

SCRA Board Meeting

A G E N D A

Tuesday 22 March 2022 at 10.30 a.m.
By MS Teams

	Item	Purpose	Papers	Owner
1.1	AOB			
1.2	Apologies			
2.	Declarations of Interest			
3.	Board Member Updates			
4.	Minutes/Committees			
4.1	Minute of Meeting held on 20 January 2022	Approval	Attached	
4.2	Board Action Log			
4.3	Workplan			
4.4	Matters Arising			
4.5	Audit & Risk Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Minute of Meeting held on 17 February 2022 	Noting	Attached	
4.6	Remuneration & Succession Planning Committee. Update for the meeting held on 22 March 2022	Info	Verbal	
	Reports			
5.	Chief Executive's Report	Noting	Attached	NH
6.	Draft Budget 2022/23	Approval	Attached	EM
7.	Budget Monitoring Report	Noting	Attached	EM
8.	OPR	Approval	Attached	LB
9.	Locality Reviews	Noting	Attached	SOM's
10.	Corporate Plan 2020-23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft SCRA Business Plan 2022/23 	Approval	Attached	LB
11.	Annual Workforce Planning Report	Approval	Attached	SD
12.	Environmental Annual Report	Noting	Attached	EM
13.	Health and Safety Annual Report	Noting	Attached	SD
14.	Keeping The Promise Update Report	Noting	Attached	LB
15.	Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting – Year 1 progress report	Noting	Attached	LB
16.	Review of Board Members Code of Conduct	Approval	Attached	PA
17.	Review of Risk Policy	Approval	Attached	EM
18.	New Risks			
	Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 22 June 2022			



Scottish Children's Reporter Administration

Minute of SCRA Board Meeting held on Thursday 20 January 2022 By Teams

Present:

Michelle Miller (Chair)
Anela Anwar
Suzanne Vestri
Tam Baillie
Jim Edgar
Martin Toye
Kay Barton
Lorraine Moore

In Attendance:

Neil Hunter (Principal Reporter/Chief Executive),
Ed Morrison (Head of Finance and Resources),
Susan Deery (Head of Human Resources),
Alistair Hogg (Head of Practice and Policy),
Lisa Bennett (Head of Strategy and OD),
Helen Etchells (Senior Operational Manager),
Paul Mulvanny (Senior Operational Manager),
Monica Sweeny (UNISON Branch Secretary/Reporter),
Iain Fitheridge (Scottish Government),
Nick Rougvie (Scottish Government),
Claire Robertson (BDO), Item 6
Pamela Armstrong (Governance Officer, Minutes)

		Timescale	Action
1.1	AOB Board Recruitment – Verbal Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PR/CE will report on strategy to improve the reach of SCRA to the nominations committee. Time line for Board Member recruitment to be discussed at the next Nominations Committee. 	Mar 22 Mar 22	NH MM
1.2	Apologies None		
1.3	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.		
2.	Minutes/Committees		
2.1	Minute of meeting held on 15 December 2021 Agreed subject to agreed changes.	Immediate	PA
2.2	Board Action log and Workplan The action log and workplan were reviewed.		
2.3	Matters Arising		

		Timescale	Action
	All matters arising are covered within the agenda.		
	Reports		
3.	Finance and Resources		
3.1	<p>Budget Planning 2022/23</p> <p>The Head of Finance and Resources introduced the report recommending the Board note the draft budget plans for 2022/23 and asking the Board to comment on the key issues identified for Challenge and Review.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <p>The report provided updates in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending Review 2022 • Draft Budget 2022/23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revenue ○ Staff Costs ○ Non-staff Costs ○ Income ○ Challenge and Review ○ Capital • Alignment with Business Plan • At this stage SCRA will receive standstill funding plus temporary contract funding. Any additional funding will not be finally confirmed until the Spring Budget Review. In the interim the final post C&R revenue budget gap will be further discussed with Sponsor Team and the position addressed in the 2022/23 Grant in Aid letter. Unless the letter provides sufficient comfort it will not be possible to present a balanced budget to the Board in March 2022. • The impact of the pandemic on service delivery will continue into 2022/23 and this will be assessed as part of Challenge and Review in February. Every effort will be made to ensure sufficient resources are in place to complete the recovery plan whilst trying where possible to invest in the next set of challenges. • The continuing one-year nature of funding settlements creates risks in setting the revenue budget for 2022/23 due to the uncertainty of funding in future years. An updated five-year Financial Plan will be presented to the Board in June 2022. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA is working closely with the SG Finance team, who are cognisant of the pressures faced by the organisation at this time. • The Board Chair and the PR/CE have met with the Director for Children and Families and other colleagues from Scottish Government, to discuss 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>known financial challenges. There is recognition of these challenges however Scottish Government are unable to provide the budget needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government have committed to meet SCRA needs in year and a letter of comfort will be provided to SCRA ahead of the March meeting of the Board. Grant-in-aid letter is critical in approving a budget that doesn't meet SCRA's needs. • In order to meet future challenges within the policy agenda, significant investment is required in the Children's Hearing System. 		
4.	<p>Staff Survey results 2021</p> <p>The PR/CE introduced results of the SCRA 2021 staff survey.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the 13th staff survey SCRA has conducted. For the last 5 years the staff survey has been developed and overseen by the joint SCRA/UNISON Health and Wellbeing Group. In 2020 there was significant deviation from the staff survey format that had historically been in place to reflect the specific circumstances of the COVID pandemic as well as internal organisational changes taking place across 2020/21. The focus of the 2020 staff survey was therefore COVID response, staff wellbeing, home working arrangements, staff support and introduction of new technology. The 2020 staff survey was reported to the SCRA Board and the staff group simultaneously (via Team Brief). • The Health and Wellbeing group were keen to ensure that in developing the 2021 staff survey we took the opportunity to review and strengthen our approach, ensure that the survey was relevant and covered the right topics, fused the best of the historic approach with the continued priorities identified in 2020 and had an ongoing focus on issues such as wellbeing, communication, workload, inclusion and diversity. • A small group was tasked with the reviewing and developing the survey for 2021 and took advice from the SCRA Research Team. The survey was launched in November 2021 for 3 weeks on the staff intranet and actively promoted. The key aspects of the final survey structure were: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Our organisational ○ Future working arrangements in SCRA CSAS and digital ○ Working in my team ○ My wellbeing 		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communication in SCRA ○ Inclusion and diversity ○ Learning and development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In total 231 (44% of all staff) staff completed the survey, compared with 240 (50%) staff in 2020. The staff survey across the last several years had been regularly attaining a 50% return rate so 2021 is slightly down on that. It is worth noting that in response to COVID the total number of staff has increased as a result of the development of the recovery team. • At a very high level the most positive responses across the survey as a whole relate to inclusion and diversity, support around harassment, health and wellbeing, with the most negative responses relating to time to digest communication, approachability of EMT, further learning support on CSAS, meaningful ways to connect with SCRA, willingness to be involved in networks/groups. • By far and away workload pressures and capacity remain the single biggest factor which need to be overcome in relation to staff engagement in organisational life, advancing priorities and developing future approaches. This is consistent with staff survey results from previous years and remains a real and present challenge for SCRA. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board noted some really positive results given the challenges everyone working in. • A further draft of the results will be presented to the March Board. • An action plan will be developed after further discussion during H&W group. • The slightly lower response rate can be explained in part by a degree of staff apathy, lack of time to complete, a historical suspicion the survey is not anonymous. • Staff exhaustion, low morale and concern around future impact of policy ambitions is a risk. Staff are concerned about their role within the organisation with regards to future change. • Wellbeing data indicates areas staff are looking to develop in SCRA. Conversations on our revised Learning Framework are ongoing with staff. • A lot of work requires to be done to upskill staff and increase digital capabilities. An IT skills strategy will be considered over the next period. • Diversity monitoring of staff will be considered for future surveys. • The reason for not attending one to one's or team meetings can be down to geographical 	Mar 22	NH/SD SD

		Timescale	Action
	differences and role. We are ensuring managers are using the technology available to keep in contact with		
5.	Strategy and Planning		
5.1	<p>Draft 2022/23 Business Plan The Head of Strategy/OD introduced the progress and next steps of the Business Plan 2022-23.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of the plan is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out the actions that will deliver SCRA 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. In accordance with the current framework, the 2022/23 plan will provide a detailed picture of how SCRA will seek to deliver the third year of its Corporate Plan 2020/23. 2022/23 will be a year for consolidation, stabilisation and building resilience. With a clear focus on Recovery, The Promise and ensuring the Standard Operating Model and CSAS become stabilised across the organisation. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board will take part in dedicated Business Plan session led by the Head of Strategy and OD to allow Board members to come together to provide thoughts/comments. 	Mar 22	LB
6.	<p>New Risks No new risks were identified the risk around the budget was discussed. The existing risk will be expanded within the strategic risk register.</p>		EM
7.	<p>Risk Management Workshop As part of the Boards ongoing development, Claire Robertson, BDO, took the Board through a session dedicated to Risk Management highlighting current best practice.</p>		
	<p>Date of Next Meeting Tuesday 22 March 2022, by Teams</p>		

Board Action Log as at March 2022

Meeting/ Item	Action	Timescale	Owner	Comments	Status
Sep 21 SCRA Annual Report	Review the use of abbreviations within the report.	Sep 22	LB		Not yet due
Jan 22 Staff Survey	An action plan will be developed after further discussion during H&W group.	Jun 22	SD		Not yet due

