attached at Appendix G.

3.7 Sustainability

Sustainability and environmental considerations form part of our first and second strategic aims to Care and Connect. As a public body, SCRA must comply with the Climate Change Duties introduced by the Scottish Government under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. Climate change and sustainability are more prominently referenced in our strategic aims and they also form part of our organisational values and behaviours.

A separate report was submitted to the Board in March 21 setting out our contribution towards the legislative duties and that our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions had reduced by 2% to 641.6 tCO₂e. The declaration of a climate emergency and the amended targets to bring net zero forward to 2045 mean this is becoming an ever increasing priority for action.

Property is our biggest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions largely through the requirement for heat and power. However, emissions are also the result of how we use our properties and deliver our services across the country. Business travel (scope 3) is known to be our 2nd highest source of emissions due to the very dispersed nature of our estate and the delivery of face to face hearings. Our reporting of scope 3 emissions do not currently include staff commuting or use of taxis, flights etc.

During 2020/21, an internal audit review of our approach to sustainability and climate change identified a number of areas where further action is required. To work towards the net zero target changes are required across the organisation

and responsibility for improving our environmental performance and reducing our GHG emissions will feature as a part of locality plans. An interim 3-year GHG reduction target of between 10% and 20% was included within the March report and agreed by the Board.

3.8 Working in Partnership

Working in partnership is consistent with the 2nd aim of the Corporate Plan – to Connect. Where property changes involve leasing or replacing premises we work with the Property Controls Team in Scottish Government to review options and secure the necessary approvals. Our IT team are currently rolling out the installation of guest wi-fi access in our buildings which will enable partners to remain productive and access their own IT networks as well as providing internet access for families.

SCRA works with CHS and partners to ensure that the arrangements between the key agencies in the hearing system are developed and strengthened. We continue to work with CHS on a number of areas relating to our properties and provide updates on planned works or changes to our estate.

Where space is no longer operationally required we have been able to share space in our buildings with other government bodies. In a number of locations we now co-locate with public bodies including Care Inspectorate, SEPA, SNH and PIRC. A summary of these arrangements are included within the table attached at Appendix B. In the same way that SCRA is reviewing its space requirements, this will also be true for other public bodies and more options for sharing space may become available.

Prior to the pandemic SCRA frequently made use of local authority and third party space for ad-hoc hearing facilities. This space is not designed or intended for children's hearings and does not provide facilities that compare well against premises in SCRA's core estate. The move towards greater flexibility and choice provided by digital hearings offers an alternative that could reduce our requirement to use daily hire facilities.

4.0 **Planned and Emerging Activity**

- 4.1 For 2021/22 a programme of capital works has been approved and is summarised at Appendix E. These comprise a series of projects across the country that contribute towards the objectives set out in the Corporate and Business plans.
- 4.2 The hearing rooms improvement programme is now in its 6th year and further hearing room upgrades will take place in Bellshill (HR2), Edinburgh (HR2), Glasgow (HR4), Inverness (HR1), Lochgilphead and Kirkwall. To make the programme sustainable, three design routes were created and only minor modifications are made each year, primarily to furniture, to reflect the learning and experience of previous years. It is intended that the design routes will be

refreshed next year to ensure that our hearing room designs remain contemporary.

- 4.3 Following introduction in our Kilmarnock office last year, further smart working projects are being developed during 2021/22. The lease of our Stirling Head office was renewed in February for a further period of 10 years. An initial feasibility and design contract was awarded to develop a smart working approach for our head office and locality office. The design process has commenced and the first phase of the works will create an enlarged hearing room to permit social distancing and free up office space to allow more head office staff to return to the building. Similarly in Hamilton, smart working feasibility work is underway and will form part of the option appraisal within the business case to Scottish Government. The current lease expires at the end of December and it is hoped to submit the business case by the end of the Summer.
- 4.4 Further work is planned across floors 2,3 and 4 of our Glasgow building that will allow the 4th floor to become a dedicated meeting, training and touch down office space. These works will also promote the introduction of a smart working approach by the locality and permit staff currently located on the 4th floor to work alongside their colleagues on floors 2 and 3.
- 4.5 Climate change and the environment will increasingly become priority considerations for every part of the organisation and during 2021/22 we will explore the opportunities available to access frameworks and funding for improving the performance of our buildings. Each year a number of older, less efficient, heating and cooling systems are upgraded or replaced across the estate through our minor works budget. Lighting systems within our offices consume a lot of electricity and we are replacing traditional fluorescent lights with LED lighting systems that have lower energy costs and do not require maintenance. Further LED lighting upgrades will be carried out during the course of 2021/22. Further energy savings through increased insulation, upgrading building controls and installing renewable energy sources such as photovoltaic solar panels may be possible and it is hoped to secure expert advice through the frameworks mentioned above.
- 4.6 The pandemic forced the implementation of organisation wide home working. Solutions were found to overcome many of the expected obstacles to remote working and responses to the staff survey strongly favoured retaining the additional flexibility. It is expected that SCRA's Agile Working policy will be formalised in the coming months and agile working will highlight the interaction of policy, people, technology and property. Our property strategy will be more closely tied to our People and Digital strategies than ever before.

5 Property Strategy Considerations

- 5.1 A new property strategy for 2022–26 will be developed and this will be influenced by the changes brought about by the pandemic and the opportunities/ challenges that have been created.

- 5.2 Property is one of the enablers for delivering the organisation's strategic objectives. Whilst the current Property Strategy supports the three strategic aims of the Corporate Plan there are a number of areas where change is expected, or currently underway, that will influence our requirement for property and how we use it over time:
- Impact of the coronavirus pandemic
 - The Promise
 - New Laws affecting Children's Hearings
 - Referral of 16 & 17 year olds to the Principal Reporter
- 5.3 The challenge will be how we build flexibility, resilience and sustainability into the configuration and use of our hearing centres and workplaces. Where exceptional circumstances arise, greater management of the use of hearing centres and offices will be needed to ensure the Health & Safety of staff and visitors. The coronavirus pandemic has introduced a number of such restrictions to ensure safety. It is also likely that future public sector funding settlements will be affected by the pandemic and this could influence or limit our ability to implement changes.
- 5.4 Our property and the services we deliver need to be increasingly **flexible**. The last year has demonstrated that digital hearings can be an alternative for physical hearings and work can be completed in different locations including home working. Our staff survey highlighted a strong preference for elements of this greater working flexibility to continue and the new Agile Working policy is currently progressing through consultation.
- 5.5 As social distancing requirements are eased and face to face hearings can resume, will all hearings need to go back to being physical hearings? The current expectation is that greater choice will be offered for how hearings are held with a mix of fully face to face, fully virtual and hybrid hearings being likely. This may have implications for the number of hearing centres we will require.
- 5.6 Digital solutions may not be appropriate in certain circumstances and social distancing required a number of larger hearing rooms to be created where space was available. New laws affecting children's hearings may increase the number of participants at the hearing, although feedback from children and young people stated a preference for there to be as few attendees as possible. Whilst these changes may have implications for increasing the size of a standard hearing room we have limited capacity to achieve this within our estate. The proposed referral of 16 & 17 year olds may also require further consideration of the space, furniture, equipment and resources available in our hearing centres.
- 5.7 The introduction of our Agile Working policy along with a Smart Working approach to office design will change how, and how often, our premises are used. As work can be carried out remotely, what will be the new role for our offices?
- 5.8 Not everyone can work from home and the office provides a place for a positive organisational culture to be maintained and developed. Our offices also provide social and wellbeing benefits through an ability to work, meet, collaborate and

learn from colleagues. These are important factors for maintaining the overall productivity and culture of the organisation.

- 5.9 As social distancing restrictions are eased use of our office spaces will increase although the greater flexibility of Agile Working may mean that this will not be at pre-pandemic levels. We no longer rely on, or need to retain, the paper based files for the majority of our work and the large areas given over to file storage in our buildings are increasingly being reduced. These two factors provide opportunities for creating alternative working areas and potentially free up space for use in our hearing suites.
- 5.10 The **location and quality** of the hearing centres and workplaces we provide also needs to be considered. With the expectation of continued delivery of virtual and hybrid hearings the use of technology in our hearing centres will increase and needs to be better integrated within our facilities. Increased data cabling, data ports and power supplies will be needed to accommodate conferencing equipment and network attached devices. If a sufficient number of small meeting spaces are available in our premises these can also provide flexibility for holding virtual hearings.
- 5.11 Agile and Smart working opens up the potential for using the available space we have in our buildings differently. Where less traditional open plan space is needed for desks and filing, it becomes possible to allocate more space to our public facing areas and improve the quality of our hearing suites.
- 5.12 What are the changes to our offices that are envisaged by a smart working design? By moving away from traditional desk layouts allocated to individuals, a variety of meeting and collaborative spaces can be created along with improved kitchen and break out spaces that feel less corporate, create a positive culture and promote wellbeing. Where possible the inclusion of facilities (eg showers) that support active travel, such as cycling, promotes fewer car journeys.
- 5.13 Prior to the pandemic the first office refurbishment to incorporate a smart working approach was completed in Kilmarnock. That project was discussed as a part of last year's update for the Board. To demonstrate the "look and feel" of a smart working office design, the photos of the Kilmarnock project are attached again at Appendix F.
- 5.14 Where we increasingly have a mix of office based and remote workers, our IT systems and equipment will need to facilitate blended collaborative working to avoid inequalities. This will require linkages across our Digital, People and Property strategies to ensure that appropriate equipment/systems are utilised and we have a confident trained workforce who can get the most out of them.
- 5.15 As the technology continues to improve and develop, virtual and hybrid hearings will increasingly become the preferred option for some hearing participants. In some locations the number of physical hearings could significantly reduce and these low usage centres may be difficult to sustain in the longer term, especially if there is pressure on public sector spending. Consideration of our need for both ad-hoc and low volume hearing centres will require to be kept under review.

- 5.16 The number of operational locations and our use of property also feeds into our **Sustainability** and Climate Change objectives, particularly our need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and travel. The ever more ambitious emissions reduction targets set by government and the requirement to achieve Net Zero by 2045 will further drive the need to innovate how we deliver our services whilst reducing emissions. Our financial sustainability could also be impacted if public sector spending is reduced as a consequence of the economic supports necessary during the pandemic. Going forward we may be challenged to do more with less.
- 5.17 Greater **partnership working** will be required where resources are stretched. We already work closely with partner agencies and share a number of premises with other public bodies and private companies. Where the financial sustainability of low volume hearing centres is an issue we will need the assistance of our key local authority partners to access suitable premises when virtual solutions are not appropriate and travel distances to an SCRA centre are unreasonable. Where partners attend SCRA premises it is helpful to be able to provide the facilities/resources for them to remain productive and work before and after the hearing. Guest wi-fi access is being rolled out to our hearing centres that will provide connectivity for partners as well as families.
- 5.18 We know some of the key areas that will guide the direction of travel for our new Property Strategy. Climate change and our contribution towards Net Zero requires our service delivery to offer greater flexibility through virtual and hybrid solutions resulting in fewer car journeys being necessary. There will be greater linkages between the People, Digital and Property strategies. With agile working and virtual hearings we are likely to need fewer properties but they will need to be better quality with good IT equipment and infrastructure to support the smarter working needs of an agile workforce. As we recover from the economic impact of the pandemic it is also likely that we will need to achieve more without any additional resources. This is likely to present opportunities, challenges and difficult decisions.

6.0 Board Views on Strategy Direction

- 6.1 The above section on Property Strategy considerations touches on some of the factors that will drive the future development of our estate ie changes in key policy areas affecting the hearing system, climate change, digital delivery of hearings, agile working and the potential for post pandemic financial restrictions. All of these factors will shape the development of a new Property Strategy.
- 6.2 Prior to the pandemic we delivered physical hearings, and worked from offices, in a dispersed property estate. The last year required huge changes and the necessity of implementation demonstrated that obstacles could be overcome to make them work. Going back to the pre-pandemic ways of working no longer seems appropriate and creates further opportunities to build on these changes, although there are likely to be further challenges to be addressed. These

challenges are summarised below and the Boards views on these are welcomed to help shape the new strategy:

Flexibility & Choice

The continuation of virtual and hybrid hearings after the pandemic offers convenience, flexibility and choice for participants as well as reducing a number of car journeys. However, not all participants will have access to the technology and internet services that are needed. It's likely that fully physical, fully virtual and hybrid hearings will all be options and the choice selected may be dependent upon the circumstances of each particular case.

Expectation – further development of our service and consideration of digital inclusion is required but virtual and blended hearings will increasingly be used post pandemic.

Climate Change

Continuing to provide our services across a widely dispersed estate means that greenhouse gas emissions will continue to be generated from business travel and the energy used to heat & power our buildings. Reducing our emissions towards net zero requires transformational change to how and where we deliver our services. The buildings we own and lease will need to become more energy efficient and used sufficiently often to justify the financial and carbon costs of holding them.

Expectation – climate change and sustainability will become an increasing priority for how many properties we need and how we use them to deliver our services as we adapt the hearings system towards net zero.

Use of Daily Hire Hearing Facilities

Our use of daily hire hearing centres has historically been a concern due to the often poor quality facilities available. Their use has largely ceased during the pandemic although there may be pressure to recommence these hearings in some locations. Digital solutions now offer a viable alternative although digital inclusion will need to be considered.

Expectation – to move away from using poor quality daily hire premises in favour of digital alternatives and better quality core premises.

Use of our Offices

As agile and smart working policies are implemented we will need fewer fixed desks in our offices. The need to hold paper files in large storage systems has largely been removed and, as they are destroyed, this will also free up space in our offices. By freeing up space there will be opportunities to enlarge and enhance the hearing suites to allow for new public facing roles before and after hearings.

Expectation – we will need less space for desks and paper file storage which creates opportunities for enlarging and improving our hearing suites as well as alternative smart working settings.

Consistency of Property Provision

With pre pandemic physical hearings, we aimed to provide a similar standard of core hearing centre facility across the country. Social distancing meant that many of our hearing rooms were too small for face to face hearings and many do not have scope to be enlarged. One potential outcome from the new laws affecting children's hearings is a greater right of attendance and larger hearings. Many of our existing buildings cannot accommodate hearings that would require rooms of around 40 SqM and most hearings will not involve large numbers of participants. To sustainably meet this demand, larger hearing rooms can be accommodated in key locations for those exceptional cases. This involves a move away from the previous consistency of provision to a more flexible approach where we have smaller and larger hearing rooms supplemented by virtual and hybrid solutions.

Expectation – there will not be move to creating larger hearing rooms in every location. Instead a limited number of larger hearing rooms will be available in key locations that are part of a flexible and managed approach to delivering children's hearings.

Size of our estate

Whilst we may require some larger hearing rooms and "freed up" space will be allocated to hearing suites and for smarter working initiatives, it is expected that our overall requirement for space should continue to reduce. Reducing the overall size of our estate will contribute towards reducing our carbon footprint as our largest source of emissions is from our buildings. Between 2010 and 2020 the overall size of our estate (SqM) reduced by around 18.2%. This was achieved through the changes made to our operational delivery model around 2010. The increased delivery of virtual and hybrid hearings, along with agile and smart working approaches are expected to reduce the amount of space we need overall. Pre-pandemic some of our hearing centres already had low levels of usage and the digital and agile working changes expected are likely to reduce the need for physical hearings further.

Expectation - with greater digital delivery of services and agile working we will need less space over time and our estate will continue to reduce in size. This may also be influenced by future financial pressures.

Financial

The government has responded to the impact of the pandemic with a number of financial packages to avoid economic collapse. Government debt is at the highest figure seen outside of wartime. Once the pandemic is over public sector spending restrictions may be seen, as was the case after the financial crisis in 2008. After staff costs, property costs are our largest expenditure heading. As a part of the austerity arrangements, property controls were introduced preventing public bodies entering into new lease agreements without first obtaining government

approval. These controls remain in place and SCRA submits business cases to Scottish Government where it is proposed to renew or enter into a new lease.

Expectation – whilst unknown at this time, public sector financial restrictions may be a concern following the pandemic with pressure on public bodies to identify savings from their property holdings. Improved partnership working and property sharing will assist in low volume locations where the need for physical hearings remain.

- 6.3 The coronavirus pandemic is not over and the above areas point towards some of the opportunities and challenges that will affect how our service evolves. The last year has demonstrated that flexibility in how and where we deliver our services is invaluable. Over the next few years we can expect further changes, challenges and opportunities that will shape our future requirement to hold and to use property. The Board are invited to provide views on the expectations set out in section 6.2.