SCRA Board Meeting Workplan March 2022

Business Item	Thu 20/01/22	Tue 22/03/22	Wed 22/06/22	Wed 21/9/22	Wed 14/12/22
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	✓	✓		✓	
Draft Annual Report				✓	
Annual Workforce Planning Report		✓			
Communications Plan			✓		
Performance					
Organisational Performance Report		✓	✓	✓	✓
Operational					
Locality Performance Reviews		✓			
Chief Executive's Report		✓	✓	✓	✓
Complaints Review			✓		
Equalities Annual Report			✓		

Business Item	Thu 20/01/22	Tue 22/03/22	Wed 22/06/22	Wed 21/9/22	Wed 14/12/22
Environmental Annual Report		✓			
Overview of Policies Annual Report					✓
Health & Safety Annual Report		✓			
Procurement Report			✓		
Property Strategy			✓		
Keeping the Promise update		✓	✓	✓	✓
Review of Risk Policy		✓			
Staff Survey	✓	✓			
Agile Policy (Next review Sep 2024)					
SCRA Framework Document (next review 2024)					
SCRA Whistleblowing Policy (next review Dec 2024)					

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
Minute of Audit & Risk Committee held on
Thursday 17th February 2022
By Teams

Present:

Jim Edgar (Chair),
 Tam Baillie
 Kay Barton

In Attendance:

Neil Hunter – Principal Reporter/Chief Executive
 Alistair Hogg - Head of Practice and Policy
 Lisa Bennett, Head of Strategy/OD, (Item 7)
 Ed Morrison, Head of Finance & Resources,
 Lindsay MacFadyen – Quality Assurance Manager (Item 7)
 Pamela Armstrong, Governance Officer – Minutes

Internal Auditors – BDO

Claire Robertson

External Auditors – Audit Scotland

Helen Russell
 Carol Foster

		Timescale	Action
1.	AOB There was no other business.		
2.	Apologies Martin Toye – Committee Member		
3.	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.		
4.	Minute of Previous Meeting: 18th November 2021 The minute was agreed as an accurate record. Action Log & Work plan The action log and work plan were reviewed and approved by the Committee.		
5.	Matters Arising There were no matters arising.		
6.	Information Governance		
6.1	Six-monthly report The Head of Practice & Policy introduced the report providing the Committee with an update on SCRA's GDPR compliance, data breaches reported to the ICO, training, and requests for information between 1 st July 2021 and 31 st December 2021.		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Completed; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GDPR 2021 refresher training ○ Information Governance monthly data breaches report ○ ND Working Group ○ Ayrshire Locality Non-Disclosure Audit • Outstanding activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training - Data Protection Non-Disclosure and GDPR initial and refresher ○ Adoption and permanence cases in CSAS • Breaches of personal data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breach numbers ○ Breach categories ○ Non-Disclosure breaches ○ Trends in data breach numbers ○ ICO investigation ○ Data Protection related complaints • Information Requests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GDPR - subject access requests ○ Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) requests ○ PVG Requests <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a number of themes running through ND breaches. • How do we manage any reputational impact of complaints upheld? SCRA endeavour to engage at local level positively and collaboratively and work with partners on a solution to reduce risk. • In terms of broader areas of reputational risk, SCRA would generally have time to brief Scottish Government and through that Ministers, in relation to background, context, risk and impact as part of our approach, to managing issues of reputational risk and damage. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An interim update around the current and future contribution of CSAS and introduction of the Standard Operating Model to further improve the situation regarding data breaches would be given at the May Committee followed by an update to the June Board. A final update will be given upon completion of the review being conducted by the Head of Practice & Policy on the management of non-disclosure, 		
7.	Quality Assurance and Performance		
7.1	<p>Case sampling programme 2022-23</p> <p>The Quality and Assurance Manager introduced the draft Quality Assurance case sampling programme for 2022-23.</p>		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA's Quality Assurance case sampling programme aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provide the Audit and Risk Committee with an overview of the level of assurance about and evidence of compliance with practice and operational direction, and the quality of operational business, practice and process on a specified area of core activity in SCRA; ○ provide consistency in our system of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our operations; ○ identify areas of operational business, practice or process that require development or improvement ○ promote a culture of self-evaluation, and a framework for continuous improvement; ○ support and promote good practice; ○ provide information to support the learning and development needs of staff • Approach to case sampling in SCRA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Locality managers have the responsibility to ensure that standards are met, operational and practice direction are followed, good practice is acknowledged and shared, and corrective action is taken when required. This is supported by engaging in the national programme of case sampling and self-assessment and case sampling on a local basis. ○ The national case sampling programme should enable managers to reflect on practice and identify areas of strength and areas for improvement. It should point to any need to seek further assurance on a local level by additional sampling or review of practice and process with staff. It is based on professional reflection and an ability to support and challenge. The case sampling programme provides the opportunity to assure the Executive Management Team and Audit and Risk Committee in relation to specific areas of practice. Areas where improvement in practice are required are highlighted, alongside strengths, both nationally and at local levels, and action plans are developed to address where improvement is needed • Following consultation with the Practice and Quality network, EMT and the Practice team, the topics proposed for these 2 exercises are proposed as:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Drafting of section 67(2)(f) and (a) grounds (domestic abuse and lack of care) ○ Observation of the Reporter in hearings 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed programme is very rich and diverse and places case sampling in a wider context of other QA priorities for SCRA at a key time (e.g. Keeping the Promise) How will The Promise related items be chosen and does the Committee have any role in that choice? The QA Manager has consulted with The Promise Board Manager on the reform and improvement agenda, which has provided many options. <p>Agreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the proposed case sampling programme for 2022/23, including the content, and delivery and reporting timescales. 		
7.2	<p>Identification of the most relevant/appropriate section 67 ground for the referred child (non-offence referrals)</p> <p>The Quality and Assurance Manager introduced the report containing detail and analysis of the case sampling exercise undertaken on cases of children jointly reported to the Reporter and the Procurator Fiscal (PF). The exercise was undertaken as part of the Quality Assurance Work Programme approved by the Audit and Risk Committee in February 2021.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a number of findings to be taken from this exercise, both in terms of the Reporter's communication with the Procurator Fiscal about the cases of children that are jointly reported and the assessment of whether the child should be dealt with in the hearing system, but also in terms of guidance and processes around these communications, and in relation to some aspects of the Agreement which SCRA has with COPFS. The findings of this exercise do not in themselves indicate that prompt and appropriate sharing of information is not taking place between the PF and the Reporter, in fact, case notes referring to phone calls and emails were seen in those cases where the agreed template had not been used or saved. As with other areas of decision making and recording, Reporters are expected to make and save a record of the details of their communication with the Procurator Fiscal in all jointly reported cases and the management action plan at Appendix 1 will include actions in respect of improving this. As well as providing assurance on an important part of the Reporter's role, and informing developments and review of training, processes and partnership work, the findings of this exercise, along with those of the SCRA research on children aged 12-15 involved in offending are pertinent to the work of The Promise in respect of 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>children in conflict with the law. The Independent Care Review concluded that more required to be done to ensure children and young people in conflict with the law are retained within the Children's Hearing System rather than entering the adult criminal justice system.</p> <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the issue of children that should not have been referred, The Head of Practice and Policy will share report findings and agree appropriate actions with Police Scotland. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the management action plan. 		
8.	<p>Risk Management Policy Head of Finance & Resources introduced the report inviting members to propose any further changes to the Risk Management Policy and to review the risk appetite.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main terms of the policy document remain unchanged since November 2021 and changes proposed by Board Members are highlighted within the report. It is some time since the Board reviewed the risk appetite. The Operational/Service Delivery Risks is currently Minimalist to Cautious but is shown as Open to Cautious to reflect the extent of change in the operational model recent years and likelihood of further change in the coming years. There was also a suggestion that we should consider whether we should be more 'open' with regard to the financials given the current environment we are in. It was agreed this would be noted and specifically mentioned at the forthcoming Board session. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Risk Management policy will go the March meeting of the Board for further discussion and approval. Board and Committee be separated in this visual in appendix 1. 	Mar 22	PA
9.	External Audit		
9.1	<p>External Audit Annual Plan 2021-22 Helen Russell, Audit Scotland, provided the following update;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helen Russell has taken over as appointed auditor and engagement lead of SCRA for 2021/22. Audit Scotland will engage with SCRA in February /March 2022 to discuss audit and the key risks facing the organisation. Regular meetings with key staff will continue as the audit progresses, particularly as remote or hybrid working continues. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timetable for the 2021/22 audit has been agreed in principle. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on public bodies has been widespread and has led to delays in the delivery of audits across the public sector. Audit Scotland aim to issue their annual audit plan in March 2022 and it will be formally presented to the next meeting of the Committee. This plan will set out the key challenges and risks facing SCRA. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a great deal of activity in the sphere of cyber security at the moment, of which the SEPA experience is informing. SCRA are part of the Cyber Essentials programme work with SG as our providers and have regular reviews of CSAS cyber security and threat levels. SCRA recently submitted a self-assessment to Ministers. There is a planned cyber security session for Board at its April Development Day. 		
9.2	<p>General Update Helen Russell, Audit Scotland, introduced the Audit Scotland update report, including technical briefings.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalisation of the 2020/21 Audit Technical Bulletins Audit Scotland Recent Reports Section 22 Reports 		
10.	Internal Audit		
10.1	<p>Government Procurement Cards Claire Robertson, BDO, introduced the Government procurement card internal audit report. The Head of Finance and Resources provided the management response.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the 2021-22 Internal Audit Plan, it was agreed by management and the Audit and Risk Committee that Internal Audit would carry out a review of the arrangements in place relating to government procurement cards (GPCs) within Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA). The purpose of this review was to assess whether there is a policy for use, whether expenditure is in line with policy and expenditure is adequately approved, reported on and supported by receipts. The process in place for issuing and removing access to GPCs was also assessed. expenditure limits BDO identified a number of areas of good practice being demonstrated in relation to government procurement 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>cards. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A GPC policy is in place, outlining the reviews and approvals required on a monthly basis. The policy is made available to all staff via Connect, and was also directly distributed to all card holders. ○ GPC expenditure is required to be reviewed and approved by locality management and budget holders on a monthly basis, and checked by both Finance and Procurement monthly and quarterly respectively. ○ The procurement cards are only issued to personnel once a business case has been agreed between the locality manager or budget holder and Finance. ○ The leaver process includes manager checks to ensure that all cards have been returned, and the Head of Finance and Resources who administrates the cards with the bank is required to cancel them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BDO identified two areas where further improvement could be made to the GPC arrangements, summarised below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Log Approvals – BDO sample tested 10 government procurement cardholder's monthly expenditure logs and backup documentation, including approvals, to verify that the monitoring and oversight controls outlined within the policy are being followed. For 4 of the 10 cardholders we found that the locality budget holder approvals for the monthly logs had not been provided in a timely manner. The logs were from December 2020, March 2021, June 2021, and August 2021, and all were approved in October 2021. ○ Policy Improvements - Within the GPC policy there are no examples or specific guidance on what the cards can be used to purchase. • BDO are able to provide moderate assurance over the GPC arrangements in place at SCRA. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the Government procurement card internal audit report. • To approve the management response. 		
10.2	<p>Virtual Hearings</p> <p>Claire Robertson, BDO, introduced the internal audit report. The Senior Operational Manager (North West) provided the management response.</p>		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the 2021-22 Internal Audit Plan, it was agreed with management and the Audit and Risk Committee that Internal Audit would undertake a review of the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration's (SCRA) virtual hearing provision and how it will be utilised effectively going forward. The scope of the review assessed whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were clearly documented processes and procedures available for users to report issues with virtual hearings or requests and these were communicated to users; There was sufficient resource available to provide support remotely and locally for participants of virtual hearings; Reported issues were being resolved in a timely manner; There was regular and detailed monitoring and reporting on virtual hearings, including details of issues requiring attention and performance statistics; Feedback from users had been sought and actioned; Effective use of virtual hearings in a post-Covid world had been considered and evaluated; and Staff have received training to use the equipment. The review noted a number of areas of good practice as follows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual Hearing support team members organise meetings with hearing participants to check their device is compatible, their internet speed is fast enough, demonstrate how to use the software and answer any questions they may have prior to the hearing taking place; A virtual hearings pilot survey was issued to all key participants of virtual hearings and analysis was performed on the results to draw conclusions on how hearings can be improved going forward; Research is being undertaken to establish how virtual hearings can be improved to support the participation of a child and their right to a fair trial; and The Virtual Hearing support team members all receive training on how to use the software. BDO also identified some areas where there is opportunity for improvement as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Log of reported issues Feedback BDO offer moderate assurance around the design and operational effectiveness of the controls surrounding virtual hearings and digital provision arrangements at 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>SCRA.</p> <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee wished to acknowledge the magnitude of work done by all SCRA staff, particularly from a cold standing start back in 2020 with no real meaningful access to reliable technology. SCRA are clearly on a journey, and the journey of ongoing improvement continues. EHRIA was really critical starting point <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the virtual hearings and digital provision internal audit report. report. To approve the management response. 		
10.3	<p>Progress Report 2021-22</p> <p>Claire Robertson, BDO, introduced the report advising the Audit Committee of the progress of the Internal Audit Plan for 2021-22.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the last Audit Committee meeting, the following internal audit reports have been finalised, and are presented under separate cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Procurement Cards Virtual Hearings 		
10.4	<p>Draft Annual Plan 2022-23</p> <p>Claire Robertson, BDO, introduced the draft plan.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Internal Audit proposed audit programme for 2022-23 is as follows; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Management Workshop Board Effectiveness Project Management Core Financial Controls Cyber Security Quality Management Estates Management The programme will be under continuous review during the year and BDO will introduce to the plan any significant areas of risk identified during that period. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the Internal Audit programme for 2022/23 		
11.	<p>Pensions Update</p> <p>The Head of Finance and Resource introduced the report, providing a summary of key items discussed at the Pensions Committee/Pensions Board meeting held on 9th December 2021.</p>		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Governance Matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A new Pensions Manager has been appointed and will take up their duties in January 2022. ○ SPPA are seeking comments on certain proposed changes to the LGPS. Along with some changes to the 2014 Transitional Regulations it is proposed to amend the 2018 main scheme regulations to give Funds greater flexibility in dealing with employers who wish to exit, including allowing cessation debts to be spread over a given period of time. All the draft changes appear to be non-controversial. ○ Retirement of Director of Corporate and Housing Services and Chief Finance Officer who author and present Pensions Committee reports. The continued ability of the Council to deliver the pensions function in view of these and other expected retirements is one of the key drivers for the merger initiative with the Lothian Fund. • Market Review and Fund Manager Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Global equities generated modest returns over the third quarter of 2021. Energy was the strongest performing sector, with natural gas and coal prices rising as demand continued to outpace supply in many parts of the world. ○ Index-linked bonds performed strongly as inflation expectations rose. ○ With economic growth having rebounded faster than previously anticipated, the strong performance of index-linked bonds over the quarter is an indicator of investor attention turning to the prospect of inflation remaining higher for longer. • Potential merger of Falkirk and Lothian Pension Funds (Project Forth) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Committee was presented with a report on the proposed merger of the Falkirk Council and Lothian LGPS Pension Funds which would be subject to the approval of both the City of Edinburgh and Falkirk Councils. 		
	Standing Items		
12.	Topical/Regulatory Issues/Governance Issues None		
13.	New Risks No new risks were identified.		
	Date of Next Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 19th May 2022, by Teams, • Thursday 18th August 2022, location TBC, • Thursday 17th November 2022, by Teams. 		

		Timescale	Action



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Chief Executives Report

**Accountable
Director:**

Neil Hunter

Date: 22 March 2022

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

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.

Equalities	Impact	Assessment
Required/Completed		

☐

Yes

☒

No

Issues/action points:-

Consultation

EMT/Communications Manager/Information and Research Manager

Document Classification

Open

1. Staff Partnership

- 1.1 SCRA and UNISON held a National Partnership Forum in late February. The main focus of which was staff survey 2021 results (covered at section 4 in this paper). In addition to the survey results the NPF focussed in on staff wellbeing, digital programme delivery and the SCRA Business Plan for 2022/3. The NPF has added a significant policy update item to its agenda reflecting the range and scale of policy (and legislative) change ahead for the Hearings System and SCRA. This, for the moment is focussed on scoping out the scale of challenge posed by proposed increases to the age of referral to the Reporter, UNCRC implementation and the array of work being undertaken in Keeping the Promise.
- 1.2 UNISON are keeping an active watching brief on developments within the Scottish Government and other Public Bodies in relation to the 4 day working week trial developments. SCRA officers have expressed a willingness to work alongside UNISON at the appropriate time to assess the outcomes of any Scottish pilots and consider how we might make future progress in this significant shift in our approach to work and based on the evidence from elsewhere and the operating context of SCRA.
- 1.3 UNISON and SCRA both noted the continued strong development, pace of work and degree of embeddedness being achieved across the organisation in relation to health and wellbeing initiatives and recommitted ourselves to working in partnership to make further progress in 2022.

2. Strategic Partnerships

2.1 Childrens Hearings Improvement Partnership

- 2.1.1 The Childrens Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) met in February and the agenda focussed on the following:-
- 2.1.2 An update from Scottish Government was given in relation to the early formation of the Care and Justice Bill, which is planned for initial consultation on scope and content in Spring 2022 and introduction to Parliament in late 2022.
- 2.1.3 The fourth report from the Childrens Hearings System Recovery Group – on progress against COVID recovery across all core service delivery agencies. The report details, despite a significant dip in December 2021 (linked to Omicron variant restrictions) otherwise solid movement across Hearing System recovery over the months before and since. The full report is available [here](#).
- 2.1.4 The National Care Service consultation analysis was published by SG on 10 February. Overall, the majority of respondents agreed that Children's Services should be included in a National Care Service (NCS). Three quarters of individuals who responded to this question and a similar proportion of organisations were in agreement. A number of key stakeholders however did express concerns about the proposals with several suggesting that more evidence on the likely benefits of the proposals is required. There were a

number of risks identified here by individuals and organisations, including the potential loss of a local dimension to responding to need and the potential loss of the link to education in favour of including Children's Services.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-care-service-consultation-analysis-easy-read/>

2.2 Youth Justice Implementation Board (YJIB)

2.2.1 The YJIB met on 1 March. The main point of discussion was in relation to children under 18 years who are sentenced or remanded to HMYOI. The YJIB has set out a desire to ensure that all children are removed from prison environment as soon as possible/practicable and that therapeutic/trauma informed secure care is seen in Scotland as the default for all children. A number of recommendations were made to the YJIB including:-

- Undertake a trauma informed Review of the Young Persons Pathway to YOI
- Recognising the needs and rights of the young person and support their understanding of court processes to ensure meaningful participation
- Assess and review key policies through the lens of UNCRC and other human rights treaties
- Identify and remove legal impediments to alternatives to remand and take immediate action where possible to remove under-18s from custody

2.2.2 The SLWG who undertook this work (on which SCRA were represented) have been broadly consensual, other than in relation to issue about timeline for removing legal impediments – where there has been a significant discussion on the issues of pace and urgency of change, versus impact on other rights holders such as victims. The possibility is that the planned Care and Justice Bill will carry the required legislative change necessary to achieve this objective.