7.0 Conclusions









- 7.1 The pandemic continues to have an impact on political, economic, societal and technological factors and is forcing every organisation to consider how it delivers its services along with how they can be more flexible and resilient. Whilst a return to the pre-pandemic approach to delivering our services looks very unlikely, a number of important factors that will shape our strategies remain uncertain and will only become clearer over time.
- 7.2 Further improvements to our digital infrastructure and equipment will provide increased flexibility for delivering virtual/hybrid hearings and support agile working. As more activities can be successfully completed virtually and remotely our workplaces will also need to change. We will no longer need office areas with large numbers of desks allocated to individuals and instead there should be greater sharing of workspaces with areas for collaboration, to meet and to promote a positive organisational culture.
- 7.3 Agile working and greater use of mobile technology and systems improves resilience and flexibility as a part of business continuity planning. There are implications for how much space we need and how we use our properties with potential to reallocate office space to public facing activities and uses.
- 7.4 Climate change and our public sector duties to work towards net zero will increase in priority and feature as a part of every aspect of how we deliver our services.
- 7.5 Our Property Strategy will be updated to reflect the new opportunities and challenges that are emerging from the pandemic response, climate change and our operational needs. With digital service delivery and agile working there is a strong link between our People, Property and Digital strategies for the organisation.

8. Recommendation(s)

- 8.1 To note recent progress implementing SCRA's Property Strategy and the planned actions for 2021/22.
- 8.2 A new Property Strategy will be developed over the coming year and the Board are invited to comment on the expected direction of travel set out in sections 5 and 6.

SCRA Property Locations (at June 21)

Appendix A

Property	Address	Tenure	Description	Area (SqM)
1 	Aberdeen The Exchange, Market Street, Aberdeen,	Leased	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Two floors within a multi storey office block	567
2 	Alloa Town Hall Lodge Mar Place Alloa	Leased	Hearing Centre Single storey detached building built circa 1930	93
3 	Arbroath 50 East Abbot Street, Arbroath	Owned	Hearing Centre Modern 2 storey building constructed 2003	139
4 	Ayr 35 Carrick Street, Ayr	Leased	Hearing Centre Ground floor office within four storey building	158
5 	Bellshill 70 North Road, Bellshill	Owned	Hearing Centre Extended single storey and attic stone villa with surfaced car park set in own grounds	281
6 	Cumbernauld 26 Carron House, Cumbernauld	Leased	Hearing Centre 3 rd floor office space in town centre shopping/ office complex	77
7 	Dalkeith 29 Elmfield Court, Dalkeith	Owned	Hearing Centre Category C listed terrace of 3 buildings with single storey extension. Constructed 1861.	190
8 	Dumbarton 55 Church Street, Dumbarton	Owned	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Modern 2 storey office building with car park in own grounds	309

9		Dumfries 99 George Street, Dumfries	Owned	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Ground floor of 3 storey building constructed mid 1980's.	227
10		Dundee 4 Commercial Street, Dundee	Owned	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Four storey office building constructed 2005	689
11		Edinburgh 1 Fountainhall Road, Edinburgh	Owned	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Two storey conversion of former coachworks to office accommodation.	766
12		Elgin Phoenix House, 1 Ward Road, Elgin	Leased	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Part ground and part first floor of modern office building	145
13		Falkirk Campfield House, Wellside Place, Falkirk	Owned	Hearing Centre Modern stone clad two storey building in own grounds built c.2001	237
14		Fraserburgh 10 Commerce Street Fraserburgh	Owned	Hearing Centre Category B Listed 19 th century 2 storey detached former house with attic conversion.	249
15		Glasgow 10/20 Bell Street, Glasgow	Leased	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Ground to fourth floors of warehouse to office conversion.	1600
16		Glenrothes Albany House, North Street, Glenrothes	Owned	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Two storey office building constructed during 1970's in central Glenrothes	870
17		Greenock 1/3 Brisbane Street, Greenock	Owned	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Two storey brick and slate modern office building and car park within own grounds	238

18		Hamilton Hamilton House, Caird Park Hamilton	Leased	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Two floors of three storey office development completed 2007	1139
19		Inverness 6 Castle Wynd, Inverness	Leased	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Ground and 1 st floors in frame construction building	442
20		Irvine Ground Floor Sovereign House, Irvine	Leased	Hearing Centre Ground floor hearing suite in former school converted to office use	145
21		Kilmarnock 21 West Langlands Street Kilmarnock	Owned	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Two storey steel framed building constructed 2010.	694
22		Kirkwall East Bank East Road, Kirkwall, Orkney	Owned	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Part of single storey former hospital building	167
23		Lerwick 13 Hill Lane, Lerwick, Shetland	Leased	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Ground and 1 st floor of 2 storey traditional stone and slate building converted to office use	147
24		Livingston Civic Centre Howden Road South Livingston	Leased	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Accommodation on ground floor	329
25		Lochgilphead Manse Brae, Lochgilphead	Owned	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Single storey modern office block constructed 1996 within own grounds with car spaces	299
26		Paisley 10 Glen Lane, Paisley	Owned	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Extended single storey modern office building with car park	418

27		Perth Belhaven House, Marshall Place, Perth	Owned	Hearing Centre 2 storey detached office building constructed during 1960's.	270
28		Selkirk 12 Ettrick Terrace, Selkirk	Owned	Hearing Centre 3 storey stone rubble and slate traditional building, former dwelling house. Listed	119
29		Stirling Enterprise House, Springkerse Business Park Stirling	Leased	Staff Base Short term lease for Our Hearings Our Voice	23
30		Stirling Ochil House, Springkerse Business Park Stirling	Leased	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Ground floor office accommodation in 1990s office within business park development	715
31		Stranraer 10 Market Street, Stranraer,	Owned	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Traditional stone and slate building. Ground floor reconfigured to provide hearing suite	262
32		Stornoway Unit 1A, 9 James Square, Stornoway	Leased	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Part ground floor in building converted to office use.	188
33		Thurso 23 Swanson Street, Thurso	Leased	Staff Base + Hearing Centre Traditional single storey stone and slate covered house	74
34		Tranent Dewar House, 1 Loch Road, Tranent	Owned	Hearing Centre Single storey office purpose built 2001 with car parking	249

Leased Out Property Report

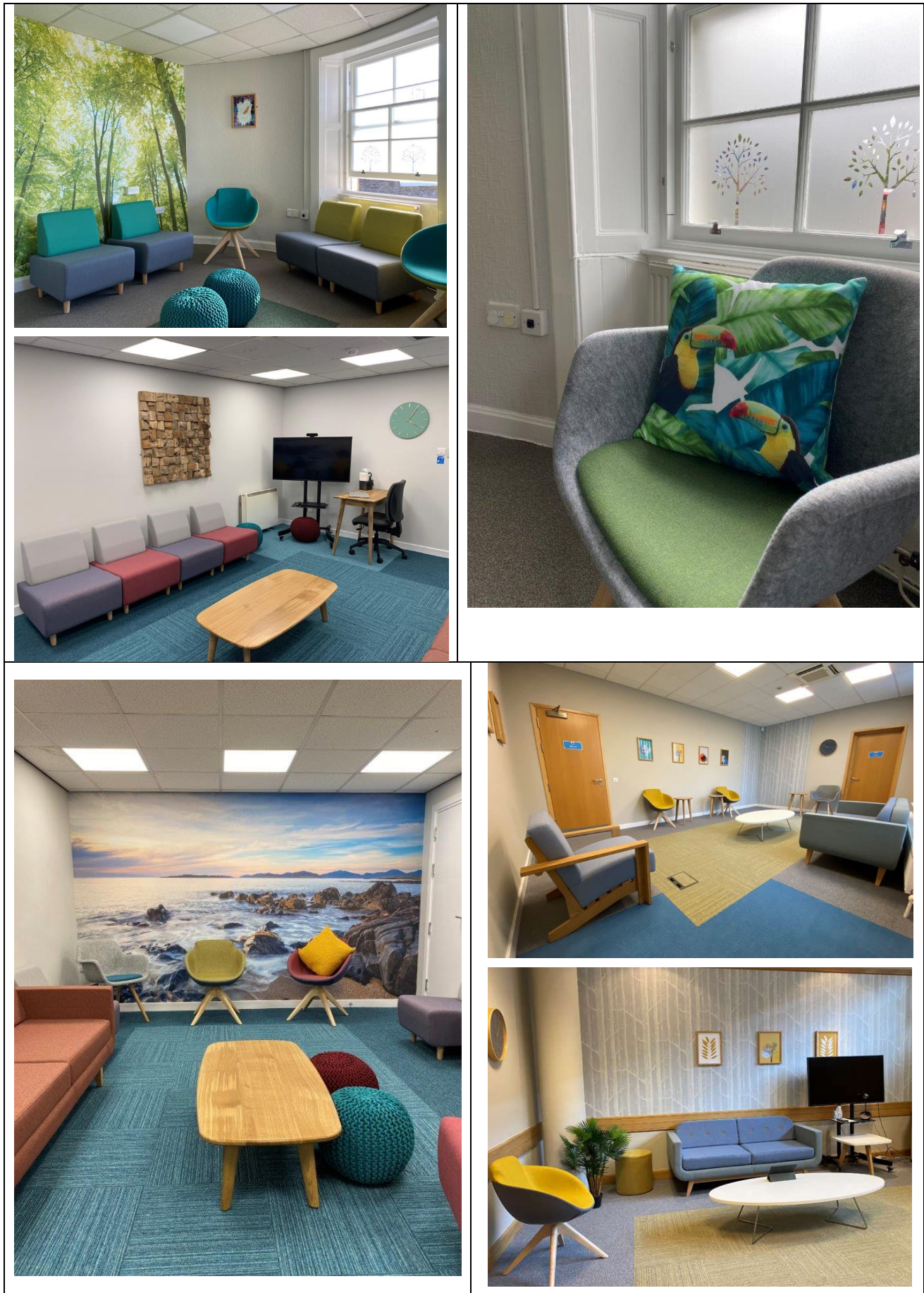
Appendix B

Ref	Property	Unit, Floor or Suite	Tenant	Leased Until	Rent
2	Arbroath - Merrin House, 50 East Abbey Street	1st Floor	Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service	27-May-22	£0
17	Bellshill - 70 North Road		Who Cares? Scotland	27-Aug-21	£5,000
26	Dalkeith - 29 Elmfield Court	First Floor	Spur Trading Ltd	07-May-23	£9,000
4	Elgin - Phoenix House, 1 Wards Road	Part first floor	Care Inspectorate	09-Apr-22	£4,400
5	Falkirk - Campfield House, Wellside Place	1st Floor	MTM Defence Lawyers Ltd	10-Dec-22	£10,000
18	Fraserburgh - 10 Commerce Street	First Floor and Attic	Marine Scotland	31-May-22	£0
7	Hamilton - Hamilton House, Hamilton Business Park, Caird Park,	Part 1st Floor	Police Investigations and Review Commissioner	17-Dec-21	£32,088
27	Kirkwall - East Bank, East Road	Part ground floor	Scottish Natural Heritage	30-Sep-23	£0
23	Lerwick - 13 Hill Lane	First Floor	Care Inspectorate	01-Mar-23	£7,100
10	Lochgilphead - Kilbrandon House, Manse Brae		Scottish Environmental Protection Agency	18-Feb-23	£0
19	Perth - Belhaven House, Marshall Place	First Floor	TGHC (Scotland) Ltd	05-Nov-24	£16,000
11	Stornoway - Unit 9, James Square		Care Inspectorate	17-Nov-25	£7,613
12	Tranent - Dewar House, 1 Loch Road		U Homecare Ltd	23-Aug-22	£8,000
				Rent Total	£99,201
				Estimate of Shared Costs recharge	£100,000
				Total	£199,201

Vacant Space Report

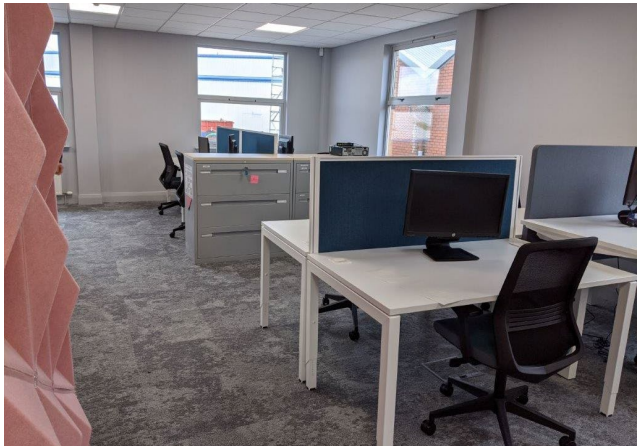
Appendix C

Ref	Property	Unit, Floor or Suite	Area SqM (Net Internal)	Notes
28	Glenrothes - Albany House, 3 North Street	First Floor Offices	436.19	On market, no interest. Potential for space to be reconfigured into separate lettable units. Currently being used to provide additional space for Children's Hearings.
24	Kilmarnock - 21 West Langlands Street	Part Ground Floor	147.42	Not on market, currently being used to provide additional space for Children's Hearings
22	Selkirk - 12 Ettrick Terrace	First Floor	61.89	Not on market and not in lettable condition
20	Stranraer - 10 Market Street	First Floor and Attic	146.62	Not on market and not in lettable condition
		Total	792.12	





<u>Core Estate</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Description</u>	Final Approved (£000)
Aberdeen	Reconfiguration	Minor changes to layout of meeting rooms and admin areas	25
Elgin	Reconfiguration	Hearing suite upgrade and reconfiguration of spaces used by SCRA and Care Inspectorate to support continued colocation	85
Glasgow	Office Upgrade	Additional works to floors 2, 3 and 4 to support smart working and dedicated meeting areas.	100
Glenrothes	Reconfiguration	Feasibility and potentially initial works to open potential uses of first floor area.	20
Hearing Room Alterations	Reconfiguration	In response to coronavirus pandemic (Falkirk identified for work)	80
Livingston	Finance Lease	Capital Element of Rent	45
Paisley	Feasibility	Potential for hearing suite alterations and smart working	15
Stirling	Reconfiguration	Extend Hearing Suite into office space	50
Various	Environment	LED lighting conversions	30
Various	Participation	Hearing Room Improvements – 6 new locations identified	100
Various	Building Fabric Upgrades	Condition Survey Upgrades/ Redecoration	50
Various	Minor Works	Minor Alterations / Equipment Replacement	100
Anticipated Spend			700



The Property KPI was reviewed during 2018/19 and was replaced by new measures for the quality, efficiency and cost effectiveness of our estate.

SCRA's hearing centres are our main public facing facilities and these are the main focus of our attention. Our main quality KPI's , consider the operational suitability of our hearing centres. The additional KPI's set out below are intended to measure the efficiency of how we use property and the cost effectiveness of our estate.

Quality Measures

	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>
1 Percentage of hearing centres that comply with our requirements	63.64%	63.64%
2 The average percentage quality score achieved across the estate	88.43%	88.92%

Efficiency & Cost Effectiveness Measures

	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>
• Vacant Space as a % of Total Space	6.2%	6.3%
• Workstation per FTE	tbc	tbc
• Floor space per FTE	25.3 SqM	23.96 SqM
• Property Occupation Costs as a % of Total Revenue (Gross excluding Income)	12.5%	12.2%
• Property Occupation Costs per SqM	£231.69	£236.88
• Maintenance & Cleaning Costs as a % of Property Occupation Costs	20.6%	17.3%

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

**Annual Procurement Report
1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021**

Accountable Director: Head of Finance and Resources **Date:** 23rd June 2021

Recommendation:

The SCRA Board is asked to:-

- a) Note Procurement activity during 2020/21 in line with SCRA's Corporate Procurement Strategy and the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.
- b) Note the ongoing contribution of the Procurement Strategy to SCRA's ongoing work.

Reason for Report: Procurement Duties requirement.

Resource Implications: Within existing budgets.

Strategy: Procurement Strategy 2020-23.

Equalities Duties Equalities Impact Assessment Required/Completed:

☐

Yes

☒

**No – annual update of
Procurement activity**

Consultation: EMT, SG Procurement.

Document Classification: Not protectively marked.

1. Background Information

- 1.1 In accordance with The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, SCRA is required to publish an Annual Procurement Report which should include:
- A summary of the regulated procurements that have been completed during the period covered by the report;
 - A review of whether those procurements complied with SCRA's Procurement Strategy;
 - The extent to which any regulated procurements did not comply, and a statement detailing how SCRA will ensure that future regulated procurements do comply;
 - A summary of any community benefit requirements imposed as part of a regulated procurement that were fulfilled during the period covered by the report;
 - A summary of any steps taken to facilitate the involvement of supported businesses in regulated procurements during the report period;
 - A summary of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two financial years; and
 - Reporting on other matters as contained within SCRA's Corporate Procurement Strategy.
- 1.2 The report also provides an overview of SCRA procurement performance across the year as well as the range and scope of the Procurement Team work and its criticality to the smooth operation and support of many aspects of SCRA's work.
- 1.3 In addition to the mandatory sections, the report also provides an update on other procurement activity including work in connection with COVID-19, Equalities & Inclusion, Cyber Resilience, Climate Change and the PCIP and Audit recommendations.
- 1.4 A copy of the Annual Procurement Report will be published on SCRA's website and a link will be sent to the Scottish Ministers.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The SCRA Board is asked to:
- a) Note the Procurement activity during 2020/21 and the continued delivery of SCRA's procurement strategy.
 - b) The ongoing contribution of the Procurement Strategy to SCRA's ongoing work.