2.2.3 SCRA continue to chair the Advancing Whole System Approach to Youth Justice – in this phase we suggested and agreed a co-chairing arrangement with Social Work Scotland, which so far is working well.

3. Scottish Government Sponsor Team

3.1 SCRA and Scottish Government met in a scheduled Accountability meeting on 10 March. The meeting was chaired by Nick Rougvie, Head of Childrens Hearings Team who has replaced Iain Fitheridge, after his recent retiral.

- Covid 19 update and recovery plan – noting the recent report to CHIP (see above)
- The Hearings System Working Group – round table discussion on progress in Keeping the Promise (see paper 14 for full Promise update)
- Practice and legislation – ongoing dialogue on the Care and Justice Act preparations
- Finance – read out from the regular SG/SCRA Finance Accountability meetings and a look forward to the Spring Budget Review Exercise (Resource Spending Review)

- Quarterly Organisational Performance/Monthly Overview Reports – draft of the OPR for SG consideration.
- Board membership – an update on recruitment programme for 2 pending SCRA Board vacancies

4. SCRA Staff Survey 2021

4.1 This has been an area of priority focus for the PR/CE and the senior team since the New Year. The PR/CE hosted 4 video calls for staff across the organisation, based on the Team Brief which he issued on 7th February. The full Team Brief can be found [here](#), and the detailed staff survey results can be found [here](#). Over 80 members of staff attended these sessions from across the organisation. Rich and diverse discussion took place and there was much content which has been incorporated into the resultant priorities and actions. These sessions were useful and are now becoming a feature to accompany each Team Brief session – they also assist with raising the visibility of the PR/CE and senior team at a time when this has been much constrained by the pressures and unique circumstances of the pandemic.

4.2 A detailed discussion also took place at the SCRA/UNISON Health and Wellbeing Group, which has overall ownership of the staff survey. At its January meeting the PR/CE undertook to provide further detail in the actions which are required to be advanced in responding to the 2021 staff survey.

4.3 Headlines Issues from the survey

- **Workload** – 1 in 5 of respondents felt their workload was unacceptable and a similar proportion reported regularly having to work outwith their contracted hours
- **Morale** – whilst 80% of staff described enjoying their job – only 56% agreed that morale at work was good, with 23% disagreeing.
- **Managing change** – half (51%) of staff felt confident in SCRA's ability to manage change effectively. A smaller proportion felt able to challenge the ways things are done in SCRA (46%). Better communication flow, more learning and development opportunities and direct engagement opportunities were seen as the key things that were needed to improve this. The extent to which people felt directly consulted on changes to work and/or job role also scored low at 48%
- **Support** – 77% of staff felt that they received good support from their line manager, 75% reported the same from team and colleagues, 74% of staff felt proud to work for SCRA
- **Wellbeing** – there was strong support for the current approach to promoting staff wellbeing with 83% of people feeling that the approach and regularity of information was useful to them
- **Leadership** - only 1 in 3 would feel confident in approaching the senior team (EMT) and only half felt confident in the leadership of the organisation.
- **Diversity and inclusion** –94% of staff felt they understood how inclusion and diversity relates to their work, 87% felt SCRA was committed to inclusion and diversity and 81% of staff felt included and respected in SCRA. 84% of staff felt confident they would know how to report issues of harassment or discrimination

4.4 The response to the staff survey needs to be focussed – but at the same time comprehensive and tackle, as best we can, some of the root causes of and contributors to the issues we face. Three key priorities areas have been identified as a result of the 2021 survey results:-

- Job satisfaction and morale
- Workload
- Leadership

4.5 Job satisfaction and morale

4.6 Morale has seen a significant drop from the last comparative period (2019 – 76% rated morale as positive). Enjoyment of job in 2019 was 86% so has fallen, albeit remaining at a relatively high level.

	Yes	No	
Q26 Overall, I enjoy my job	80%	20%	
	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
Q27 Overall, my morale at work is good	56%	20%	23%

4.7 There is no doubt that the pandemic to this point has placed immeasurable stress and pressure on SCRA staff. From day 1 our operating model and everything that we knew and trained our staff to deliver, to a very high level changed overnight. Add to that the cumulative effect of operational and technological change over this period give a very significant backcloth to the really challenging staff survey results in relation to morale across our service.

4.8 By far the two largest aspects of comments mentioned in relation to morale were the interlinked areas of workload and the degree and pace of change across SCRA. A smaller number of respondents mentioned lack of confidence in managements leadership of change, lack of appreciation and value for their work, implementation of CSAS, the standard operating model and the conduct and behaviour of colleagues. Absence levels, resources and lack of consultation were mentioned in a smaller number of cases.

4.9 There is no doubt that the future landscape and possibility of large scale change in the hearing system as a result of multiple (mainly positive) policy change forms an important, if uncertain and anxiety provoking context for SCRA staff. This has been picked up in a number of ways in the staff survey and the need for clear, consistent and quality communication, engagement and harvesting the aspiration and wisdom of SCRA staff will be central to navigating through this period.

4.10 Areas we need to focus on to tackle morale

- Support on workload and demands (see section on workload below)
- A continued focus on employee wellbeing
- Moderating the pace of change to ensure that adequate staff engagement, planning, support, training, resources and guidance supports key initiatives
- Increasing a broad culture of recognition across SCRA reflecting the professionalism and efforts of SCRA staff – embedding such a culture of recognition and visible appreciation for SCRA staff across the whole organisation will ensure that it avoids tokenism and divisiveness
- Giving people a clear sense of development and progress – principally through the agreed SCRA Learning and Development programme which will, once fully delivered give access to significant opportunity for personal, group and professional development
- Continued development of our communications across SCRA. Whilst communications generally scored highly across the 2021 staff survey – we need to keep moving ahead with sufficiency, regularity and quality of our communications work across all channels (including face to face opportunities). This will be particularly key for all managers – but the PR/CE and senior team in particular.

4.11 Managing workload

- 4.12 Whilst the vast majority of staff reported managing working hours within SCRA's existing flexibility arrangements, 1 in 5 respondents indicated that they regularly work outwith hours and at weekends. This pressure of work follows on from previous staff survey results and previous research we have undertaken where capacity and availability of resources at individual and team level remain highly challenging.

	Yes	No
I can manage my working hours within the parameters of SCRA's Flexi Scheme?	82%	18%
I can manage a good balance between home and work life	83%	17%

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
Do you regularly work at weekends/non working days (not planned overtime)?	21%	42%	37%
Do you regularly work at weekends/non working days (not planned overtime)? If answered regularly to Q48, why?	Count	%	
Managing my workload	34	56%	
Pressures of workload	42	69%	
Supporting team members	16	26%	
Quieter working environment	9	15%	
Suits my personal circumstances	11	18%	
Providing cover	3	5%	
Keeping on top of emails	28	46%	

4.13 If you regularly work at weekends/non-working days why is this?

4.14 11 people provided further information and 13 key issues were highlighted including court pressures, adapting to or complexity of CSAS and SOM, new legislation, lack of administrative support. Panels which run on after hours, external partnership work, can't focus at home and too much work generally.