SCOTTISH

CHILDREN'S REPORTER

ADMINISTRATION

Procurement in SCRA

Annual Procurement Report

For the period
1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

Published June 2021

VERSION CONTROL

VERSION NO.	REVISED BY	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES	DATE
1.0	Helen Mora	First Issued Version	09/06/2021

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Summary of Regulated Procurements Completed
3. Review of Regulated Procurement Compliance
4. Community Benefits Summary
5. Supported Businesses Summary
6. Future Regulated Procurements
7. Non-regulated Procurements Completed
8. Procurement Performance
9. Other Procurement Activities
10. Continuous Improvement Activities
11. Annual Procurement Report Template
12. Ownership and contact details

- Appendix A: Summary of Regulated Procurements Expected to Commence in the next two financial years
- Appendix B: Summary of non-regulated procurements completed
- Appendix C: Annual Procurement Report Template
- Appendix D: Glossary

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About SCRA

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) is a national body focused on children and young people most at risk. SCRA was formed under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994 and became fully operational on 1st April 1996. Our main responsibilities as set out in the Act are:

- To facilitate the work of Children's Reporters
- To deploy and manage staff to carry out that work
- To provide suitable accommodation for Children's Hearings

The Children's Hearings System provides the operational setting in which SCRA and its partner agencies work. The aim is to provide a safety net for vulnerable children and young people, and deliver tailored solutions which meet the needs of the individuals involved, while helping to build stronger families and safer communities.

SCRA's Procurement Strategy 2020-23 was approved by the Board in May 2020 and refreshed in May 2021 for the period 2020 to 2023. The Strategy details the principal aims of SCRA Procurement as follows:

- Deliver a professional and flexible procurement service to both internal managers and external suppliers through an inclusive procurement approach, ensuring that SCRA receives best value for money in the procurement of all goods, services and works in order to deliver an effective and efficient service to children and families.
- Contribute to SCRA carrying out its functions and the achievement of its purposes by ensuring that suitable contracts are in place, in particular to allow the dissemination of information and data and to ensure we have adequate premises for hearings to take place.
- Ensure full compliance with legislation and Public Sector Regulations, in accordance with the General Duties and Sustainable Procurement Duty, giving due regard to SCRA's needs and requirements to ensure operational effectiveness is maximised.
- Ensure SCRA's procurement practices contribute to the Scottish Government's objective for sustainable economic growth and contribute to the achievement of relevant National Outcomes.

The Strategy set out seven priorities for the three years covered by the Strategy. The priorities and progress to date are covered in the table at section 3.2.

The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive was clear in his foreword that the solid approach to procurement, captured in the strategy, allows SCRA Localities and Teams across the country to have the kind of access to specialist support and advice they need, now and in the future, to make wise, best value decisions about goods and services, to benefit from the scale of national contracts and to vision future ways of making things ever more efficient, responsive and adaptable to our changing needs.

1.2 Procurement Vision

Our vision for the future is one where the approach to procurement and contract management is inclusive and fully integrated into our business strategies and a culture of best practice is embedded which will deliver legally compliant procurement processes, ensuring value for money, sustainability, quality services and continuous improvement.

1.3 Publication of Report

This report will be published on SCRA's website at www.scra.gov.uk.

2. SUMMARY OF REGULATED PROCUREMENTS COMPLETED

The following regulated procurements were completed in the period from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

Date of Award	Contract Title/ Subject Matter	Supplier	Total Est. Value (Including Extensions) (Ex. VAT)	Total Est. Value (Excluding Extensions) (Ex. VAT)	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date (Excluding Extensions)
27/04/2020	Legal Services - Property & Related Matters	MacRoberts LLP	£53,333	£26,667	01/06/2020	31/05/2022
18/05/2020	Legal Services – Principal Reporter's Statutory Functions	Anderson Strathern LLP	£483,333	£362,500	01/06/2020	31/05/2023
30/04/2020	FM – Hard & Soft Services (Islands)	FES FM Ltd	£201,117	£100,559	01/05/2020	30/04/2025
30/04/2020	FM – Hard Services (Mainland)	FES FM Ltd	£2,433,275	£1,216,638	01/05/2020	30/04/2025
30/04/2020	FM – Soft Services (Mainland)	FES FM Ltd	£1,891,767	£945,884	01/05/2020	30/04/2025
15/01/2021	Payroll & eHR Software	Insight	£436,000	£311,429	15/01/2021	14/01/2026
31/03/2021	Financial Management Software Solution & Hosting	Softcat Plc	£407,529	£878,664	01/04/20221	31/03/2026
22/01/2021	Virtual Hearings Sandbox (NCA)	Brightwire Technology Services	£59,850	£27,204	22/01/2021	30/06/2021

* The above table does not include contract extensions which were taken during 2020/21.

3. REVIEW OF REGULATED PROCUREMENT COMPLIANCE

3.1 In compliance with Section 15(5) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and published Statutory Guidance, SCRA is now required to set out how it will ensure its regulated procurements will:

- Contribute to the carrying out of its functions and achievement of its purposes
- Deliver value for money
- Be carried out in accordance with the General Duties and the Sustainable Procurement Duty
- Ensure payment of invoices are made no later than 30 days after the invoice relating to payment is presented

3.2 Review of compliance with Corporate Procurement Strategy

Key Priorities	Compliance in 2020/21
1. Ensure full compliance with EU and UK Public Sector regulations	
For all regulated procurements comply with statutory requirements for addressing Fair Work Practices, including payment of a Living Wage	Complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addressed by SPCD and CCS in setting up Frameworks (Legal Services, FM, Financial Management Software Solution.• Statements on workforce matters, CSR, Environmental performance and Sustainability included in ITTs and Evaluation criteria where applicable.
Develop a diverse range of suppliers, including SMEs, Supported Businesses and Third Sector	Complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addressed by SPCD and CCS in setting up Frameworks (as above) and by including SMEs in non-regulated procurements.• Engaged with Supported Businesses re possible low value contract opportunity.
Consider Community Benefit clauses in all contracts for good and services over £50k in value	Complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considered by SPCD and CCS in setting up Frameworks (as above).• One Cat C contract awarded will result in Community Benefits.
Ensure that regulated procurements are carried out in compliance with SCRA's sustainable procurement duty	Complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addressed by SPCD in setting up Frameworks (as above).• Sustainability Test included in Procurement Strategies and

	Evaluation Criteria included in tenders issued, where appropriate.
Comply with SCRA's Health & Safety Policy by ensuring that suppliers comply with relevant regulations and best practice	Complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressed by SPCD in setting up Frameworks and in SCRA tender exercises, where relevant.
Follow SCRA's established approach of consulting and engaging with those affected by its procurements	Complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate SCRA engaged with internal stakeholders either by setting up UIGs or in discussions with business leads..
Ensuring SCRA's contracts deliver value for money	Complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Strategies identify best route to market and ensure demand is justified. Business Cases include whole life costing where appropriate. Opportunities for collaboration actively considered. All regulated procurements tendered via PCS.
Ensuring that SCRA pays its suppliers within 30 days and endeavour to make payment within 10 working days of receipt of a valid invoice	Partly complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in payment performance will be targeted again in 2020/21.
2. Promote continuous improvement	
Develop contract management practices across SCRA	Partly complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSM Guidance was drafted and issued to key Contract Managers for implementation from 1st April 2021.
Develop and train staff involved in purchasing and/or managing contracts and suppliers	Partly complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DP Training carried out in 2020/21. No formal Contract Management training delivered but as above updated CSM Guidance was issued. CSM Training modules have been added to our E-Learning portal for implementation in 2021/22.
Embed the role of the Contracts Review Group in ensuring SCRA receives best value whilst meeting legal obligations	Partly complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal meetings in 2020/21 due to COVID-19 however members were kept updated on changes to Strategy, annual report etc.

Develop relationships with Scottish Government Procurement and identify opportunities for collaborative working with other public bodies	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good relationships with Scottish Government Procurement and collaborated with Police Scotland and other public bodies regarding a British Sign Language Framework.
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3.3 Review of regulated procurements

SCRA's Head of Finance and Resources reviewed all regulated procurements in the period April 2020 to March 2021, as shown in the table above, for compliance with the organisation's Procurement Strategy and Policy.

In summary all eight of our regulated procurements:

- where relevant were tendered via PCS;
- complied with SCRA Procurement Policy thresholds;
- where appropriate, included statements in the ITTs on Fair Work Practices, sustainability including fair and ethically traded goods and payment performance for suppliers and sub-contractors.

Three were awarded under Scottish Government Frameworks, two of which were following a mini competition, three were awarded following a mini competition using a Crown Commercial Services Framework, one was a direct award using another Framework and the virtual hearings sandbox was awarded by NCA.

4. COMMUNITY BENEFITS SUMMARY

4.1 Where relevant, consideration was given to the inclusion of Community Benefit Clauses (CBCs). A question on CBCs was included in the Legal Services contract for Principal Reporter's Statutory Functions and the FM Contracts awarded during the reporting period. These have not yet taken place. The CBCs agreed in the Legal Services contract included:

- Specifically targeting young people who have been unemployed for 6 months or more for their Modern Apprentice Scheme.
- Discussing with their recruitment providers how they could target individuals unemployed for 6 months or more through their general recruitment process, recognizing that they may need targeted support throughout the application, recruitment and induction processes.
- Discussing with SCRA if there were specific schools we would like them to target in the Schools Mock Court Project which they have participated in for the past 5 years, which assigns volunteer Solicitors to pupils to help them develop their communication skills in relation to a mock court case.
- Working with SCRA to develop a plan to fit with our aims in this area.

5. SUPPORTED BUSINESSES SUMMARY

- 5.1 SCRA actively take steps to facilitate contract opportunities for Supported Businesses where possible. One enquiry was made regarding protective screens however due to timescales to obtain Perspex, screens were sourced elsewhere. No contracts were awarded during 2020/21.

6. FUTURE REGULATED PROCUREMENTS

- 6.1 A summary of regulated procurements expected to commence within the next two financial years is included at Appendix A. Details may be subject to change due to budget revisions/resource availability, in particular following the development of the organisation's digital plan for 2021/22 and the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. NON-REGULATED PROCUREMENTS

- 7.1 A summary of non-regulated procurements and contract extensions with an estimated value above £20k, awarded in the reporting period, is included at Appendix B.
- 7.2 In addition c.26 non-regulated procurements below £20k, with a total value of around £235k were awarded in the reporting period.

8.0 PROCUREMENT PERFORMANCE

8.1 Supporting national policies

SCRA and CHS completed the transition to the new and future-proofed digital platform, CSAS, within the year. In addition there was significant investment in infrastructure development, creating wireless connectivity with guest/public access in all SCRA core hearing centres and deployment of hardware to increase digital capability in hearing rooms. The Procurement Team have supported the Digital Programme Manager by providing procurement advice and leading on any tendering requirements.

SCRA's Procurement Team participate in the organisations Environmental Group which leads on environmental reporting and development of environmental initiatives, however no meetings were held in 2020/21. In addition the potential for environmental benefits are considered in procurement exercises and where appropriate sustainability is included as one of the criteria for tender evaluation with bidders advised that sustainability is a key feature of the Procurement Reform Bill and a focus of Scottish Government.

Procurement also contribute to the mandatory environmental reporting by completing the procurement section of the annual Climate Change Report.

8.2 PCIP Healthcheck

The last Healthcheck took place in December 2019. The following recommendations were implemented during 2020/21:

- Introduced a formalised training plan/register for DPOs and training for new DPOs before their delegation is in place to ensure consistent knowledge of commercial and procurement requirements .
- Fraud – Included a section on Fraud within the DPO Training held in November 2020.
- Contract Management – Included a process for gauging the level of risk/contract management in the updated CSM Guidance and developed a formal contract handover document to be completed by the Procurement Lead for all Strategic and Operational contracts, to assist Contract Managers with the measurement and management of suppliers, including information on KPIs, deliverables etc. This will also provide Contract Managers with items to include on the agenda for contract review meetings.

The following outstanding recommendation will be completed in 2021/22:

- Savings & Benefits – A green status was agreed, however, it was recommended that the Benefits Reporting Guidance document is used as a reference for all potential savings going forward. It was also recommended that the softer benefits realised from calling off SG frameworks are also recorded.

8.3 2020/21 Published Spend Data

SCRA's Spend Data for 2020/21 has not yet been published by Spikes Cavell. The following table will be updated once the information is available from Spikes Cavell and before this report is published.

£ Total Spend			£ Core Trade Spend	
?	?	?	?	?
Input Suppliers	De-duplicated Total Suppliers	Duplicate Suppliers	SME Suppliers	Local Suppliers
?	?	?	?	?
Transactions	Avg. spend per supplier	PCard Spend	SME Spend	Local Spend

Key:

Total Spend - the total amount of spend for the 20/21 year.

Input Suppliers - The number of suppliers, before de-duplication.

De-duplicated Total Suppliers - The number of unique suppliers.

Duplicate Suppliers - The number of suppliers which are duplicates of another supplier.

PCard Spend - Percentage of transactions by value of spend that are identified as Purchase Card transactions in the extract.

Transactions - The total number of transactions.

Avg. spend per supplier - The average spend per unique supplier.

Core Trade Spend - Core Trade is a sub-set of your supply base that includes all **Trade Suppliers** and **Social Care Providers** with whom you have spent £1,000 or more in the financial year.

SME Suppliers - Small & Medium sized businesses where the supplier has less than 249 employees or where the annual revenue is less than £22.8m.

SME Spend - Spend with SME as a percentage of Core Trade Spend.

Local Suppliers – Spend with suppliers within the same local authority area as your organisation (based on Postcodes).

Local Spend – Spend with local suppliers as a percentage of Core Trade Spend.

8.4 Contracted Spend

Of the estimated total procurement spend of £4,843,015 in 2020/21, £4,574,284 was contracted spend (including non-regulated contracts). This represented c. 94% of all procurement spend in the year.

Procurement spend is closely monitored by the Procurement Team with support from the Contracts Review Group.

8.5 Spend with SMEs

During 2020/21 37% of SCRA's Core Trade Spend was with SMEs, however, it should be noted that Spikes do not currently have sufficient data from all suppliers on their number of employees, so the SME information is likely to be understated.

Of the eight regulated procurements completed within the reporting period, two were awarded to SMEs. A further four non-regulated contracts above £20k were awarded to SMEs and c. twelve contracts below £20k.

8.6 Invoices paid within 10 working days (Ed)

During the year ended 31 March 2021 SCRA paid 68% of all invoices within the terms of its payment policy.

8.7 Collaborative working

SCRA utilises Scottish Government Frameworks where possible. In addition SCRA occasionally participates in UIGs (SG Mobile, Voice & Data Framework and Police

Scotland's British Sign Language Framework) and works with Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) where possible. We collaborated with CHS on the Internal Audit re-let which SCRA lead during 2020/21. This was awarded early in 2021/22.

8.8 Savings & Benefits

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Scottish Procurement have not yet confirmed the Q4 savings that SCRA made from SCRA's use of Scottish Government collaborative framework agreements, however savings of £174.2k had been confirmed to end of Q3 2020/21. It should be noted that these are not savings which reduce SCRA's costs or help SCRA to operate within the approved level of Grant in Aid so are not counted as efficiency savings.

Savings from SCRA contracts (as distinct from Frameworks above) are captured on SCRA's Savings Tracker. Information on these savings has been captured throughout 2020-21 for regulated and non-regulated procurements, and the accumulated savings, largely based on the difference between the average of all tenders less the winning bid and mainly savings over the 4 year period of the Legal Services contract for PR's Statutory Functions, amount to around £12.8k on the 2 procurement exercises where savings were calculated.

Savings are reported to SCRA's Board in the quarterly Budget Outturn reports.

9.0 OTHER PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES

9.1 COVID-19 Pandemic

During the early part of 2020/21 the Procurement Team were involved in a number of different activities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure business continuity. These included:

- Understanding changes to procurement rules during the pandemic, including arrangements for supplier relief
- An urgent risk assessment of existing contracts to determine how they would be impacted
- Sourcing PPE Equipment for staff returning to offices and face to face hearings resuming
- Purchase of signage, screens etc.
- Purchase of IT equipment for home working and virtual hearings

9.2 Digital Strategy

The Procurement Team have supported the fourth year of the Digital Programme. The main procurement exercise was for the development of new core IT solutions for the Children's Hearings System and a contract was awarded in 2017/18. During 2020/21 the Procurement Team played a key role in the tender exercises for Address Verification Software and Documentation Collation which were awarded in the second and fourth quarters of 2020/21 and in the purchase of hardware and services for creating wireless connectivity with guest/public access in all SCRA core hearing centres and to increase digital capability in hearing rooms.

The Digital Strategy vision is to create a child centred hearing system, staffed with digitally capable volunteers and employees, who confidently utilise digital technologies to improve outcomes for children and young people in Scotland including through enhanced participation and engagement. The Strategy is linked to Scottish Government ambitions for digital transformation.

9.3 Facilities Management

During 2020/21, the Procurement Team worked with the Property Team to finalise the tender documents for three separate Facilities Management contracts. Following an extensive clarification period, all three contracts were awarded in April 2021.

9.4 Equalities & Inclusion (Helen)

The Procurement Officer met with the Inclusion & Diversity Manager to discuss the requirements for completing Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessments (EHRIA) and updates required to the Corporate Procurement Strategy and procurement processes to make these more inclusive.

EHRIAs are now completed for all regulated procurements and the Strategy was recently updated to reflect a more inclusive approach.

The Procurement Officer will continue to work with the Inclusion & Diversity Manager during 2021/22 to introduce further improvements.

9.5 Policy development

In line with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act, SCRA's Procurement Strategy was revised in March 2021 with changes approved by the senior management team.

The Procurement Policy is reviewed every two years and will be updated in 2021/22 and approved by the senior management team.

9.6 Cyber Resilience

In January 2020, the Scottish Government advised that a Supplier Cyber Security Guidance Note had been developed to meet the commitment to develop a proportionate, risk-based policy in respect of supply chain cyber security for Scottish public sector organisations.

The Procurement Officer has been working with the Digital Governance Lead in connection with a scoping exercise to implement the requirements. From 1st April 2020, the Procurement Officers have embedded cyber security in our procurement processes by considering the importance of cyber security before commencing each procurement and where relevant completing the Scottish Cyber Assessment Service decision-making support tool and including relevant wording in tender documentation and Terms & Conditions of contracts.

9.7 Climate Change

In response to SPPN 01/2021 and the call for action on Climate Change, the Procurement Team held a Climate Change Workshop in March 2021 attended by the Head of Property and agreed a number of initial actions to be implemented, including:

- Include narrative about Climate Change in Corporate Procurement Strategy, and if possible Targets & Milestones
- Carry out a review of contract pipeline to help prioritise where to focus resources to reduce emissions, support biodiversity or a circular economy in Procurement Strategies and Specifications before going to market
- Review new Sustainable Procurement Tools and complete Sustainability test for all regulated procurements or others with scope to reduce emissions
- Drive compliance through use of Frameworks which have already considered climate
- Review historical consumption patterns to help prioritise where to best focus resources internally to influence demand management, consumption and associated internal policies and ways of working to reduce emissions, support biodiversity or a circular economy.

9.8 Fraud Risk Workshop

At the end of 2020/21 the Procurement Team attended a Fraud Risk Workshop lead by SCRA's Internal Auditors, BDO. This was arranged to raise awareness to SCRA as fraud is on the increase. It covered some legal aspects and included facts and figures around current fraud risks and the impact on fraud due to the COVID-19 situation.

10.0 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY

10.1 Contract and Supplier Management (CSM)

New CSM guidance was developed during 2020/21 and issued to key Contract Managers.

There is a need to introduce more formality into contract management of critical suppliers in line with findings in the PCIP and Internal Audit review. This will be achieved through implementation of the CSM Guidance in 2021/22.

10.2 Procurement Audit

A Procurement and Contract Management Audit was carried out during December 2019 as part of the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan and process improvement recommendations were implemented in 2020/21. These included:

- Developing a formalised Training Plan for Delegated Purchasers
- Carrying out Delegated Purchaser Training, including Fraud Prevention
- Introducing spot checks to ensure alternative quotes are being obtained by Delegated Purchasers

10.3 Procurement Procedures

In order to keep track of the increasing variety of areas which need to be considered and completed for each procurement, many of which are dependent on the value of the procurement, a Procurement Procedures document has been implemented. This includes both legislative and SCRA requirements.

10.4 Networks and Training

SCRA's Procurement Officers are members of a Cluster Group. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, only one virtual meeting took place during 2020/21, with further communications by email where required. In addition Procurement Officers attended the following events during the reporting period:

- SG 16th National Procurement Conference & Professional Procurement Skills Training Zones (online)
- Scotland Excel Specification Writing online training
- Cyber Assessment Tool Webinar

11.0 ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT TEMPLATE

In accordance with Scottish Procurement Policy Note SPPN 4/2019 an Annual Procurement Report template has been completed and attached at Appendix C.

12.0 OWNERSHIP AND CONTACT DETAILS

The owner of SCRA's Annual Procurement Report is as follows:

Ed Morrison
Head of Finance & Resources
0131 244 8585
ed.morrison@scra.gsi.gov.uk

SUMMARY OF REGULATED PROCUREMENTS EXPECTED TO COMMENCE IN THE NEXT 2 FINANCIAL YEARS

Subject Matter	Type	Expected Contract Notice Publication Date	Expected Award Date	Expected Start Date	Estimated Value of the Contract or Extension
Confidential Shredding Services	Re-Let	01/10/2022	01/02/2023	12/03/2023	£50,000
General Stationery & Office Paper Re-Let	Re-Let	N/A	01/10/2021	01/10/2021	£155,000
Interpreting, Translation & Transcription Services	Re-Let	N/A	12/11/2021	12/11/2021	£650,000
Provision of Postal Services	Extension	N/A	01/09/2021	01/10/2021	£300,000
Supply of Electricity	Extension	N/A	10/02/2023	01/04/2023	£185,000
Water & Waste Water Billing Services	Extension	N/A	10/02/2023	01/04/2023	£58,000
CSAS – (2 nd Year of 1 st Extension)	Extension	N/A	30/03/2022	01/07/2022	£248,771
Independent Accreditor for CSAS	Re-Let	05/01/2022	01/05/2022	01/06/2022	£50,000
Address Verification Software	Re-Let	07/06/2021	01/08/2021	13/08/2021	£62,000
Winter Gritting Services	Extension	N/A	01/09/2022	01/11/2022	£12,827
Supply of Gas	Extension	N/A	01/02/2023	01/04/2023	£36,000
Legal Services - Property	Extension	N/A	01/04/2022	01/06/2022	£16,000

* Note: Contract Extensions shown above are not included in Section 9 of the template at Appendix C. Call Off's from Frameworks are included in the template.

SUMMARY OF NON-REGULATED PROCUREMENTS & CONTRACT EXTENSIONS ABOVE £20K - AWARDED BETWEEN 01/04/2020 AND 31/03/2021

Contract/PO Ref.	Contract Title	Supplier Name(s)	Est. Total Value (ex VAT)	Contract/ Extension Award Date
Agency Agreement	Supply of Electricity (1 st Extension – 2 years)	EDF Energy	£312,000	02/04/2020
Agency Agreement	Supply of Electricity (2nd Extension – 1 year)	EDF Energy	£156,000	01/02/2021
SCRA/2019/18	Postal Services Re-let (Extension)	Royal Mail	£297,000	30/9/2020
SCRA/2017/01	Interpreting, Translation & Transcription Services (Extension)	Global Connects	£163,333	18/11/2020
SCRA/2017/02	CSAS (Variation - 6 month Extension)	Leidos Innovations UK Ltd	£233,000	31/01/2021
SCRA/2017/02	CSAS (1 st Year of Two Year Optional Extension)	Leidos Innovations UK Ltd	£248,771	18/03/2021
SCRA/2018/06	Confidential Shredding (Extension)	Paper Shredding Services	£21,320	08/02/2021
PO ZZ00573	Cisco Room Kit for Virtual Hearings	Computacenter	£41,773	12/8/2020
SCRA/2020/08	Design Consultancy for Hearing Room Improvements	Graham & Sibbald	£31,500	16/09/2020
SCRA/2020/20	Hearing Room Connectivity – Equipment	Computacenter	£32,166	17/12/2020
SCRA/2020/13	Hearing Room Improvement Project (Furniture)	Claremont Office Supplies	£22,700	16/11/2020
PO ZZ00564	Laptops for home working	Hewlett Packard	£29,736	11/06/2020
PO ZZ00569	Laptops for Hearing Rooms	Hewlett Packard	£33,155	09/07/2020
PO ZZ00587	Silverpeak – Broadband Bandwidth Upgrade	Computercenter	£37,889	06/01/2021
SCRA/2020/05	Taking Evidence by Commissioner (2020) (NCA)	Heriot Electronics Ltd (T/a Heriot AV)	£20,800	09/10/2020
PO ZZ00589	Video Conference Equipment for virtual Hearings	Insight	£23,043	22/01/2021
SCRA/2019/28	Workplace Design - Hamilton & Stirling	Space Solutions Ltd (Scotland)	£20,310	22/10/2020

* Notes: Works contracts below £2m are classed as non-regulated.

Annual Procurement Report template

[NOTE: reference to contract is also to be construed as meaning a Framework Agreement]

1. Organisation and report details	
a) Contracting Authority Name	Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
b) Period of the annual procurement report	1 st April 2020 to 31 st March 2021
c) Required by s18 Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 to prepare an annual procurement report? (Yes / No)	Yes
2. Summary of Regulated Procurements Completed	
a) Total number of regulated contracts awarded within the report period	8
b) Total value of regulated contracts awarded within the report period	£5,596,434
c) Total number of unique suppliers awarded a place on a regulated contract awarded during the period	6
i) how many of these unique suppliers are SMEs	3
ii) how many of these unique suppliers how many are Third sector bodies	0
3. Review of Regulated Procurements Compliance	
a) Number of regulated contracts awarded within the period that complied with your Procurement Strategy	8
b) Number of regulated contracts awarded within the period that did not comply with your Procurement Strategy	0
4. Community Benefit Requirements Summary	
Use of Community Benefit Requirements in Procurement:	
a) Total number of regulated contracts awarded with a value of £4 million or greater.	0
b) Total number of regulated contracts awarded with a value of £4 million or greater that contain Community Benefit Requirements.	0
c) Total number of regulated contracts awarded with a value of less than £4 million that contain a Community Benefit Requirements	1
Key Contract Information on community benefit requirements imposed as part of a regulated procurement that were fulfilled during the period:	
d) Number of Jobs Filled by Priority Groups (<i>Each contracting authority sets its own priority groups</i>)	0
e) Number of Apprenticeships Filled by Priority Groups	0
f) Number of Work Placements for Priority Groups	0
g) Number of Qualifications Achieved Through Training by Priority Groups	0
h) Total Value of contracts sub-contracted to SMEs	Not Known
i) Total Value of contracts sub-contracted to Social Enterprises	Not Known
j) Total Value of contracts sub-contracted to Supported Businesses	£0
k) Other community benefit(s) fulfilled	0

5. Fair Work and the real Living Wage

a) Number of regulated contracts awarded during the period that have included a scored Fair Work criterion.	3
b) Number of unique suppliers who have committed to pay the real Living Wage in the delivery of a regulated contract awarded during the period.	3
c) Number of unique suppliers who are accredited Living Wage employers and were awarded a regulated contract awarded during the period.	2
d) Number of unique suppliers who have signed up to the Scottish Business Pledge and were awarded a regulated contract awarded during the period.	Not Known

6. Payment performance

a) Number of valid invoices received during the reporting period.	2161
b) Percentage of invoices paid on time during the period ("On time" means within the time period set out in the contract terms).	68%
c) Number of regulated contracts awarded during the period containing a contract term requiring the prompt payment of invoices in public contract supply chains	To be confirmed
d) Number of concerns raised by sub-contractors about the timely payment of invoices within the supply chain of public contracts	0

7. Supported Businesses Summary

a) Total number of regulated contracts awarded to supported businesses during the period	0
b) Total spend with supported businesses during the period covered by the report, including:	£0
i) spend within the reporting year on regulated contracts	£0
ii) spend within the reporting year on non-regulated contracts	£0

8. Spend and Savings Summary

a) Total procurement spend for the period covered by the annual procurement report.	£4,843,015
b) Total procurement spend with SMEs during the period covered by the annual procurement report.	£? (%age of Core Trade Spend)
c) Total procurement spend with Third sector bodies during the period covered by the report.	Not Known
d) Percentage of total procurement spend through collaborative contracts.	?%
e) Total targeted cash savings for the period covered by the annual procurement report	Not Known
i) targeted cash savings for Cat A contracts	Not Known
ii) targeted cash savings for Cat B contracts	Not Known
iii) targeted cash savings for Cat C contracts	Not Known

f) Total delivered cash savings for the period covered by the annual procurement report	£174,173
i) delivered cash savings for Cat A contracts	TBA
ii) delivered cash savings for Cat B contracts	TBA
iii) delivered cash savings for Cat C contracts	£12,800
g) Total non-cash savings value for the period covered by the annual procurement report	Not Known
<u>9. Future regulated procurements</u>	
a) Total number of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two financial years	4
b) Total estimated value of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two financial years	£917,000

Glossary

Term	Description
Collaboration	When two or more groups of people or organisations engage in procurement work together for mutual benefit (CIPS).
Contract Management	The process of monitoring the performance of a supplier to contract.
Framework Agreement	An agreement or other arrangement between one or more contracting authorities and one or more economic operators which establishes the terms (in particular the terms as to price and, where appropriate, quantity) under which the economic operator will enter into one or more contracts with a contracting authority in the period during which the framework agreement applies.
Critical Suppliers	Those suppliers identified as business critical in terms of risk/value and business continuity.
Procurement Exercise	Full end to end procurement exercise documentation from strategy development to contract & supplier management.
Procurement function	The business management function that ensures identification, sourcing, access and management of the external resources that an organisation needs or may need to fulfil its strategic objectives.
Procurement Journey	Revised public procurement toolkit with guidance and templates on the procurement process or Construction manual when appropriate. The Procurement Journey will be enhanced on an on-going basis with feedback from users and any other identified good practice guidance and tools where appropriate to ensure a standardised approach to the supply base.
Procurement Officer	Individual who spends the majority of their time working in a role that adds value to the quality, cost and effectiveness of the procurement or acquisition of goods, works and services; impacting upon commercial relationships during one or more stages of the procurement cycle and contributing towards best practice contract and supplier management.
Procurement strategy	Strategy for procurement within an organisation (can be called policy).
Public Contracts Scotland	The national advertising portal used to advertise all Scottish Government goods, services or works contract opportunities.
Small Medium Enterprise (SME)	The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro.
Supply Chain	All activities, resources, products etc. involved in creating and moving a product or service from the supplier to the procurer.
Supply Chain Management	The coordinated set of techniques to plan and execute all steps used to acquire raw materials from suppliers, transform them into finished goods, and deliver both goods and services to customers. It includes chain-wide information sharing, planning, resources and performance measurements.
Supported Business	Either the organisation's main aim should be the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged persons, or the contract should be performed within a sheltered employment programme.
Value for Money	An economic assessment by the public sector as to whether a project represents value for money; the optimum combination of cost and quality to provide the required service.
Whole Life Costing	The costs of acquiring goods or services (including consultancy, design and construction costs, and equipment), the costs of operating it and the costs of maintaining it over its whole life through to its disposal – that is, the total ownership costs. These costs include internal resources and overheads.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Communications Strategy and Engagement 2020-2023 – an update

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive

Date: 23 June 2021

Recommendation:

1. To note progress on actions within SCRA's Communications and Engagement Strategy 2020-2023 one year on.

Reason for Report: For Board noting

Resource Implications: Within approved budgets

Strategy: Within approved plans

Consultation: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive

Document Classification: Open

1. Introduction

- 1.1. SCRA's latest three year [Communications and Engagement Strategy 2020-2023](#) was approved by the Board in June 2020. It was launched shortly afterwards and is available on Connect, our staff intranet and our external website.
- 1.2. The Communications and Engagement Strategy aims to ensure SCRA continues to have an integrated approach to communications and engagement, and one that supports the organisations' vision and values.
- 1.3. The Communications and Engagement Strategy is supported by an action plan and this report provides Board Members with an update on actions in the last 12 months which covers the first year of the strategy.
- 1.4. The Board will continue to receive annual updates on the strategy and progress against actions.