4.15 'If your workload is unacceptable, please let us know why'

4.16 There were 75 responses to this question. A broad range of issues were covered, the most significant of which were:-

- Increased administrative burden on Reporters
- Impact of change and transition
- Inequity in work allocation
- Inconsistency in workload demands
- Span of management
- External partnership demands
- Impact of agile working
- Systems inefficiency
- Tasks taking longer
- Court workload
- Staffing levels – absence and internal turnover

4.17 Areas we need to tackle on workload

4.18 SCRA has a longstanding pressure on workload and capacity. This is particularly acute in some teams and roles. We are at a transitional stage in the introduction of new technology and supporting operational processes. And of course we have just experienced one of the biggest shocks to our operating model any of us have ever experienced. The degree of change, adaptation and introduction of new ways of working is without question a big driver. We need to allow these changes to further embed and continue to drive out any inefficiencies in our core processes and supporting technologies. We have a range of programmes in place to achieve this including:-

- Standard operating model – we have completed the first phase of the roll out of the operating model. Rich feedback has been given by staff and the next phase of development and strengthening some aspects is underway. The relationship between the development of the standard operating model and the development of CSAS is understood and underscored in this review.
- The ongoing development and improvement of CSAS beyond the minimum viable product. SCRA has invested across 2021/22 in a programme of work aimed at systematically working through all development backlog issues and new development functionality. The main focus of the 21/22 programme has been the delivery of a much improved hearing information pack, because of its proximity to better handling of non-disclosure checks, opening up the possibilities associated with e-papers across the Hearing system and better, safer management of papers for virtual hearings

- Retention of a small team of specially trained staff in the operational readiness team to support, coach and train staff on optimal use of CSAS – at a team, group or individual level
- 4.19 It would be wrong to suggest that workload is a new issue in SCRA. In 2016/17 the organisation undertook an extensive workload and capacity exercise which examined working patterns, activity and demand over a typical 4 week period. The outcome of that work was reported to the Board at that time. At a high level the exercise and subsequent analysis suggested that operational demands in SCRA consistently exceeded capacity by 5%. A number of programmes of work have been undertaken over the subsequent period
- Development of the SCRA work allocation tool and reporting – which allows us to track operational demands against capacity
 - Resource equalisation across and between teams and localities, with movement of posts and budget between teams where indicated
 - An improvement in short term absence across SCRA following the completion of our managing absence review
 - Continuing to prioritise front line staffing in our budget decision making processes and ensuring that vacancies continue to be filled quickly
 - A stabilisation in income from Scottish Government up to and including financial year 2021/22, with additional resources of £1.1m being made available in the year just passed, reflecting the Covid crisis, with the vast majority carried forward into 2022/23
 - We need to continue to engage in an open dialogue with the Scottish Government on our assessed financial needs – which are well understood and well-rehearsed and based on a clear analysis on our year on year pressures. We will factor into this in 2022/23 a further analysis of the investment SCRA will need to successfully carry forward Ministerial policy ambitions – particularly in relation to increasing the age of referral
 - A need to support our front line managers effectively and work with them on the range of responsibilities they carry. There is no question that whilst the pandemic has been hard on everyone – it has been particularly acute for Locality Reporter Managers and Locality Support Managers. There will always be limited opportunity to increase the management cohort – but we do need to actively work with our front line managers to help address workload and stress – particularly in times of acute pressure such as those we have just endured.

4.20 Leadership

- 4.21 There is no question that the pandemic has directly impacted on the direct visibility of the organisations leadership to the wider service. Individuals and teams can derive a degree of assurance from direct access to senior staff at times of great change, uncertainty and pressure. Previous staff surveys up until 2019 had shown some progress in this area. The PR/CE and senior team have taken some difficult decisions over the course of the pandemic that have affected everyone in the organisation and there have been acutely difficult transitions that have had to be made. Decision making, to some degree has been for a period centralised and directive as we steered ourselves through

2020 and 2021. This has led to a degree of distance between various parts of the organisation and that is both unwelcome and undesirable.

4.22 In early 2020 and in response to the 2019 staff survey results, the PR/CE noted the continued difficulty in making progress on improving communication and trust between the senior management team and the wider organisation. Whilst progress over time had occurred it wasn't at the pace or level of other improvements. The PR/CE ultimately carries the responsibility and accountability for the relatively slow progress in these aspects. In early 2020 the PR/CE undertook to launch a programme of dialogue, further research and more focussed survey work in order to gain a better insight into the issues for staff across staff. The sudden onset of the pandemic has meant that this work has not been progressed.

4.23 Further planning and thought is required in relation to moving this work on. It may be – for issues of legitimacy and neutrality that bringing in an external partner to assist with this work and undertake some focus group type work might be useful and consideration will be given to this in the course of Spring 2022, reporting to Board and the Senior Management Team before the end of 2022 in terms of findings and recommendations for improvement. In addition to this there will be some recommendations to pick up in the 'advisory' internal audit review of organisational culture being conducted by BDO on behalf of the Audit and Risk Committee.

4.24 Areas we need to tackle on leadership

- Improved visibility of the whole Senior Management Team and SCRA Board over the course of 2022
- Ensuring we maximise opportunities for all SCRA staff to engage directly with the PR/CE, Senior Management Team and SCRA Board – through formal and informal events
- Take a more comprehensive and skilled approach to managing future change in SCRA, with a focus on staff engagement and influence over change, improved planning for change, increased support and training for staff in responding and adapting to change and ensuring adequate resources and guidance to support key initiatives
- Continue to develop and improve communication channels and transparency between the senior team, Locality and Head Office teams and individual staff members – paying attention to the language, content and approach which we undertake – with a focus on welcoming debate, discussion and challenge in safe environments and ways which promote increasing trust and understanding
- Consider some independent focus group work to follow up on the findings and make recommendations to the senior team

5. Press and Communications Team update – March 2022

5.1 Keeping The Promise communications

5.2 On Care Day (18 February) we published externally SCRA's Route Plan to Keep The Promise. This included a suite of information materials and a detailed

communications plan, involving our own website, social media and our corporate parenting website. We have set up a dedicated [Keeping The Promise section](#) on our website, which includes a standalone Keeping The Promise latest news page.

5.3 We wanted to make the Route Plan as accessible as possible and our information materials included: BSL films with sub titles and audio, an easy read version of the plan, a cartoon animation for children and an interactive online visual map.

5.4 A snap shot of online activity (website/social media analytics) immediately after go live is available at appendix A.

5.5 Hearings System Working Group Issues List

5.6 On Friday 11 March, The Promise Scotland published the Hearings System Working Group Issues List. We developed an internal and external communications plan to raise awareness of this. In advance of the list being published, we posted a latest news item on the home page of Connect, our staff intranet which linked to a set of Q&As. The news item included a reminder to sign up for a series of internal Keeping The Promise briefing sessions.

5.7 For our external communications, we liaised with The Promise Scotland, Children's Hearings Scotland and the Scottish Government. The Promise posted a news item on their website along with the Issues List. We posted a [news item](#) on our website welcoming the announcement. We also showed our support on social media. In addition, we published a news item on the CHIP website.

5.8 Visual information guides

5.9 As part of our ongoing commitment to make our information materials as accessible as possible, we are continuing to develop [visual information guides](#) for children with autism and other sensory needs. The guides are for face to face Children's Hearings (we do have one for [virtual Hearings](#)) and are based on best practice from 'Social Stories'. In addition, we consulted with young people from Reach for Autism, as well as Autism Network Scotland, Partners in Advocacy and a speech and language expert. We are slowly working our way around the country (as we need to get specific images and information for each Hearing centre) and now have guides for Glasgow, Paisley, Stirling, Hamilton and Dumbarton. We are promoting the guides with advocacy workers/social workers/anyone helping to prepare a child for a Hearing.

5.10 Connect – internal communications

5.11 We are continually trying to improve Connect, our staff intranet to ensure colleagues are able to navigate around it and find what they are looking for. We regularly review the analytics to see what people are searching for etc. We have revamped two sections that have grown in recent months – Health and Wellbeing and Disability. We have also created new themed pages for topics

including COP26, LGBT History Month, Gender-based violence, No Smoking Day and Time to Talk Day. This ensures that if someone is interested in a particular topic, all the information and resources (both internal and external) are all available in the one place.

- 5.12 We are currently working with colleagues in HR to build a new Learning and Development site.



Social media analytics

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1.2 Twitter

On #CareDay22 we are delighted to launch our #KeepingThePromise Route Plan. We have the plan available in different formats including BSL and easy read. Find out more - <https://bit.ly/3p1lkaH>
#TendingTheLight #FOC22

Impressions **1,248**
(how many people we reached)

We are committed to keeping our information about #KeepingThePromise as accessible as possible, so we have a series of short video clips with BSL, sub titles and audio outlining our Route Plan □ <https://bit.ly/3v7fj00> #BSL #BritishSignLanguage
@DeafAction @BDA_Scot @commtacs

Impressions **611**
(how many people we reached)



Facebook

What better day to publish our [#KeepingThePromise](#) Route Plan than on [#CareDay22](#) ? If you don't have time to read the full plan, we have information in lots of different formats including BSL, easy read and an interactive route map on our website - www.scra.gov.uk/keeping-the-promise/

875

People Reached

After an insightful BSL training session last week, we are delighted to unveil a series of 6 video clips on our website in BSL, along with sub titles and audio which outline our plans to [#KeepThePromise](#) - <https://bit.ly/3v7fj00>

203 views

People Reached

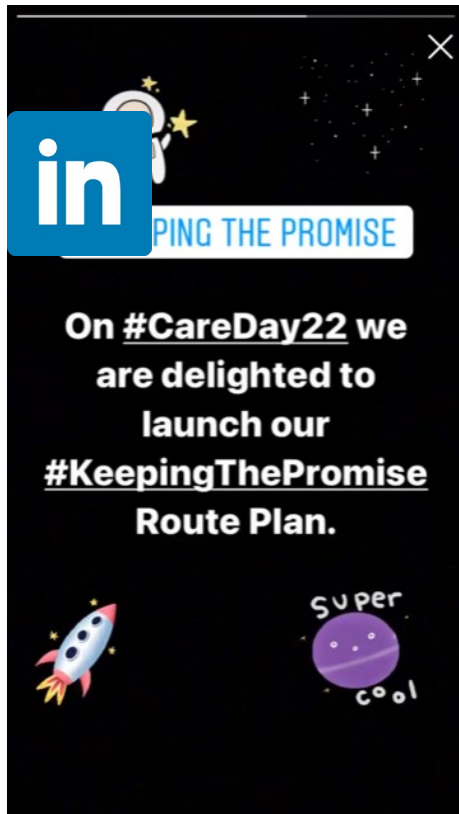


Instagram

What better day to publish our [#KeepingThePromise](#) Route Plan than on [#CareDay22](#) ? If you don't have time to read the full plan, we have information in lots of different formats including BSL, easy read and an interactive route map on our website - www.scra.gov.uk/keeping-the-promise/