2. Internal communications

- 2.1 Internal communications is a key part of the Communications and Engagement Strategy. In the first year of the strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic, successful internal communications was critical. Our strategy utilises a number of communication tools to engage with our internal audience. Here are some of the actions and highlights in 2020/21...
- 2.2 Creation of new sections on Connect, our staff intranet, dedicated to information about COVID-19, including a section on Practice information, general information and wellbeing information (start of April 2020). In addition, we have a suite of FAQs for staff which are regularly updated.
- 2.3 Regular emails and/or issues of the Team Brief sent to all staff covering critical information about our response to the pandemic, Virtual Hearings, then our recovery plan (ongoing throughout 2020/21).
- 2.4 Campaign to highlight Mental Health Awareness Week (May 2020) with a suite of information and variety of materials made available for all staff.
- 2.5 Creation of a brand for CSAS so distinct from CMS and visual reminder for all staff (June 2020).
- 2.6 Use of a variety of tools to engage with staff during the pandemic, such as team WhatsApp groups and virtual team coffee mornings. In the Team Brief, the PR/CE makes a routine offer to attend virtual team meetings and has attended several which have been very well received.

- 2.7 Launch of annual Staff Survey in November 2020 with a specific focus on lockdown, recovery, CSAS and future working. During the year, we have continued to seek feedback from staff via a variety of surveys, including Virtual Hearings, new Chromebooks, shortened COVID social work report template, Teams pilot etc.
- 2.8 On International Women's Day (March 2020) we showcased some of our talent with career case studies from a variety of women in our organisation. The case studies were published on Connect and our external website.
- 2.9 On other key dates, we have highlighted the stories and experiences of staff on Connect, in Healthy Being and the National Reporter including: Care Experienced History Month, Volunteers' Week and Carers' Week.

3. External communications

- 3.1 The Communications and Engagement Strategy highlights that SCRA has a large external audience with a variety of different information needs. During the pandemic, it was critical that we employed a number of communication tools to meet these needs. Actions and successes over the last 12 months are outlined below.
- 3.2 Launch of new Coronavirus section on our website (start of April 2020). From the start of the first lockdown (end March 2020) we started to see a significant increase in traffic to our website. It was important we kept the information on our website as up to date as possible, plus as visible and accessible as possible. We created information for different audiences, with a general Coronavirus section, as well as sections for children, young people and parents/carers.
- 3.3 Design and launch of a brand – RAVHI the Robot to promote information around Virtual Hearings. In addition, a new, detailed Virtual Hearings section on our website was built.
- 3.4 The Press and Communications Team continue to monitor hits to our website and the Board has been provided with several updates. The latest update is attached at Appendix A. We also use the website analytics to check for any gaps, for example if a visitor is searching for a particular topic, we check to ensure it is as visible as possible.
- 3.5 Social media forms a key part of our Communications and Engagement Strategy. We currently use the following platforms to engage with our external audiences: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn. Throughout the pandemic, we utilised these platforms to highlight key messages and information, using visuals, cartoons and animations to give posts more prominence.

- 3.6 During 2020/21, we have also employed social media as a way to promote SCRA's vision and values and to show we are a positive, forward-thinking organisation. We posted on key dates including: Volunteers' Week, Care Experienced Week, Purple Friday, World Children's Day, 50th anniversary of the Children's Hearings System and Living Wage Week.
- 3.7 Partner e-news continues to be published quarterly. This contains a round-up of all our latest news, such as new research reports, corporate reports and our official statistics. This is sent initially to LRMs for local distribution, and is then distributed by the Press and Communications Team to key national partners and people who have signed up to receive the bulletin via our website. It is also available on our website and is publicised via social media.
- 3.8 Partnership – during 2020/21, SCRA has continued to provide communications support to Stand Up For Siblings and the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership. To mark Stand Up For Siblings third anniversary on 9 March 2021 our Press and Communications team created a suite of materials on the Stand Up For Siblings website to mark the milestone. This included a congratulatory message from the then Minister for Children and Young People Maree Todd.
- 3.9 Since the launch of our research report 'Sexual exploitation of children involved in the Children's Hearings System' in November 2020, SCRA has been working with Barnardo's Scotland on a campaign to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation. As well as an initial communication plan to promote the report, a second campaign was launched on CSE awareness day (Thursday 18 March 2021) which included information on our website, on social media and Connect. This included highlighting six case studies from the original research report.
- 3.10 Book gifting partnership – SCRA has teamed up with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and the Scottish Book Trust so that children aged five and under attending Children's Hearings across Scotland will be gifted with a book every time they attend a Hearing. SCRA developed and implemented a communications strategy in conjunction with the Imagination Library to promote this initiative and ensure maximum reach.
- 3.11 Media – there isn't as much emphasis on the traditional media as our previous Communications Strategy. However, we do engage with the media when and where appropriate.
- At the introduction of Virtual Hearings, we were contacted by the BBC and provided information and statistics. This led to a positive piece on Radio Scotland and an article on the BBC website (May 2020).

- In February 2021, SCRA received a request from BBC Radio Scotland to take part in a programme to mark the 30th anniversary since the Orkney abuse case. SCRA had previously taken part in a similar programme to mark the 25th anniversary. Neil Hunter did a pre-recorded interview with BBC presenter Fiona Stalker and it aired on Sunday 28 February as part of a 30 minute long programme. It also included contributions from the NSPCC, as well as archive radio footage. Neil focused on what improvements/changes had been made to child protection since then.
- In March 2021, following a high profile court case, the Herald newspaper featured an article which included numerous inaccuracies about the Children's Hearings System. We felt it was important to respond to the inaccuracies. SCRA and CHS drafted and sent a letter to the editor which was published in full on 28 March.

4. Participation and engagement with children and young people

- 4.1 Engaging in a meaningful way with Hearings-experienced children and young people is a cornerstone of our strategy. Some of our actions and highlights in the last 12 months are detailed below.
- 4.2 SCRA continues to host and support Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV). In addition, we had a more active role from mid December 2020 to 1 April 2021, due to staff changes at OHOV. During this period, we engaged with the young people via the secure BAND platform and held two virtual sessions with them. SCRA continues to provide communications support to OHOV, specifically around the website, social media and design.
- 4.3 Calls to Action – in October 2020, OHOV published The Zine. This contains 40 calls to action for all partners in the Children's Hearings System. SCRA publicly welcomed The Zine (via our website and social media) and also thanked the young people directly. This included a virtual meeting with Neil Hunter, a short, visual report and a cartoon animation letting them know what we had been doing and what we will be doing to answer their calls to action. SCRA's Participation Officer is leading on our ongoing response to the calls to action via a work plan which sits within our Participation Group and that will form part of our Keeping the Promise work.
- 4.4 CSO film for young people - in January 2021 SCRA launched a new film for children and young people about Compulsory Supervision Orders (CSOs). The short film covers what a CSO is, what it means for children and young people and how long it can last. It also covers the right to appeal, advocacy and legal representation and where to get more information. The film was

made at the end of 2020 following strict physical distancing measures. There is also versions available with BSL and subtitles. The idea for the film about CSOs came from young people at Our Hearings, Our Voice and was created in partnership with one of our Hearings-experienced Modern Apprentices.

- 4.5 Advocacy – 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. We developed a communications plan to launch the new website and service externally, including a series of social media visuals/animations. We held two workshops with young people from Our Hearings, Our Voice to get feedback on the website and help us design a poster for Hearing centres. In addition, we got the views of the young people and added a new page on the website with their comments on how advocacy can help. Our Modern Apprentices also worked with us on this.
- 4.6 Subject Access Requests - We worked with Who Cares? Scotland to make our information more accessible and improve how we deal with requests for information, particularly from children, young people and Care Experienced people. We launched a new section on our website, along with a new suite of materials to make it easier for people to understand how to make a request to SCRA to access their information. The materials include: updated full guidance document, leaflet for children and young people, easy read guide, information on our website specifically for Care Experienced people and a jargon buster which explains what words like redaction and data controller mean.
- 4.7 Modern Apprenticeship programme – in January 2021, it was the 10th anniversary of the launch of our Modern Apprenticeship scheme for Hearings/care-experienced young people. We marked the anniversary by announcing the appointment of our latest Modern Apprentice. Our 13th Modern Apprentice joined our North Strathclyde Locality on 8th February. During the two year programme, our new Modern Apprentice will undertake an SVQ in Business Administration and will work with SCRA’s Participation Officer on multiple engagement initiatives such as rolling out the new Hearing room programme, creating a variety of information streams for young people, consultations, training and is already a member of our Participation Group.

- 4.8 SCRA's Hearing Room Improvement Programme is now in its 6th year and to date we have upgraded 30 Hearing rooms. We recently announced plans for the next phase of the programme which we have promoted on our website, our corporate parenting website and social media. In addition, we provided a Q&A style briefing which was published on CHS' website and which they also promoted via social media.
- 4.9 Working with the young people from Proud 2 Care, the Champions Board in Inverclyde, we have re-written and changed the design of the All About Me form (now called Hearing About Me) along with the Going to a Hearing leaflet for young people. Following a series of virtual focus groups, the young people worked with us on the new text and choose the look of the form and leaflet. Our two Modern Apprentices have also been involved with this piece of work.
- 4.10 As part of our planning for the return to face to face Hearings, we held a consultation with young people from Our Hearings, Our Voice, The Fostering Network and the Champion's Board in Aberdeenshire – to understand from them what was important/worrying/unknown in coming back in to Hearings centres and what they wanted us to know and think about. This led to a number of recommendations being implemented, including the design and distribution of more child-friendly COVID-19 posters for Hearing centres and the introduction of takeaway sensory kits and takeaway colouring in kits. You can read our response [here](#).

5. Inclusion and our communications

- 5.1 We strive to ensure our communications are as inclusive and accessible as possible and we are continually making improvements in this area.
- 5.2 Easy read guides – we previously worked with the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability and People First to create our first two easy read guides. We now have a suite of seven online guides for people with learning/literacy difficulties. In the past year we have launched one for Virtual Hearings and one on Compulsory Supervision Orders.
- 5.3 Accessibility and our website – on Global Accessibility Awareness Day (May 2021) we launched a revamped Accessibility section on our website. The information was split into different sections with information for visitors to our site with different needs, such as BSL. In addition, we created a new section which provides information for people applying to work with SCRA who may require some adjustments at interview or once appointed. In addition in December 2020, we revamped the Equalities and Inclusion section on our website, introducing a different layout, making it easier to find key information

- 5.4 Over the past year we have been trying new or refreshed tools to reach our varied audiences, including use of a comic strip and cartoon animations aimed at children, updated podcasts aimed at young people and SCRA partnered with Children 1st's Parentline to offer support to parents and carers of children and young people in the Children's Hearings System. We prepared a training and information pack designed to offer support and information to callers. We also created an information flyer for parents and carers during the pandemic with key contact information. We are also committed to making corporate information more accessible to children and young people (for example with publication of a dedicated annual report for children and young people.)
- 5.5 To mark Sign Language Week (March 2021) we published our new British Sign Language (BSL) action plan. The plan supports our commitments in the Scottish Government's British Sign Language Plan 2017 - 2023 and sets out the actions we intend to take to promote BSL and support BSL users over the period covering 2021 to 2023. A film version of the plan is now available on our website in BSL, with subtitles and with audio. In addition, we now have a short film on our website in BSL format which explains the role of SCRA. The short clip also has subtitles and audio.
- 5.6 To help young children or children with sensory needs prepare for coming to a Hearing, two new guides have been created and launched. The first is a visual story guide for children participating in Virtual Hearings. The second is a pilot visual story guide for children attending face to face Hearings in Glasgow. We plan to introduce this in other locations in 2021/22.
- 5.7 We know from consulting with Hearings-experienced young people, that going to a Hearing can be stressful. We have created a new wellbeing page in both the children and the young people sections of our website, providing information about relaxing before and after a Hearing. This was developed with suggestions by young people from Our Hearings, Our Voice.

6. Recommendations:

- 6.1. To note progress on actions within SCRA's Communications and Engagement Strategy 2020-2023.

Appendix A

SCRA Analytics snapshot – 01.01.21 - 31.05.21



Our Tweets earned 151.0K impressions over this 91 day period

TOP TWEETS

SCRA @ChildReporter Mar 18: On [#CEADay21](#) read Andrew's story [bit.ly/2QgW7dY](#) it shows how boys in particular, can be overlooked as being victims of exploitation by services – Read the full research report - [bit.ly/3bXBFXN](#) [#HelpingHands](#) [pic.twitter.com/ERmzfaRwHZ](#)

Impressions (how many people we have reached) 31,601

SCRA @ChildReporter Apr 29: Excited to unveil our latest batch of Hearing rooms to get a make-over [bit.ly/3xBBqL4](#) [#nomorebigtables](#) [pic.twitter.com/Epspr79X7C](#)

Impressions 7,746

SCRA @ChildReporter Mar 17: Participating in a virtual Children's Hearing? We would love to hear your views afterwards. We have launched a new feedback survey [bit.ly/2P2QJKV](#) [@CHScotland](#) [#virtualhearing](#) [pic.twitter.com/ITIsP0ZTBs](#)

Impressions 6,623

SCRA @ChildReporter Mar 2: Participating in a Virtual Children's Hearing? We have created a new section on our website to help you. Plus RAVHI the

robot will be there to guide you through your Virtual Hearing journey ↗

bit.ly/3sIXnoe pic.twitter.com/IBJfbIXxXS

Impressions

6,594

SCRA @ChildReporter Mar 18: On #CEADay21 learn about Jasmine's story which shows how a child's need to be loved results in them being targeted by adults for the purposes of exploitation ↗ bit.ly/3lra9Fc read the full report - bit.ly/3bXBFXN #HelpingHands

pic.twitter.com/3PVeGL7BVu

Impressions

5,182

SCRA @ChildReporter Mar 19: Going to a face to face Children's Hearing & need some extra help? Check out our film for young people with autism ↗ youtu.be/tP7WIXt1xE Remember to pick up one of our sensory takeaway kits too #NeurodiversityCelebrationWeek

pic.twitter.com/NV584hJ2bl

Impressions

4,985

SCRA @ChildReporter Apr 1: Participating in a Virtual Hearing? We have created an easy read guide ↗ bit.ly/3mhMffR. We are also working with young people to create a visual Virtual Hearings story guide for autistic children & young people. It will be published soon

#WorldAutismAwarenessWeek pic.twitter.com/eWopiMuM77

Impressions

2,194



Facebook

1102

Total Page views

43,369 impressions

New page followers

121

Increased to 825 followers on Facebook.

Everything posted organically by SCRA (no paid for posts)

Top Posts

Loving our new look Hearing rooms. Six more have said bye bye to the big table!

3182

Bundles of amazing free books for children under 5 have been delivered to our Hearing centres this week. Massive thank you to [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#) for making this happen. If you are bringing a young child to a Hearing, make sure they get one of these fabulous books. Plus you can sign them up to get a free book delivered every month!
[#freebooks](#) [#DollysLibrary](#)

2619 views

We are looking for an Accountant to join our small Finance team. The post involves budget monitoring, reporting to management and the Board, liaising with auditors and the preparation of statutory financial statements. Find out more - <https://bit.ly/3xuoO8e>

2332 views



Instagram (30 days snapshot)

982 followers

Six more hearing rooms – 294 impressions

Pick up a sensory kit – 261 impressions

Proud to support purple Friday - 248 impressions

Film for young people about CSO - 240 impressions

Audience Age range:

13-17 1.2%

18-24 8.9%

25-34 28.9%



LinkedIn

Bundles of amazing free books for children under 5 have been delivered to our Hearing centres this week. Massive thank you to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for making this happen. If you are bringing a young child to a Hearing, make sure they get one of these fabulous books. #thankyou #community

763 impressions

Excited to unveil our latest batch of Hearing rooms to get a make-over.
Find out more - <https://bit.ly/3xBBqL4>

525 impressions

We are recruiting a Communications Assistant! A fantastic opportunity to join our Press and Communications Team. Find out more here
- <https://bit.ly/3uyMXZO> #communicationsjobs

430 impressions

799

Total followers



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

SCRA website (www.scra.gov.uk)

Page views

116,243

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

7,850 views

<https://www.scra.gov.uk/about-scra/role-of-the-reporter/>

4,909 views

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

3,380 views

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

3,039 views

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

2,677 views

<https://www.scra.gov.uk/virtual-hearings/>

2,384 views

61.7% DESKTOP USERS

34.8% MOBILE PHONE USERS

3.5% TABLET USERS

Direct to website - 76%

Via social media 24%

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS 2020-21

Accountable Director: Head of Practice & Policy

Date: 23 June 2021

Report Author: Information & Research Manager

Recommendation:

1. To note the report.

Reason for Report:	To provide an annual report to Board as requested in June 2014.
Resource Implications:	None.
Strategy:	SCRA Complaints Procedure
Consultation:	EMT.
Document Classification:	Sensitive.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 SCRA's Complaints Handling Procedure has been in place since 2011 and follows the model provided by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). Its main features are to allow:
- More pro-active recording of issues as complaints
 - Greater resolution at front line
 - Greater visibility of issues of learning
- 1.2 The Board and EMT have asked for annual reports on complaints. This is the report on complaints received by SCRA in 2020-21. Following the Board meeting, this report will be shared with Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS), and with SCRA Locality Reporter Managers and Head Office Managers.
- 1.3 An internal audit of SCRA's complaints process was carried out in February and March 2021. This found a moderate level of assurance and made seven recommendations related to: complaints process, complaints logging, complaints sign off, independent review of complaint and finding, complaints root cause, and lessons learned and actions. These recommendations have been implemented from 1st April 2021, and will be reflected in the review of complaints for 2021-22.