124 views

Instagram stories (below) - 60 views



LinkedIn

On #CareDay22 we are excited to share our #KeepingThePromise Route Plan. It sets out what we will do to Keep The Promise and strengthen the Children's Hearings System - <https://www.scra.gov.uk/keeping-the-promise/>

287 impressions



As an organisation committed to inclusion, we are working hard to make more information available in #BSL format. We are delighted to share a number of video clips in BSL, along with sub titles and audio which outline our plans to #KeepThePromise - <https://www.scra.gov.uk/keeping-the-promise/bsl-information/>

218 impressions



SCRA website hits

177 views

<https://www.scra.gov.uk/keeping-the-promise/>

64 views

<https://www.scra.gov.uk/2022/02/keeping-the-promise-our-journey-gets-underway/>

62 views

<https://www.scra.gov.uk/keeping-the-promise/our-route-map/>

42 views

<https://www.scra.gov.uk/keeping-the-promise/bsl-information>

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION**Budget Monitoring Report Period 10 2021/22**

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive **Date:** 22 March 2022

Report prepared by: Head of Finance and Resources

Recommendations:

1. To note the revenue and capital positions for the year to February 2022.

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 the year to February 2022 and forecast for the full year 2021/22.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Scottish Government has allocated revenue funding of £25.16m for 2021/22. In discussions with Sponsor Team and the Scottish Government about hand back of 2020/21 grant funding, it was agreed that SCRA retain revenue underspends 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 Board approved a revenue budget of £26.96m in March, on the basis that a further £0.3m of reserves could be used to support business priorities.

In light of SCRA's revised forecast expenditure of £26.745m (including £180k for unfunded pensions) in December, the £1.5m in-year funding was reduced to £1.1m and the reserves contribution was increased to £485k. The latest forecast below indicates £399k of reserves will be used in-year, comprising £219k as detailed in 3.1, plus £180k for unfunded pensions.

- 2.2 Depreciation is a non-cash charge, and is excluded from the expenditure tables in section 3.
- 2.3 The Scottish Government has allocated capital funding of £1.9m for 2021/22 and the Board approved a £1.9m capital budget in March. A request for an additional £100k of capital funding was discussed at a recent meeting with Sponsor Team and Scottish Government Finance Business Partner, and has been approved.

3. Revenue

- 3.1 The following table summarises the position to February by expense head:

Previous Full Year Actual £000	Expense Head	Budget Year to Feb £000	Actual Year to Feb £000	Variance Year to Feb £000	Full Year Budget £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Forecast Variance £000	Forecast Variance %
19,494	Staff Costs	19,431	19,366	-65	21,198	21,208	+10	0.0%
2,900	Property Costs	2,838	2,238	-600	3,097	2,944	-153	-4.9%
37	Travel Costs	150	51	-99	163	73	-90	-55.2%
2,273	Other Operating Charges	2,538	2,811	+273	2,769	2,655	-114	-4.1%
3	Capital Financing	3	2	-1	3	3	+0	0.0%
-481	Other Income	-411	-334	+77	-449	-404	+45	-10.0%
24,226	Sub-total	24,549	24,134	-415	26,781	26,479	-302	-1.1%
-25,694	Grant In Aid	-24,438	-23,877	+561	-26,660	-26,260	+400	-1.5%
-1,468	Net Total for SCRA	+111	+257	+146	+121	+219	+98	

- 3.2 Revenue expenditure in the year to date is £415k under budget. The staffing year to date underspend is expected to reverse over the rest of the year. The Property year to date underspend is largely on rent, rates, shared costs and repairs and maintenance. The Other Operating Charges year to date overspend has arisen on a number of lines, particularly ICT costs, offsetting underspends on legal fees, and Hearing and consumable costs such as postages.

3.3 The following table summarises the position, excluding depreciation and unfunded pensions, to February 2022 by budget centre.

Previous Full Year Actual £000	Cost centre	Budget Year to Feb £000	Actual Year to Feb £000	Variance Year to Feb £000	Full Year Budget £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Forecast Variance £000	Forecast Variance %
249	Communications	197	168	-29	215	190	-25	-11.6%
8,992	East and Central Scotland Area	8,572	8,592	+20	9,351	9,431	+80	0.9%
302	Executive	343	246	-97	375	298	-77	-20.5%
6,885	North West Scotland Area	6,582	6,567	-15	7,181	7,142	-39	-0.5%
1,170	Practice and Policy	1,320	1,214	-106	1,440	1,351	-89	-6.2%
6,627	Support Services	7,535	7,346	-189	8,220	8,067	-153	-1.9%
24,225	Net Total for SCRA	24,549	24,133	-416	26,782	26,479	-303	-1.1%

3.4 The forecast spend by Locality is detailed as follows:

Locality	Variance Year to Feb £000	Forecast Variance to March £000	Variance %
East & Central Scotland Office	+14	+13	+7.9%
Tayside And Fife Locality	+18	+39	+1.9%
South East Locality	+11	+2	+0.1%
Central Locality	-7	+0	+0.0%
Lanarkshire Dumfries & Galloway Locality	-40	-18	-0.8%
Ayrshire Locality	+24	+43	+2.7%
North West Area Office	+21	+23	+18.0%
Highlands And Islands Locality	+39	+14	+1.2%
Grampian Locality	+19	+11	+1.0%
North Strathclyde Locality	-16	-1	-0.0%
Glasgow Locality	-77	-86	-3.2%
	+6	+40	+0.2%

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

3.5 East and Central Scotland

Salary costs across all localities continue to forecast exceeding budgets by £168k to the end of the financial year with the exception of Lanarkshire, Dumfries and Galloway. This continues as a result of temporary supernumeraries and additional hours to support RAVHI project and additional specific overspends supported by savings of budget within Head Office. Savings of non-staff costs are forecast to be £88.6k and these are derived from savings in staff travel, postage and stationery.

3.6 North West

Staff costs are forecast to be £65.6k above budget by the end of the financial year. All localities expect to be above their salary budget by the year end with the exception of Glasgow which is mainly due to staff vacancies. Additional staff costs for RAVHI is the main driver for overspends in this area.

There are projected underspends in all non-staffing costs totalling £104.5k due to savings in travel, postage and stationery. There are also projected savings in property repairs and maintenance and energy costs, which offset the salary overspends.

3.7 Head Office

Support Services

Material items within the support services £153k forecast underspend are:

Cost centre	Over-spend	Under-spend	Comment
FN		(19)	Staff: Arising from vacancies (Accountant). Offset by some additional hours within team
PL		(75)	Staff net of income: Delayed recruitment to Promise Team
HR		(14)	Staff: Extensions to contracts in VH and Recovery Teams (in addition to RAVHI costs referenced in 3.5 and 3.6 above, in order to achieve organisational recovery as swiftly as possible). No further recruitment in RAVHI as staff move to permanent posts has reduced forecast.
HR		(27)	General training underspend (£12k) and IT training moving to 22-23 (£15k)
PR		(136)	Rent (£27k), rates (£23k), shared costs (£28k), repairs & maintenance (£60k). Reduction in general fixed and reactive maintenance offset by urgent roof repair in Dalkeith.
PR	42		Legal fees for agency work in Hamilton, Elgin and Alloa.
IT	75		SCOTS charges (new charging model)
IT	23		Docking stations, delayed from 20//21
IT	66		Digital programme research costs charged to revenue
IT	32		Hardware components charged to revenue
IT		(74)	CMS hosting savings arising from efficient and effective approach to decommissioning and Leidos costs
IT	32		Team restructure
PL		(64)	The £80k provision for a data solution for CSAS will not be fully required in 2021/22

Executive

Executive are forecasting £77k underspend due to savings on Operational Manager posts.

Press and Communications

An underspend of £25k is forecast due to a delayed recruitment of a Modern Apprentice and no staff event in 2021/22.

Practice and Policy (including Our Hearings, Our Voice)

Practice and Policy is forecasting an underspend of £89k due mainly to expected underspend on legal fees. Our Hearings, Our Voice anticipates spending to budget.

- 3.8 Sponsor Team encourages SCRA to report variances as early as possible, and there is strong monthly dialogue between Sponsor and SCRA, SCRA was required to confirm its resource needs before the Autumn Budget Review (ABR). Based on the December set of forecasts, SCRA committed to drawing down £26,260k of grant in aid and funding the balance of forecast spend from reserves (2020/21 underspend).

The current forecast revenue spend of £26,479k reported in 3.1 and 3.3, plus unfunded pension costs of £180k, means that SCRA forecasts a spend of £26,659k. This represents an overspend of £399k on in-year grant in aid, with this £399k being met from reserves.

4. Efficiencies

- 4.1 As approved by the Board in March 2021 efficiency savings of £153k (0.6%) have been targeted in 2021/22 (vacant space savings £15k, procurement savings £50k, Head Office staff savings £50k, Interpreting & Translating £13k, Locality initiatives £25k).
- 4.2 The Budget Efficiencies Group, Business Managers and Finance Manager focus on ensuring Locality efficiencies (both cash and time releasing) are tracked and captured for inclusion in efficiency reports in line with the organisation's Efficiency Framework.

5. Core Capital

- 5.1 Net expenditure in the period to February 2022 is £526k. Details of the budgets, actual spend and forecast are as follows:

	Board-approved Budget March 2021 £000	Adjustments £000	Available Budget 2021/22 £000	Actual YTD Feb £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Variance forecast to budget £000
Property Programme						
Aberdeen - meeting room/admin areas	25	35	60	3	66	6
Elgin – Hearing suite upgrade and staff areas	85		85	1	5	(80)
Glasgow – 2F-4F phase 3 development	100		100	10	110	10
Glenrothes 1F feasibility	20		20		5	(15)
Paisley - Hearing Suite alterations	15	25	40	1	54	14
Project contingency	80	(60)	20	14	18	(2)
Stirling – extend Hearing Suite into office space	50		50	30	40	(10)
LED Lighting retrofits	30		30		33	3
Livingston capital element of rent	45		45		45	0
Hearing Room Improvement Programme	100		100	43	141	41
Various condition surveys, upgrades, redecoration	50	28	78	8	148	70
Minor Works	100	97	197	60	139	(58)
Digital Programme						
Aim One – Maximising the organisational benefits from delivery of the CSAS MVP	392		392	194	392	0
Aim Two – Digitally Enabled Service Redesign	308		308	83	90	(218)
Aim Three – Strong Digital Governance and Ownership	450		450	23	418	(32)
CHS CSAS Development	0	117	117	56	250	133
Other projects						
Corporate projects	50		50		50	0
Total capital	1,900	242	2,142	526	2,004	(138)

- 5.2 The budget adjustments above reflect agreed use of reserves and transfers from contingency budget to projects in Aberdeen and Paisley. The forecast underspend of £21k on all property projects will be required along with the additional funding of £100k to complete 2021/22 projects in early 2022/23, namely Glenrothes (£15k), Hearing Room Improvements (£30k) and Minor Works, principally upgrading work following water risk assessments (£61k).
- 5.3 Discussions are almost concluded on Elgin's lease renewal and subject to final Scottish Government approval the planned reconfiguration work will take place in 2022/23. The original £85k was an estimate adopted some months ago prior to the scope being developed, the draft 2022/23 Capital Budget includes a sum of £130k following a reassessment of likely tender prices in the current market conditions.
- 5.4 Glasgow 2nd, 3rd and 4th floor works are underway, there is a slight risk that furniture will not be delivered on time.
- 5.5 The scope of works in Aberdeen and Paisley have been extended in discussion with local managers and it is anticipated that physical works can be completed by end March 2022. The work in Stirling to extend the hearing room is complete and a project underspend is forecast.
- 5.6 Furniture orders for the Hearing Room Improvement Programme have been placed and physical works are still expected to be completed in quarter four. There is a slight risk that furniture will not be delivered on time. Cost of works and fees are higher than previous years and additional works in Kirkwall are all contributing to an anticipated £40k overspend. The planned works in Alloa will now take place in 2022/23.
- 5.7 The Minor Works forecast has reduced to £139k from £201k forecast in December. The main reason for this change is expected delays on upgrading work following water risk assessments which will be carried out by the Facilities Management contractor.
- 5.8 Significant works arising from condition surveys will be progressed this year in Edinburgh and Kirkwall resulting in a forecast overspend of £70k on this budget. In addition urgent works to the Dalkeith roof will be treated as a repair and charged to revenue.
- 5.9 The Property Team have been managing a risk of capital underspend defined as "Lack of clear plans and insufficient capacity (Property Team and key suppliers) leads to delays in initiating projects which results in a significant underspend on the 2021/22 property capital budget." The Head of Property's mitigations have had some impact on the risk of underspend with main slippage issue being Elgin reconfiguration works.

Further risks to the Property Programme stemmed from procurement exercises and increased market volatility and uncertainty around prices and inflation.

- 5.10 The Digital Programme Director has developed three Digital Aims and Objectives for 2021/22. Aim One comprises CSAS development £316k and contingency £76k. Aim Two comprises external reporting development costs £66k, unallocated £36k, virtual hearing development £63k, improved hearing room connectivity £77k and user research/strategy consultancy £66k. Finally Aim Three comprises refresh of laptops and mobile devices £324k and programme consolidation activity (environments and technology refresh) £120k. The balance of available funding is £6k. The budget of £66k for user research/strategy consultancy and £32k of the laptop refresh budget has been transferred to revenue.

Actual spend to date is low, however laptops have now been delivered, invoices for the connectivity project have been received and there is increased activity on CSAS development work following action by the Digital Programme Director that will be billed shortly. Notwithstanding this activity, the global shortage of raw materials and refocusing of organisational priorities have made the effective spending of resource a particular challenge this year.

As SCRA owns CSAS, expenditure on CHS CSAS changes will be accounted for by SCRA. Scottish Government have approved a capital budget transfer of £117k for this investment.

- 5.11 Given the ongoing uncertainty around timing of delivery of capital projects on both the Property and Digital fronts, EMT is working with Sponsor to ensure resource is secured to complete 2021/22 projects early in 2022/23.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The overall accruals based revenue underspend forecast is £302k (1.1%). The revenue budget will be brought back into balance if there are no further changes to forecast and SCRA draws down grant in aid of £26.260m and contributes £399k from reserves. If capital slippage result in a capital underspend as currently forecast, EMT will work with Sponsor to ensure resource is available to cover this work in 2022/23.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 To note the revenue and capital positions for the year to February 2022.

East And Central Scotland Area

	Ayrshire Locality	East & Central Scotland Office	Central Locality	Lanarkshire Dumfries & Galloway Locality	South East Locality	Tayside And Fife Locality	Total
Staff Costs	+73.5	+18.2	+15.5	-11.8	+34.5	+38.5	+168.4
Property Costs	-9.3	-5.0	-0.8	+2.5	+2.5	+8.0	-2.1
Travel Costs	-5.5	+0.2	-2.0	-7.5	-12.0	-11.0	-37.8
Other Operating Charges	-15.8	-0.3	-12.4	-1.3	-22.7	+3.8	-48.7
Total	+42.9	+13.1	+0.3	-18.1	+2.3	+39.3	+79.8

North And West Scotland Area

	North West Area Office	Highlands And Islands Locality	Grampian Locality	North Strathclyde Locality	Glasgow Locality	Total
Staff Costs	+24.0	+47.5	+5.0	+19.0	-29.9	+65.6
Property Costs	+0.0	-3.5	+0.0	-5.0	-5.5	-14.0
Travel Costs	-1.0	-18.0	-5.0	-8.0	-3.0	-35.0
Other Operating Charges	+0.0	-12.5	+11.0	-6.5	-47.5	-55.5
Total	+23.0	+13.5	+11.0	-0.5	-85.9	-38.9

Head Office

	Communications	Executive	Finance	Human Resources	Information Systems	Planning	Practice & Policy	Property	Total
Staff Costs	-14.5	-77.0	-7.0	-41.0	+32.0	-118.0	-3.0	+5.0	-223.5
Property Costs	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	-136.7	-136.7
Travel Costs	+0.0	+0.0	-1.5	+1.0	-7.0	-3.5	-5.6	-1.2	-17.8
Other Operating Charges	-10.5	+0.0	-10.0	-4.0	+125.5	-73.0	-80.0	+42.1	-9.9
Capital Financing	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0
Other Income	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+0.0	+43.0	+0.0	+1.5	+44.5
Total	-25.0	-77.0	-18.5	-44.0	+150.5	-151.5	-88.6	-89.3	-343.4



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Senior Operational Manager Reviews 2021/22

Accountable Director : SOMs North West and East Central

Date : 15.03.22

Report Author : Helen Etchells, Paul Mulvanny, Myrian Lazo.

Recommendation:

1. To note the outcome of the 2021/22 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 Locality Performance Reviews (LPRs) are part of the established cycle which cover all aspects of operations. This year, the LPRs have been carried out against the background of the continued response to the Covid19 pandemic and the organisational response to that. This report sets out the approach to and findings of the reviews which were carried out in January and February 2022.

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.

Due to the ongoing response to the pandemic, the implementation of the Standard Operating Model and the transition to the Teams based Virtual Hearings Platform, the time was not right to undertake LPRs in the autumn of 2021 and these were postponed to the start of 2022 on a planned basis. Notwithstanding the organisational response to the Omicron variant, the LPRs took place as planned in January and February this year.

Recognising that there remains a challenge in short and long term planning given the ongoing impact of Covid19, the uncertainty and constant shift, LMTs were asked to focus on:

- Progress against Locality Plans – What progress has been made against key priorities and what are the main challenges that remain outstanding? What are the areas of continued focus? What should be carried over into next year and what has been superseded?
- Performance snapshot – What does this add to the picture on progress and areas of continued challenge?
- Reflecting on the local Staff Survey return, what are the key messages and observations for the Locality team?

In addition to being an opportunity to take stock, LPRs are influential in setting the operational priorities for 2022/23. Every participant was asked to identify their top 3 priorities for 2022/23.