2. Number and sources of complaints requiring further investigation (stage 2 complaints) in 2020-21

- 2.1 The number of complaints to SCRA over the last eight years is as follows:

Year	Complaints
13/14	72
14/15	42
15/16	54
16/17	28
17/18	39
18/19	40
19/20	61
20/21	36

- 2.2 There were 36 complaints received in 2020-21 which required further investigation. The majority (77%) of them were from parents or solicitors representing parents:

Source of complaint	Number of complaints	%
Parents	25	69%
Solicitor	3	8%
Foster carers & prospective adopters	3	8%
Member of public	2	6%
Other relatives	1	3%
Advocacy worker (one for a child)	1	3%
Victim of an offence	1	3%
Total	36	

2.3 As with previous years, SCRA received no direct complaints from children and young people.

3. Localities and number of complaints

3.1 All localities received at least one complaint that required further investigation:

Locality	Number of complaints	%
Ayrshire	6	17%
Central	2	6%
Glasgow	4	11%
Grampian	3	8%
Highlands & Islands	1	3%
Lanarkshire, Dumfries & Galloway	6	17%
North Strathclyde	4	11%
South East	6	17%
Tayside & Fife	2	6%
National/Head Office	2	6%
Total	36	

3.2 The two complaints about Head Office were from members of the public and related to 1. SCRA's use of pronouns in a response to a freedom of information request, and 2. an image of a young person used on SCRA's Twitter page. Neither were upheld.

Five complaints related to the Victim information Service (VIS). None were upheld.

3.3 Just over a half of these complaints (21, 58%) were dealt with by Locality Reporter Managers (LRMs). Fifteen complaints (42%) were dealt with by Head Office Managers, these tended to be complaints related to data protection, the VIS or were particularly complex.

4. Types of complaints

- 4.1 Complaints are categorised into broad types. The types of Stage 2 complaints received in 2020-21 are shown below:

Complaint type	Number of complaints	%
Referral and reporter decision	5 (all VIS related)	14%
Children's Hearings process and or administration	9	25%
Data protection related	6	17%
SCRA staff conduct/customer relations	3	8%
Equalities	1	3%
More than one type	9	25%
Virtual Hearings	2	6%
unclear	1	3%
Total	36	

5. Complaint resolution

- 5.1 SPSO guidance and SCRA's Complaints Procedure is that where the matter can be resolved quickly and informally this should be done at the **front line** (stage 1 complaints) and only reported where the issue might have national significance. Six complaints were reported to have been dealt with at the front line, and all within the 5 day timescale. The number of complaints resolved at the front line is likely to be higher as they could be dealt with without having to be reported.
- 5.2 Of the 36 complaints that required **further investigation** (i.e. could not be resolved at the front line) – all except one have been closed. One is still outstanding as we are waiting on clarification from the complainant.
- 5.3 Of the 35 closed complaints that required further investigation:
- 25 (71%) received an **acknowledgement** within 3 days, and nine did not, and one wasn't acknowledged.
 - 32 (91%) received a **response** within the required timescale of 20 days, and three took longer. For two of the delayed responses an extension was agreed with the complainant; the third was delayed due to staff absence.
- 5.4 The majority of stage 2 complaints were **not upheld** (25, 71%); and this is a similar proportion to previous years. Four were partly upheld (11%) and five (14%) were upheld (one complaint was referred onto Children's Hearings Scotland), and these are summarised below:

Complaint summary	Outcome
Related to a breach of Non Disclosure and impact on complainer and their family	Upheld
Hearing having to be deferred because papers were not sent to Panel Member	Upheld
Hearing date being changed and parent not informed	Upheld
Hearing papers sent to wrong address	Upheld
Failed to send acknowledgement of a referral	Upheld
Delay in arranging a Hearing	Partly upheld
Conduct of a member of staff towards a parent	Partly upheld
Correspondence being sent to the wrong address, the investigation not being timeously conducted, lack of communication and failure to comply with legislative or best practice timescales	Partly upheld
Certain information not being included in Hearing papers, attendance and technical difficulties at Virtual Hearing	Partly upheld

- 5.5 Where a complaint is not upheld or partly upheld, the complainant is advised that they may contact the SPSO. There was one referral made to the SPSO on a complaint made in 2020-21 that was not upheld by SCRA. In this case the SPSO decided not to investigate:

Complaint summary	SPSO decision
How the SCRA and those they instructed dealt with this referral is the matter that requires investigating	The SCRA form part of the Criminal Justice system in Scotland. As such, decisions on whether or not to proceed from a referral to a grounds hearing, cannot be investigated by the Ombudsman, as they are excluded from their powers of investigation under the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act (2002). SCRA have clearly and comprehensively explained their investigative process and the evidence they based their decision on.

5.6 *Vexatious and repeated complaints*

One complainant made two separate complaints in 2020-21. Both of these complaints were upheld.

Three complaints were deemed as vexatious in line with SCRA's Complaints Handling Procedure. Two were because the complainants had repeatedly contacted SCRA on these, and other, matters which were found to be unsubstantiated. The third was because we considered the complainant's actions, behaviour or language to be unacceptable.

These three individuals' contact with SCRA is dealt with in accordance with SCRA's Unacceptable Behaviour and Dignity at Work Policies and is restricted to the Information Governance Team.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The Board is invited to note this report.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Influencing Report: 1st December 2020 to 31st May 2021

Accountable Director:	Head of Practice and Policy	Date:	23 June 2021
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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>
Document Classification:	<i>Open</i>

Report Contents:

Introduction.....	2
Pending legislation & Parliamentary Work	4
Other Consultation Responses.....	10
Current partnership & collaborative work	12
Research	15
Additional Work	15
Other Influencing Work & Training	19

1	Introduction
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 twentieth such report and covers the period 1st December 2020 to 31st May 2021.</p> <p>Like the nineteenth report, this report covers a further 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 following CSAS migration and roll out.</p> <p>Melissa Hunt (Policy and Public Affairs Manager) was temporarily re-deployed in the South East Scotland Locality Team from the week beginning 16th March to the end of December 2020 where the focus of her work was largely operational and she was extensively involved in CSAS training and migration in South East Locality as a digital lead / peer supporter. At the beginning of 2021 Melissa maintained some contact with South East Locality (one day a week) until Easter.</p>
1.2	<p>There are hyperlinks in this 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> <p>We hope the information contained in this report is relevant and useful and would be happy to alter the structure / content / format of the report if the Board felt that any changes would be beneficial at the current time.</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. This has not been possible during the pandemic and will not be possible until the Scottish Government buildings are back up and running 'normally'.</p> <p>Melissa has positive working relationships with officials in the Scottish Government and continues to be engaged in informal and formal dialogue and through informal and formal consultation with SCRA, when relevant. Melissa 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> <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. Alastair has maintained strong regular contact with Scottish Government colleagues and other partners throughout the pandemic as a result of the fast pace of change.</p> <p>Melissa Hunt and Alistair Hogg have responded to a number of Government queries; Alistair and Melissa have been involved in discussions about Family Group Decision Making (FGDM); the guidance in relation to the application of the Forensic Medical Services (Sexual Assault) Scotland Act for Reporters and are both involved in ongoing discussions about Advocacy services for children in the Children's Hearing. Melissa and Amy Farmer (CHS) have a standing invite to attend the National Advocacy Service Providers Network as and when that may be useful and have been involved in a question and answer session with representatives of the Network. Melissa and Amy are happy to be involved with the providers Network as and when the Network sees fit.</p> <p>Melissa Hunt is also a member of the Scottish Child Policy Officers Network (CPON) and is kept up to date on national views / discussions through that group.</p>
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1.4	<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 develop 'LRM Briefings' in respect of SCRA's position on national consultation exercises where we are not preparing a full response. The approach has been expanded and was recently used to inform LRM's and Head Office Managers about the current Policy and legislative landscape:</p> <p>We have now tentatively titled this briefing 'In the Picture' and we think it provides a really useful vehicle for SCRA to send out key messages at certain times. We are currently drafting a briefing note on our approach to The Promise and on changes to Recording Permanent Placements in CSAS (although that may develop into a Practice Note).</p> <p>Informal feedback suggests that this approach is useful – and Melissa Hunt continues to be contacted by SCRA staff members about consultation exercises that are live in their locality area.</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>
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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 continue to find the provisions useful and use 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 gathered data 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 28th May 2021.</p>
2.3	<p>United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill 2020</p> <p>This Bill was unanimously passed by the Scottish Parliament on 16th March 2021. However, the UK Government is challenging aspects of the legislative competence of the Act and dates have been set for the case to be heard at the Supreme Court on 28th and 29th June 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. SCRA, COPFS and Police Scotland are currently in discussion about a co-ordinated approach to Scottish Government in relation to expert advice, support and training in relation to the practical aspects of incorporation.</p>
2.4	<p><u>Public Petitions Committee</u></p> <p>Some Relevant Current Business:</p> <p>Inquiry into mental health support for young people in Scotland</p> <p>Open Petitions:</p> <p>PE1838: Regulation of non-statutory child advocacy services</p> <p>PE1692: Inquiry into the human rights impact of GIRFEC policy and data processing</p>

2.5	<p><u>The Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Act 2020</u></p> <p>The Act makes provision for a Female Genital Mutilation Protection Order (FGMPO). The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act has been amended at section 62 (5) with insertions after 62 (5) (p) of additional sections (q) (r) (s) (t) (u) enabling a court considering an FGMPO to refer information in respect of case to the children's hearing.</p>
2.6	<p><u>The Children (Scotland) Act 2020</u></p> <p>The Bill for this Act was introduced on 2nd September 2019. The Bill for this Act of the Scottish Parliament was passed by the Parliament on 25th August 2020 and received Royal Assent on 1st October 2020.</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>There is a lot of multi-agency work ongoing in relation to this Act and the provisions in sections (13) and (14) and (25) and (26) come into force on 26th July 2021.</p> <p>Other aspects of the Act and the Family Justice Modernisation Strategy (child contact centres and child welfare reporters) are currently subject to Scottish Government consultation (extended to July as a result of the impact of pre-election guidance). SCRA are considering whether to respond to these consultations.</p>
2.7	<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>

2.8	<p><u>Children (Equal Protection from Assault) Act 2019</u></p> <p>The Act became law on 7th November 2019 and SCRA <u>welcomed it online</u> 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: <u>https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/building-a-rewarding-relationship-with-your-child</u>.</p>
2.9	<p><u>The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020</u></p> <p>The Bill for this Act was introduced on 12th June 2019. The Bill for this Act of the Scottish Parliament was passed by the Parliament on 10th June 2020 and received Royal Assent on 14th July 2020. The Act has not yet been fully implemented.</p> <p>Alistair Hogg gave oral evidence to the Education and Skills Committee on 13th November 2019. His oral evidence can be read here: <u>http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12368&mode=pdf</u></p> <p>And viewed here: <u>https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/education-and-skills-committee-november-13-2019</u></p> <p>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. Melissa Hunt has been in contact with Disclosure Scotland Colleagues to look at how we can develop our statements of fact in relation to section 67 (2) (j) offence ground referrals to make any disclosure repercussions as clear as possible; we are also looking again at the information we supply to children and families in respect of offence grounds.</p> <p>This is not yet finalised but will be circulated to SCRA staff alongside a news item on CONNECT.</p>

2.10

Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Act 2021

The Forensic Medical Services Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament on the 26th November 2019. The Bill for this Act of the Scottish Parliament was passed by the Parliament on 10th December 2020 and received Royal Assent on 20th January 2021.

Alistair Hogg had been due to give evidence in relation to the Bill on March 24th 2020, but the UK and Scottish Government Covid 19 response meant the Health and Sport Committee took evidence virtually, through the use of technology and with one witness per session.

Instead of personal evidence SCRA supplied additional written evidence.

We have already supplied written evidence to the committee, and this is on the SCRA website here.

Guidance in relation to the Act is currently being developed and we are in touch with the Scottish Government Team in relation to this. It is a complicated area and our recent feedback is included here in full (dated 14th April 2021):

"This is a really complicated area – and one where we have had concerns since the initial pre-bill consultation.

However, where we are now is that pre-16 child protection procedures will be followed and post-16 there is the option of self-referral as well as Police referral.

The reality is that we are not yet progressing referrals for 16 & 17 yr olds who are not on a CSO, although we do deal with this group when they are on a CSO. Crucially, being on a CSO would not 'remove' any right from an individual aged 16 or 17 to choose to self-refer rather than police refer – and this needs to be clearly explained.

In order to assess the evidence in relation to an offence referral it is entirely possible we would need the forensics before any hearing occurs. I think the Act and the protocol allows SCRA to be read alongside SPA / COPFS – but maybe that needs to happen throughout the protocol document in relation to cases that become Police Referral cases (and where the chain of evidence may need to be established in Court to the criminal standard of proof by us or by COPFS).

There is a further complication though – there may be cases for 16 & 17 yr olds who self-refer, who do not want a Police referral but who are referred to the Reporter by professionals for care and protection reasons. In such cases I think we would be unable to access any 'evidence' stored by the HSCP unless a Police referral was made, even if this could allow us to provide protection through the children's hearing (this will depend on the threshold for determining the exceptional cases where the Police must be involved as a result of the public interest – covered at 10.3 of the protocol).

It feels like there needs to be something that clearly explains this – and the potential interface between adult and child protection processes – and the protocol doesn't really do that (although it does explain recourse to IRD). I think we may be in the same position as the Police and require to ultimately get a warrant to secure the evidence if that is necessary – but suspect that is not something we would actively pursue given the ethos of the legislation and the re-trauma that could be caused by our acting in this way. For a child already on a CSO the imperative for us to act is different than it would be for a 16 or 17 yr old referred and not on an order – in the future this may need to be revisited."

2.11

[The Coronavirus \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#)

This emergency piece of legislation has been used since coming into force on the 7th April. It remains in force until September 2021.

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.

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.

The Coronavirus Act reporting commitment is considerable and the task of reconciling live data across two case management systems has been a huge undertaking for Donald.

The Scottish Government Report can be found here:

[Report 1](#)

[Report 2](#)

[Report 3](#)

[Report 4](#)

[Report 5](#)

[Report 6](#)

Joint CHS / SCRA reports can be found here:

[Report 1](#)

[Report 2](#)

[Report 3](#)

[Report 4](#)

[Report 5](#)

[Report 6](#)

Report 7 has been drafted but we don't yet have a publication date.

SCRA continued to operate throughout the pandemic making use 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. The provisions will come to an end on 30th September 2021, with some transitional rules to allow the transition back to normal legislation and rules

2.12	<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 have been 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, and Neil Hunter sits on the ACR Programme Board. We also have representatives on 2 of the working groups reporting to the Advisory Group, and our research is ongoing into offending by 12 to 15 year olds. The current estimated implementation date for the full provisions of the Act is October 2021.</p>
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4	Other Consultation Responses
4.1	<p>Secure Care Pathways and Standards</p> <p>Published by the Scottish Government on 5th October 2020 and can be read here.</p> <p>An LRM Briefing in relation to the standards was developed following a request by LRM Alan Mulrooney in Ayrshire and circulated to all LRM's.</p>
4.2	<p>Youth Justice Standards</p> <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>In summary, SCRA warmly welcomed 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	<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 public consultation about the reviewed Guidance closed 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>SCRA's response to the consultation on the Guidance is online and can be read here.</p> <p>The Guidance is due for publication in June and SCRA have volunteered to be involved in any further work that may be required in respect of the national implementation of the Guidance.</p>
4.4	<p>The Office of National Statistics Survey on Exploring the feasibility of a survey measuring child abuse in the UK</p> <p>SCRA responded to this feasibility study. Dr Gillian Henderson, Indiya Kurlus, Melissa Hunt and Alistair Hogg were all involved in drafting our response which can be read online here.</p> <p>The ONS has been back in touch with SCRA on 24th May 2021 to ask for a meeting, to discuss our survey response and views in more detail. Melissa Hunt, Indiya Kurlus and Gillian Henderson are meeting with colleagues from the ONS.</p>
4.5	<p>Raising the Age of Referral to the Principal Reporter</p> <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 helpfully in this discussion.</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 has chaired a multi-agency group to examine and prepare for the possibility of all 16 & 17 year olds coming into the children's hearing system and this group is currently preparing to report to Scottish Government with recommendations on the potential implementation of this proposal.</p>

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>Online Training – developed for North Lanarkshire</p> <p>Melissa Hunt and Elaine Adams have worked with partners in training & development and frontline services in North Lanarkshire Council to re-design our 'Making & Justifying Recommendations to a Children's Hearing' training as an online / virtual training session.</p> <p>The training is now divided into three distinct sessions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) a voiced PowerPoint presentation on the legal position and the approach to making and justifying a recommendation in a social work (or other) written assessment, along with how to present that recommendation in person; 2) a series of case studies to focus on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) where intervention COULD HAVE occurred; b) how the children's views are gathered and presented; c) practise writing & justifying recommendations. 3) an online 'event' which will take one of the case studies and deliver a 'mock' children's hearing in the case – focussed very much on making and justifying a recommendation. <p>The online aspects of the training are hosted on the CHIP website and can be accessed here (deliberately 'hidden' at the bottom of the page – so that the training can't just be picked up and is centrally resourced and supported by us).</p> <p><u>Social workers Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (chip-partnership.co.uk)</u></p> <p>The availability of the resource has been communicated to all LRM's. After Elaine and Melissa have been involved in the initial 'online' course the plan is to engage the Locality Teams in taking this work forward alongside the Local Authority, so that we can focus on other LA areas who may be interested in the training.</p>
5.3	<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>

5.4	<p>Restorative Approaches</p> <p>Melissa Hunt is involved in a multi-agency group considering wider restorative approaches. Currently two young people are taking some content and transforming it into a 'comic book' style presentation that could be an informative leaflet or poster.</p> <p>Neill Mitchell continues to be involved in work to specifically progress the Scottish Government Restorative Justice Action Plan and he has provided information from the planned SCRA practice note for Reporters to align with the information contained in the above work.</p>
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Children's Rights

SCRA's work on children's rights is a cornerstone to our work on Keeping the Promise. All of this work is intended to inform our approach and will develop alongside other learning from Covid19 Recovery and Better Hearings. None of this work is static – it is all intended to be dynamic and for there to be a dynamic interplay between different strands of the approach. This rights work is a 'starter for ten' – so please approach it with that in mind.

Melissa Hunt and Elaine Adams (CELCIS CHIP Learning and Development Lead) are currently working on a blog piece for the Oxford Human Right Hub and a journal article for the Scottish Journal of Residential Childcare September edition.

The 'plan' for SCRA's children's rights work has been developed and is currently with SCRA's Equality Review Group (ERG) for consideration of the Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA). The documents are not yet published but are included here for reference / interest. The Board may be interested to look at the EHRIA – the template for our impact assessment tool has been developed / refined and there is now an option to select between a full or a short version of the EHRIA. There is a document to help people to select which EHRIA tool to use. There is a lot of interest in SCRA's approach to this work as well – and we are developing a briefing note to explain the approach and the developments we have made to the approach at the start of this year.

EHRIA is one of the key approaches we have to embedding a rights respecting approach across our work. We hope that the developments we have made to the tools we use will increase awareness and understanding.

SCRA are also developing an innovative and forward thinking Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy (RICP). This strategic approach will be a key delivery vehicle for The Promise and for the legislative change that may come our way in this current session of the Scottish Parliament. The reporting structure in relation to the RICP will be 'RICY's' Report Card - SCRA's Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Year and it will fall within the governance of The Promise. We plan to combine previous report formats into a single, streamlined document and to integrate reporting on rights. We will establish a baseline 'rights audit' to be followed up annually in subsequent years, so we can demonstrate progress and refine our approach as our knowledge, confidence and expertise develops across the service.

We also have a 'Your Rights' Project underway – the first 'Project' set up in the way we hope to deliver actions under the RICP strategy. Melissa Hunt has been in discussion with experts in relation to 'Parent Advocacy' in Scotland and the USA who are prepared to act as our 'critical friend' in this work She is also in contact with people in New Zealand.

6	Research
6.1	<p>There are no updates from Information & Research that weren't covered in the recent report to the Board.</p> <p>SCRA and Barnardo's Scotland research, and accompanying policy paper, on 'Sexual Exploitation of Children Involved in the Children's Hearings System' on 26th October 2020 can be read in full here.</p> <p>The Policy paper can be read here.</p>

7	Additional Work
7.1	<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>
7.2	<p>Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP)</p> <p>Core CHIP members have been meeting regularly every Tuesday afternoon in the Children's Hearings COVID Recovery Group– and Alistair Hogg alongside other senior SCRA staff members has attended these meetings.</p> <p>The large CHIP group started meetings again in 2021. Focus has been on recovery from the pandemic, the potential increase in the age of referral, Better Hearings, OHOV and the Promise.</p>
7.3	<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>

7.4	<p>Children’s Hearing – Training for schools / information for staff and pupils</p> <p>This work has been fully re-visited in 2021 and has been combined with work alongside Education Scotland in relation to the resources available for Education Staff through their National Improvement Hub.</p> <p>Melissa Hunt and Elaine Adams have been involved with Education Scotland and other colleagues in developing content for two areas of the National Improvement Hub:</p> <p>The Childrens Hearing: What Educational Practitioners Should Know</p> <p>Supporting Learners at risk of, or in conflict with the Law</p> <p>We have also developed our teaching and learning resource, which is with Education Scotland and has been circulated to interested Secondary Schools and Local Authorities.</p> <p>Melissa Hunt has begun work on a Primary School Resource, based around a series of short stories. Midlothian Champions Board and Our Hearings, Our Voice have seen these stories and are looking to develop / illustrate them. This work will take some time – if Board Members would be interested in the suite of stories so far these can be shared.</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.</p> <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 offer.</p> <p>SCRA’s Press and Communications Team worked with the Government Advocacy Team to design and deliver a national website and SCRA has amended the key statutory notifications we send to children and relevant persons to include information about the availability of advocacy services. The use of these services has been steadily increasing since November 2020.</p>

8	Horizon Scanning
8.1	<p data-bbox="293 248 638 282">Other legislative Reform</p> <p data-bbox="293 315 1447 450">There is a new session of the Scottish Parliament which will bring new legislative reform. We have already heard talk of an Inclusive Communications Bill and the SNP Manifesto commitments as listed below will all potentially impact on the work of SCRA (list is not exhaustive):</p> <ul data-bbox="341 454 1426 1317" style="list-style-type: none"> • to provide every child with a digital device and a free internet connection; • create a citizen assembly for under 16's; • to progress incorporation of four additional UN treaties; • to improve CAMHS service provision and increase funding; • to establish the minimum income guarantee; • to tackle child poverty; • to end homelessness; • to deliver the Gypsy Traveller Action Plan; • to support victims and for child witnesses to have a 'Bairns Hoose' available to every child victim or witness by 2025; • to review Scotland's Prosecution System to deliver fairer, faster and more effective justice; • to put culture at the heart of recovery; • to tear down barriers to education • and crucially to review the Children's Hearing System over the course of the next Parliament to ensure the principles of Kilbrandon and the Care Review are fully realised. <p data-bbox="293 1339 1447 1435">SCRA needs to invest in resourcing the approaches we take to the change ahead effectively and fully in order to deliver for our people and for children and families who are affected by our work.</p>
8.2	<p data-bbox="293 1487 655 1520"><u>Independent Care Review</u></p> <p data-bbox="293 1554 1241 1588">Reported its findings in a series of reports at the beginning of 2020.</p> <p data-bbox="293 1621 1447 1718">Key members of SCRA staff have been engaging with key members of The Promise Delivery team. The Promise has an ambitious ten year delivery plan – and Plan 21-24 sets out the current focus for work.</p> <p data-bbox="293 1751 1447 1823">SCRA are fully invested in this work and keen to be able to see and plan for the short, medium and long term impact of what delivering The Promise will mean.</p> <p data-bbox="293 1856 1447 1928">Board members will have separate sessions looking at The Promise, so this report will not go into detail on the work SCRA has been doing.</p>

8.3	<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>This change will need to ramp up in order to the meet the SNP Manifesto commitment as detailed above by 2025.</p> <p>Alistair Hogg is part of a steering group set up by Children 1st to deliver on the Barnhaus vision. This group has met once and will meet again in June.</p>
8.4	<p><u>Improving the Management of Sexual Offences Cases</u></p> <p>This Judicial-led Working Group was chaired by Lady Dorrian and reported in March of this year. Gordon Bell from the Practice Team represented SCRA on the Working Group. A link to the final report is here.</p> <p>The focus of the group was primarily on criminal justice proceedings, in particular the experience of witnesses in such proceedings. However, we were keen that the Group did not lose sight of Children’s Hearings court proceedings and that any proposed improvements in criminal justice proceedings could apply - where appropriate - to Children’s Hearing proceedings. Helpfully, Lady Dorrian was persuaded that Children’s Hearings court proceedings should be given a separate chapter, with separate recommendations, in the final report.</p> <p>What is required to take some of the recommendations forward will depend on the reception that the report as a whole receives or on the co-operation of partner agencies. However there are some recommendations that SCRA can start to consider now. Consideration will be given to the best way to respond to all of the recommendations.</p> <p>Separately, SCRA’s Practice Team have convened a working group to develop specific training for Reporters on Harmful Sexual Behaviour. The impact of the pandemic has resulted in the working group being unable to make much progress but it is hoped that this work can start again soon.</p>

8.5	<p>Victims Taskforce</p> <p>The Victims Taskforce was 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>
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9	<p>Other Influencing Work & Training</p>
9.1	<p>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 has been published – which is available online here - Monitoring and Evaluating Rights, Respect and Recovery (MERRR) - Substance use - Our areas of work - Public Health Scotland..</p> <p>SCRA are going to be involved in the new Secure Care Group which meets for the first time in June.</p>
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>

9.3	<p>We are currently collecting responses to a survey on the shortened Covid 19 Report template which was developed in March 2020 and has been in use in some areas across the Country. We are keen to know where the template has been used; what people think about the template and what learning should be taken from the use of the template going forward. We are also keen to gather information about other report versions which have been used. This 'stage 1' work is focused on the views of professionals.</p> <p>The survey closed on 31st May 2021. The findings have been shared with CHS along with an approach to Our Hearings Our Voice which considers what any 'next steps' should be.</p> <p>Elaine Adams and Melissa Hunt will take the survey result, write a report and develop next steps – which will include ways to gather information from children and families.</p>
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10	Recommendation
a)	The Board is asked to note the contents of this report.



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

SCRA Board Self-Evaluation

Accountable Director : Principal Reporter/Board Chair

Date : 23 June 2021

Report Author : Governance Officer

Recommendation:

1. To note the SCRA Board Self-Evaluation

Reason for report : For noting.

Resource implications : Within approved budgets.

Strategy : Within approved plans.

Consultation : SCRA Board

Equalities duties : EHRIA not required.

Document classification : Not protectively marked.

1. Introduction

Boards are required to conduct an annual self-evaluation exercise.

As part of this Board Members have completed a checklists from the On Board Guide, Good Corporate Governance.

A copy of the checklists is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Good Corporate Governance Checklist

This checklist is split into the following areas:

Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships

- Statutory Accountability
- Accountability for Public Money
- Communication with Stakeholders
- Roles and Responsibilities

Effective Financial Management

- Annual Reporting
- Internal Controls
- Audit Committee
- External Auditors

Standards of Behaviour

- Leadership
- Code of Conduct

- 2.1 There were no significant areas of concern flagged up but there were areas where either clarification was sought or there was uncertainty around the current position and some of the terminology was questioned. These are detailed as follows:

Communication with Stakeholders

Question 3 - Has the Board established: (1) clear channels of communication with the body's stakeholders? (2) Appropriate processes to ensure that such channels operate effectively in practice?

Members comments as follows:

- I would be interested to learn more about what children and young people (a key stakeholder) people think about our communications.
- Do we need to ensure regular effective communication with CHS and formalise Board's role in communications with CHS and with main stakeholders such as OHOV etc?
- CE reports are regular and detail liaison with key stakeholders such as police, social work and Scottish Government. Chair reports on communication with sponsor team.
- Chair meets regularly with Deputy Director at Scottish Government. Regular meetings to be established between chair and The Promise.

Roles and Responsibilities

Question 6 - Is there a clearly defined division of responsibilities at senior management level

Members have queried if this requires review. Last reviewed 2014.

Question 8 - (1) Has the Board established a framework of strategic control (or scheme of delegated or reserved powers)? (2) Does the Board maintain an up-to-date framework of strategic control?

Members comments as follows;

- Does the framework of strategic control include a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for the collective decision of the Board? Can the framework be reissued?
- It would be useful to create a policy delegation schedule for board to see/review.

Question 10 - Has the Board established appropriate arrangements to ensure that it has access to all such relevant information, advice and resources as is necessary to enable it to carry out its role effectively?

Members comments as follows;

- There is a balance to strike in terms of detailed information with manageable workload
- In so far as it can. The diverse backgrounds of the board are helpful here.

Question 14 - Has the Board made a senior executive responsible for ensuring that Board procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations and other relevant statements of best practice are complied with?

Members requested clarity. This is the role of the Governance Officer with input from the Standards Officer as required.

Question 16 - Has the Board established a remuneration committee to make recommendations on the remuneration of top executives?

Members have queried if the membership requires review.

Effective Financial Management

All members responded positively in this section of the checklist with no additional comments or queries.

Standards of Behaviour

Leadership

Question 14 - Has the Board taken steps to ensure that its members exercise leadership by conducting themselves in accordance with high standards of personal behaviour?

Members noted this is conducted via performance review and objective setting.

Code of Conduct

Question 25 - Has the Board established appropriate mechanisms to ensure that members and employees of the body are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest?

Members have requested unconscious bias and diversity training.

3. How does your organisation measure up as an employer?

This checklist comprises a range of questions around the Board's role as employer and seeks confirmation that all relevant documentation, policies and procedures are in place.

3.1 There were areas flagged up for discussion, further work and reassurance as follows:

Further Discussion

Knowledge of current thinking on good employment practice.

Areas for further work to be undertaken

- A system of equal opportunities monitoring.
- A diagram showing the staffing structure of your organisation.

Areas for clarification/assurance

- Training on recruitment and selection for those involved in the selection process/
- There was a recurring theme from respondents in relation to the questions on the range of policies and procedures in place (questions 8-24). While it was assumed these were all in existence and fit for purpose, reassurance was sought around the following;
 - Training
 - Redundancy
 - Grievance Procedures
 - A clear understanding between the Board and senior staff of each other's responsibilities
 - An understanding of the organisation's management ethos
 - An induction system for all staff, Board members and volunteers.

4. Recommendation

To note the outcome of the Good Governance Checklist.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Strategic and Operational Risk Registers

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive **Date:** 23 June 2021

Report Authors: Head of Finance & Resources
Governance Officer

Recommendation:

1. To review the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers.

Reason for Report: For monitoring

Resource Implications: Not applicable

Strategy: Not applicable

Consultation: Executive Management Team

Equalities Duties: Equalities impact assessment not required

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Board on the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers.
- 1.2 The Risk Registers were last reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee at its May 2021 meeting and the Board at its meeting on 16th December 2020.

2. Risk Management in SCRA

- 2.1 SCRA's Revised Risk Management Policy was approved by the Board at its meeting in June 2019. The Board has responsibility for the system of internal control and risk management within SCRA. The Risk Management Policy will next be reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee in February 2022 and taken to the March 2022 Board for approval. The Board charges the Audit and Risk Committee with overseeing the operation of the system of internal control and with ensuring robust risk management arrangements within SCRA, including reviewing the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers six-monthly.
- 2.2 The Risk Registers are kept under review by the Executive Management Team (EMT) and the Planning and Performance Network (PPN). The work of the service wide Risk Reference Group has now been integrated into the remit of the PPN and this change has been reflected in the updated Risk Management Policy.
- 2.3 2021/22 Locality Plans have linked Locality Risk Registers and the common risk themes have been reviewed by EMT.
- 2.4 The risk register format includes an assessment of both gross and net risk in order to demonstrate the impact of existing control mechanisms and to link the agreed organisational risk appetite.

3. Strategic Risk Register

- 3.1 The current Strategic Risk Register is attached at Appendix 1. The register and potential new risks were considered at a Strategic Risk Register session on 21/4/21.
- 3.2 Changes to the register are as follows:

Risk 1 - IT Security measures are insufficient to prevent a successful cyber-attack on SCRA case information which results in loss of data which cannot be recovered. A cyber security 'Exercise in a Box' took place involving senior SCRA Managers. Although the transition to CSAS is complete and independent accreditation of CSAS secured CMS is in the process of being fully decommissioned. This risk will remain on the register until end of quarter 1 (linked to CMS decommissioning) and thereafter cyber security risks will be tracked on the IT Operational Risk Register.

Risk 2 - The optimum model for CSAS ownership and accountability and a joint future partnership between SCRA and CHS is not adequately defined and agreed. The issue of legal ownership of CSAS has been resolved, this sits with SCRA. An MOU/SLA will be developed to govern the digital relationship between SCRA and CHS incorporating any IT shared services and KPIs. The DDB has approved Change Control arrangements and the Digital Programme Director is developing a Digital Plan for 2021/22.

Risk 3 – New Risk - Organisational recovery plan fails to deliver operational stability within an acceptable timeframe. All actions other than creation of internal Promise Team are complete. It is recommended this risk is closed with remaining elements of operational stability risk tracked on the Operational Risk Register.

3.3 Following the review of strategic risks a number of new risks are under consideration for inclusion on the Strategic Risk Register. These include:

- Learning & Development (L&D) – there are a significant number of L&D objectives in the Operational Plan (practice training, digital skills, management development, health & safety, wellbeing, equalities, trauma. There is a concern over resources/capacity to identify training priorities/needs and then deliver all the training.
- Property Strategy – there has been a very different operating context over the last 15 months and a significant range of new drivers which may mean significant changes to the estate.
- Agile working – although not starting with a blank sheet of paper the move to agile working as the norm will require culture change and support to managers to ensure new policies are applied fairly and consistently.
- Financial sustainability including pay – temporary funding and a higher ratio of temporary to permanent staffing in 2021/22 creates uncertainty in planning for 2022/23 and beyond.

Other areas reviewed included:

- Job roles
- Hearings Information Pack (HIP)
- CSAS utilisation
- Workforce diversity
- The Promise
- Management of hearings
- Policy and legislative agenda

4. Operational Risk Register Profile

4.1 The current Operational Risk Register is attached at Appendix 2. The register and potential new risks were considered at an Operational Risk Register session on 14/4/21.

4.2 Changes to the register as follows:

Risk 1 “Insufficient operational capacity to consistently deliver quality services”. It was agreed last summer that this risk would not be the focus of management attention whilst the organisation was dealing with the response to the pandemic. This risk, with its focus on delivering quality services, is starting to come into focus again and consideration will be given to merging risk 1 and risk in the next quarterly EMT risk review. Meantime it is noted that:

- The SOM six-monthly reviews – replaced in 2020/21 with more frequent Business Continuity meetings.
- Inter locality working protocol impacted by CSAS security model/Microsoft configuration.
- Moving from context of close management control and direction to a more balanced, devolved approach.

Risk 2, “Varying practice and lack of clarity on processing of Non-Disclosure cases that may increase risk of breach and lack of operational efficiency/duplication of effort”. Actions are largely complete however four remain outstanding. Previous references to ‘Code of Practice on Information Sharing for Hearings system’ have been replaced with ‘Non-disclosure of information in the Children’s Hearing System: A good practice guide. (2016)’. The risk description has been changed to ‘During the early implementation of CSAS there is a heightened risk of Non-Disclosure breaches.’ Previously “As a result of the transition from CMS to CSAS there is a heightened risk of Non-Disclosure breaches.”

Risk 3, New Risk, “Insufficient operational capacity (staff, technology, property) to deliver local recovery plan and CSAS implementation within an acceptable timeframe”. This was a new risk developed at the six-monthly review in Autumn 2020. This risk will be reviewed by the PPN to determine if any new actions are required, meantime it is noted that:

- Requested enabling technology is largely in place but not all hearing centres operating virtual/hybrid hearings.
- Need to ensure national training plan reflects need for every member of staff to have a basic level of competence for engaging with new technology.
- Optimum size of hearing rooms in transition period and beyond to be considered through Better Hearings lens.

4.3 The main themes from Locality Risk Registers were reviewed at the Operational Risk Register session including CSAS, recovery, staffing, returning to offices, digital platforms for virtual hearings and the Standard Operating Model.

- 4.4 Also at the Operational Risk Register session participants reviewed the 2021/22 Operational Plan to identify any new risks. 2021/22 objectives relating to wellbeing, recovery, partnership, learning & development and property were reviewed and as referenced in section 3.3 above risks for learning & development and property strategy are under development.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The risks across both registers focus on the ongoing challenges in the delivery of a safe and effective service with the focus on capacity, resources and information governance.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 To review the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers.

Appendix 1 – Strategic Risk Register (April 2021)

Appendix 2 - Operational Risk Register (April 2021)

Previous Papers:

Risk Register Report to Audit & Risk Committee – May 2021

Risk Register Report to Board – December 2020

Strategic Risk Register April 2021

Risk No	Reference to SCRA Objectives	Risk Type	Risk Description	Risk Owner	Gross Risk Score L*I	Key mitigating controls	Control Effectiveness	Residual Risk Score L*I	Risk Appetite	Target Risk Score L*I	Actions and Timescales	Action Owner /Deadline
1.	Business Plan 2020/21: Digital Strategy - Retire and remove all legacy systems no longer required.	Service Delivery / Information	IT Security measures are insufficient to prevent a successful cyber-attack on SCRA case information which results in loss of data which cannot be recovered.	Head of IT	16 (4*4)	<p>Being part of the SCOTS/ITECS environment which is responsible for safeguarding SG IT from cyber-attack reduces CMS's exposure as the only access to CMS is through the SCOTS environment.</p> <p>Scottish Government have achieved Cyber Essentials Plus certification for the SCOTS network.</p> <p>Annual Penetration testing of CMS ensures that CMS's vulnerability to common cyber threats is fully understood.</p> <p>By testing CMS disaster recovery procedures regularly and reviewing and testing SCRA business continuity plans annually gives assurance that SCRA is capable of recovering from a cyber security attack.</p> <p>Kept up-to date with new threats by attending cyber security events and professional membership – SCRA's Digital Governance Lead is a Certified Information Security Manager (CISM) and a member of the Cyber-security Information Sharing Partnership (CiSP)</p> <p>Full accreditation for CSAS.</p>	<p>Effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Effective</p>	9 (3*3)	Cautious to Minimalist	6 (3*2)	<p>Proposal to EMT to run a test exercise of a Ransomware attack, using tools from the National Cyber Security Centre.</p> <p>Operational risk - full transition of teams from CMS to CSAS platform will significantly reduce risk to operations.</p> <p>Security risk – potential for major security breach will only be fully mitigated following decommissioning of CMS.</p>	<p>'Exercise In a Box' completed March 2021.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>Digital Programme Director. June 2021.</p>

Risk No	Reference to SCRA Objectives	Risk Type	Risk Description	Risk Owner	Gross Risk Score L*I	Key mitigating controls	Control Effectiveness	Residual Risk Score L*I	Risk Appetite	Target Risk Score L*I	Actions and Timescales	Action Owner /Deadline
2.	Digital Programme Masterplan	Financial/ Information/ Service Delivery/ Reputational	The optimum model for CSAS ownership and accountability and a joint future partnership between SCRA and CHS is not adequately defined and agreed.	Principal Reporter	16 (4*4)	Senior Team Workshops Digital Programme Director/Chief Executive meetings Digital Oversight Committee DDB/Programme Assurance Group Licencing and software agreements. Legal ownership agreed. Change Control Board.	Effective Effective Effective Partly Effective Effective Effective Partly Effective	9 (3*3)	Cautious	4 (2*2)	<u>Strategic actions</u> Develop SCRA's partnership decision making model, including assessment of future SLA/MOU and KPIs. June 2021. Agree a framework for application of the Digital budget beyond 2020. June 2021. Agree governance arrangements which will inform the decision making model and to support delivery of objectives. May 2021 Joint Board discussion. Develop a Digital Strategy beyond 2020 – 2021/22 Aims and Objectives in draft. June 2021.	SCRA PR/CE & CHS NC/CE & Digital Programme Director. SCRA PR/CE & CHS NC/CE & Digital Programme Director. SCRA PR/CE & CHS NC/CE & Programme Director Underway SCRA PR/CE & CHS NC/CE Digital Programme Director/Head of Strategy

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3.	Business Plan 2020/21: Contingency and Recovery Plan	Service Delivery/ Reputational/ Financial	<p>Organisational recovery plan fails to deliver operational stability within an acceptable timeframe.</p> <p>Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recovery funding is not aligned with timeline of activity <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New staff – initial period of instability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technological skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing and resilience <p>Hearings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of sufficient f2f hearings Availability of suitable technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity/ contingency planning and tracking <p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSAS – operational deployment timeline 	Principal Reporter	16 (4*4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMT oversight of recovery plan. Regular discussions with SG. Phase start dates. Training delivered to ensure as quick supports to teams as possible. CSAS training materials. Core support team. Vanguard experts. Pace of transition. Enabling tech plan. Ongoing discussions with UNISON on wellbeing. Regular communications – corporate and local. Respond to areas of need. Tech leads. Enabling tech plans. Business Managers/IT Team liaison. Daily review of key technical and operational issues, chaired by senior managers, in place to prioritise/ review and 	<p>Effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Effective</p>	12 (3*4)		6 (2*3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report realistic forecasts to Board/SG. Early start to recruitment of support staff Continue to develop training materials. Build support capacity. Agenda items on all partnership agendas including LMTs. Prepare physical spaces. Install enabling tech. Complete discovery phase for MS Teams. Understand iTecs MS Teams offering. Complete audio trial and rollout solution Delivery and deployment of CCU equipment. Data requirements to be defined to develop a plan that will track progress and provide reports to Board and provide updates to SG and partners. Developing improved training and operational materials based on the experience of the vanguard. Reviewing migration strategy to 	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSAS - staff support 			support the 'burn down' new issues.					<p>ensure go-live aligns with technical and operational requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning recovery planning to support the prioritisation of CSAS roll out. 	Complete
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSAS – inhibits recovery plan in short term 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture learning from early adopters that can be passed on to those yet to go live to support them. • Update training materials to align fully to product as changes occur. • Ensure a mixed method support model is in place – email/telephone/skype/floorwalkers. 	Partly Effective				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct scenario planning exercise to look at recovery taking into account a delayed transition to CSAS. • Learn from early adopters the likely capacity when undergoing go live. 	Complete
			<p>Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships – open and transparent communications 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with our hearings system partners and external stakeholders through existing structures to provide assurance, and transparency in approach. • Respond openly and positively to feedback by working with partners, children and young people and staff to demonstrably evidence listening and resultant change/improvement. • Create positive links and engagement with the Promise team and other groups of influential young people e.g. OHOV as we evolve our processes from recover to sustainable and acceptable service. • Partnership Group. 	Effective				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA will work to re-mobilise CHIP, to ensure there is a core group in place to take on work of recovery and beyond that into improvement. CHCRG owned system wide Recovery Plan • The participation group will lead a response to the 40 calls to action from Our Hearings Our Voice. • Develop a response to the feedback carried out relating to virtual hearings to determine what 'Better Hearings' looks like in a virtual setting. • Create an internal promise team to develop plans to take forward the work, linking with the Promise team and partners. 2021/22 BP and Corporate Parenting Plan. 	Complete
												Complete
												Complete
												Complete
												In Business Plan.

Risk No	Reference to SCRA Objectives	Risk Type	Risk Description	Risk Owner	Gross Risk Score L*I	Key mitigating controls	Control Effectiveness	Residual Risk Score L*I	Risk Appetite	Target Risk Score L*I	Actions and Timescales	Action Owner /Deadline
1	High Quality Decisions	Operational/ Reputational	Insufficient operational capacity to consistently deliver quality services.	Senior Operational Managers Locality Management Teams	(4:4) 16	<p>Use and deployment of temporary staff to meet operational pressure is reviewed routinely at LMT/with SOM's.</p> <p>A managed approach to workload measurement is in place.</p> <p>All key IT/Business systems, availability, performance and function is maintained.</p> <p>Delivery and regular review of comprehensive Locality Plan and Head Office Business plans.</p> <p>Locality Plans have clear visibility and leadership and timelines on quality improvements.</p> <p>Delivery of routine management information and data reporting prompts focussed planning and action.</p> <p>Inter Locality working protocol is initiated as part of BCP when required. Impacted by CSAS security model.</p> <p>Individual Locality Performance Reviews, led by SOM's – replaced by more regular BCP meetings in 2020/21.</p> <p>Quarterly review of Locality plans by LMTs.</p> <p>Quarterly Business Plan reviews by Head of Strategy/OD.</p> <p>Engagement of planning officers/team with LMTs.</p>	<p>Effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Partly effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Effective</p>	(2:4) 8	Cautious	(2:2) 4	<p>Complete Court review (complete) and implement relevant recommendations.</p> <p>Targeted investment/resource to improve resilience/sustainability in small number of Localities.</p> <p>Internal Audit Locality review including Locality Workforce Planning.</p> <p>As part of 2018/19 Budget Planning carry out an early review of non-establishment posts.</p> <p>Equalisation programme analysis.</p> <p>Resource redeployment.</p>	<p>Complete.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>Underway.</p>

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2	Effective Collaboration	Operational/ Reputational /non-compliance with legal duty	<p>During the early implementation of CSAS there is a heightened risk of Non-Disclosure breaches.</p> <p>The components of the heightened risk are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff pressures • Capacity for double-checks • CSAS functionality changes • CSAS migration 	Senior Operational Managers/ SIRO	(4:5) 20	<p>Practice Direction on Non-Disclosure is reviewed and amended</p> <p>Consistency of practice across localities by complying with Practice Direction.</p> <p>Reduction of disclosure details to minimum possible</p> <p>Partnership working - engage with partners nationally and locally to seek their assistance in adhering to previously agreed principles of reduced ND info and redacting their reports.</p> <p>Data Manager to provide fortnightly ND lists to aid local discussions and heighten awareness.</p> <p>LRMs using ND data reports.</p> <p>Non-disclosure standing item on EMT agenda.</p> <p>Code of Practice on Information Sharing for Hearings system.</p> <p>Sharing information about non-disclosure on CSAS transition support calls (3 per week).</p> <p>Sharing information about non-disclosure on SOM/LRM calls (fortnightly).</p> <p>Regular contact between members of IG Leads group.</p> <p>Management of number of hearings duration transition.</p> <p>Monthly report on breaches to EMT and IG Leads.</p>	<p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Effective</p>	(3:4) 12	Minimalist	(2:2) 4	<p>Complete review of Practice Direction.</p> <p>Confirm completion of CSAS non-disclosure functionality changes in MVP.</p> <p>Engage partner agencies on current challenges with reference to Code of Practice on Information Sharing for Hearings system.</p> <p>Re-iterate messages from EMT on not rushing and seeking assistance.</p> <p>Revisit Code of Practice on Information Sharing for Hearings system with CHIP.</p> <p>Seek assurance from Localities on non-disclosure process to be followed during transition.</p> <p>Monthly report on breaches to EMT and IG Leads.</p> <p>Monitor impact of new staffing on teams capacity to manage non-disclosure cases.</p> <p>Data Manager to develop system generated ND report.</p> <p>SOMs connecting local partnership discussions regarding ND information with CHIP discussions/national framework and identify any gaps/issues.</p>	<p>GS Apr 21</p> <p>AH Apr 21</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>SOMs Apr-Jun 21</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>SOMs Sep 21</p>

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3	Recovery Plan	Operational/ Reputational	<p>Insufficient operational capacity (staff, technology, property) to deliver local recovery plan and CSAS implementation within an acceptable timeframe</p> <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial period of instability Oct-Dec 20 Wellbeing/ resilience <p>Hearing capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of sufficient hearing capacity Optimum use of enabling technology <p>New tech – CSAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition support Operating model/staff roles <p>Business Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple business changes 	Senior Operational Managers/ SIRO	(4:5) 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase start dates Training delivered to ensure as quick supports to teams as possible Budget increase Base number of hearings Oct-Dec 20. Enabling tech plans. Business Managers/IT Team liaison. Support to vanguard teams Training materials Recovery Team 	<p>Effective Partly Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p> <p>Effective Partly Effective</p> <p>Partly Effective</p>	(3*4) 12	Minimalist	(2*3) 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early start to recruitment of support staff. Plan Jan-March 2021 hearing calendar. Establish available capacity using all available technology/hearing rooms. Delivery and deployment of CCU equipment. Train staff in use of equipment. Finalise 2nd order of CCU equipment. Plan for phasing of 2nd wave teams. Staff from vanguard teams released to support 2nd wave teams. CSAS Operational Guide. Develop 2021/22 locality plans. Monthly EMT review of plans 	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>