Each LMT was provided with a pack of information which comprised:

- ZOHO update on progress against the Locality Plan
- Performance snapshot
- Locality Staff Survey return.

3. Progress against locality plans

This is the first full year in which we have used ZOHO to track progress against Locality Plans. At Appendix 1, there is a ZOHO report which shows the progress that has been made across all 9 localities.

The value of ZOHO has become very apparent this year, both in allowing progress to be tracked in real time and in showing how progress is being made against the Corporate Plan at locality level. The ZOHO report shows that good progress has been made, across all 9 Localities against planned activity.

The Board is asked to note progress in these specific areas :

3.1 Resourcing has been challenging but well managed

Good workforce planning is embedded across localities and the proactive management of vacancies has helped morale. Many new people have joined Locality teams this year and there have been opportunities for progression for existing employees, including secondments. Support teams in particular have been in flux as a result of support for central teams, the Virtual Hearings Team and Organisational Helpdesk in particular, and recruiting backfill has been challenging in some areas. The time and resourcing required to train new starts has been considerable and there are a high number of Reporters and Assistant Reporters now undertaking the Professional Development Award which will place pressure on Locality teams in the coming years.

Localities are considering the shape and composition of the operational teams which are required now and in the future and this is causing some understandable anxiety about the future, particularly for those in support roles.

The support of the Recovery Team has been appreciated in supporting recovery work and some pockets of sickness absence. Recovery Team members have been made welcome in the host teams who have inducted them and ensured their training. Locality Teams are now thinking about succession of the temporary Recovery Team into substantive posts.

3.2 Time challenge/capacity/productivity

There remains a strong sense within some locality teams of being in “survival mode” and focusing on the core elements of roles and responsibilities. That has inevitably impacted on staff participation in wider work including participation with EDI and health and wellbeing activity. It has also impact on learning and development (see also earlier comments on the PDA) and may impact engagement with Promise work unless addressed.

Other teams are in a better position and shared a sense of having turned the corner. There was a feeling that being able to get a clear run at the work, gaining confidence and experience in the new ways of working, meant that people are feeling increasingly at ease and that, were it not for Omicron, good progress is being made.

Addressing productivity and optimising the efficiency of our processes and the way we are working post pandemic is a key focus for work in 2022, to return to a point where people feel that their work can fit into the working week. People continue to go above and beyond to maintain the service but this level of goodwill cannot be maintained indefinitely.

3.3 Health and Wellbeing and Equalities

The LPRs underlined the importance of having structures and scaffolding in place locally to ensure high levels of awareness of the importance of health and wellbeing and effective delivery of staff led initiatives to promote it. We heard some excellent

examples of local groups that are embedded in Localities, and of their reach and impact. There has been good local work that has supported agile working and team cohesion.

All localities were tasked with having a formal wellbeing group or mechanism in place in 2021/22. The teams without formal structures or with a less developed response and who have invested less in health and wellbeing, demonstrated less resilience in response to the pressures of the pandemic. Support will be provided by those localities with more mature mechanisms to the teams where the wellbeing offer is less well developed.

The use of the Wellness Plan tool which was introduced in 2021 has been patchy but the value of the questions it asked is acknowledged. Those managers who have used it with their teams spoke of its value in promoting wellbeing.

Engagement with equalities has been inconsistent this year both as a result of time pressure and the reframing of EDI within the organisation. There is a strong desire to resume this activity in 2022 and to link it to Health and Wellbeing activity, using EDI as scaffolding to embed a culture of kindness through greater EDI awareness.

3.4 Unprecedented change in service delivery

Operational teams are still adapting to the changes to systems and increased complexity in court and hearings which have resulted from the pandemic and changes in our own case management system. Systems are still being optimised across the organisation. It was widely acknowledged that the position with CSAS is much better than it was 12 months ago and there is increased confidence across teams although some individuals still need, and are receiving, intensive support.

In general locality teams like the Standard Operating Model (SOM) and are using it. There has been good engagement with future developments and systems improvement. Concern was expressed about who does what within the SOM and it has been described as too “tasky” and transactional. There is a desire for increased automation and efficiency where possible.

The move to a Teams based Virtual Hearings platform is generally viewed positively and an improvement on the previous platform. There is a desire to return Virtual Hearings functions to local teams and for simplicity in the processes which currently feel over engineered.

Inevitably, this has had an impact on people and there is uncertainty about roles and future change. The need to skill people up to adapt to changing roles is acknowledged but clarity about the scope of future roles is desired.

3.5 Digital

Good progress made improving infrastructure and digital kit within hearing centres and where support has been provided by the Digital Team on the ground, this has been very much appreciated. Some remaining challenges have been identified but the issues are known and work is ongoing to resolve them.

There is an acknowledged need for an office manager role to support use of tech in local offices and teams are generally receptive to this. One option may be to upskill Locality Support Managers.

3.6 Agile working

Significant progress to embed agile working has been made in some teams and there were well developed reflections on agile working. Some of the progress which was made in 2021 was impacted by restrictions caused by Omicron. There has been some reluctance to return to the office by those with a strong preference for home working, though the vast majority are reported to be happy with a balance between home and office based working.

The impact on team cohesion, knowledge sharing, health and wellbeing and connections between people were identified as key challenges of home working. Some issues of parity and fairness between roles and across teams is still to be worked through but teams are working together to find the best fit. Further support is needed for managers to help them to help their teams to optimise this way of working which remains new for the organisation.

3.7 Learning and Development

Participation in L&D has been impacted by the pandemic but is beginning to resume including local L&D led by Senior Practitioners. There is strong desire to resume L&D but this is impacted by the time pressure felt within teams.

The benefits of the availability of virtual L&D and bite size training was noted. There is a desire to ensure that everyone has an up to date Personal Development Plan but people have not had time to do so. In response to the changes of the last two years, the organisation must ensure that L&D meets the needs of staff. There has been significant training on the changes to sibling legislation and the Standard Operating Model and people have had to learn changes to practice and new ways of processing work.

Some L&D is invisible on itrent and the SOMs will raise this with HR.

3.8 Partnership

Close partnership work remains a core activity and there has been constant liaison with local partners throughout 2021. There have been challenges. Local Authorities have been subject to similar challenges to ourselves and significant risk was highlighted in some areas around vacant social work posts and our ability to receive the necessary information for children at the right time. Liaison with courts has been spiky. Within ASTs, there have been pockets of panel member resistance to some elements of pandemic service delivery such as virtual hearings and electronic papers which has made progress challenging.

There has though been fairly wide local engagement on the Promise, mainly as ongoing improvement work through Better Hearings structures.

3.9 Change management

LMTs reflected that, throughout 2021, there continued to be a lot of change in a small window. The agility and speed of response to the restrictions imposed by Omicron was reassuring and the short notice changes to service delivery were largely viewed as a non event. There is a strong desire for the organisation to pace change and improvement activity in 2022/23. Reflections on change management included helpful feedback on the volume and method of communication and the visibility of EMT which we will develop in 2022/23. This will be a focus for improvement in the coming year.

3.10 Property work

There has been significant property work this year including projects in Glasgow, Paisley, Dumbarton, Stirling, Falkirk, Alloa and Aberdeen, promoting better use of space and improving the office environment in ways which supports agile working.

3.11 Leadership

The care, support and devotion which managers continue to provide their teams shone through. There have been excellent examples of proactive problem solving, agility and imaginative and flexible solutions in a continually changing environment. Managers have responded well to the challenges of agile working although the more “command and control” approach has worked less well than a culture of enabling confident people to work autonomously. Managers are being offered further support to develop their skills and knowledge in this new way of working.

The challenge of being a locality manager and the impact on individuals is acknowledged. They occupy a challenging position, facing the push and pull of implementing the strategic and operational objectives of the organisation while leading, motivating and caring for the people in their operational teams. This is a challenging role at any time but particularly two years into pandemic.

Once again, they have done an exceptional job.

4. Performance

We reported last year that, as a result of the pandemic affecting teams differently, progress against recovery metrics had been variable across the organisation however our stated aim was that we would seek to ensure that all localities would reach a return to a steady state by the end of 2021/22.

There is currently no significant backlog around hearings nor are there decision being made where hearings are not being scheduled. While some pockets of delay remain, these are being tackled appropriately within teams.

In terms of the recovery metrics which we have reported against, we are now able to say that we have reached a recovered position. This was reflected in the feedback received from LMTs in the course of the LPRs but is caveated by the additional context and detail provided in this report. While the recovery metrics are positive, there is still further work to be done to embed and improve upon the multiple changes to the operational model which have been introduced in the last two years and to mitigate the impact that this has had on operational teams.

However, we cannot ignore the impact of the pandemic on partner agencies and where they are in recovery terms. Some local authority social work teams are reporting challenging staffing conditions and this could potentially impact referrals from those teams and our ability to make decisions without sufficient information. The courts are still impacted and proofs are taking longer to conclude than pre pandemic.

5. Staff Survey

LMTs commented that the Staff Survey had been a challenging read in places but that there were many positives to be taken from the local returns and most comments were more positive than negative. Reflections were open and honest and the Staff Survey

will be used as a start point to ask further questions and probe further with their teams and to inform the focus for activity in 2022/23.

6. Next steps

The SOMs continue to work closely with LRMs and LMTs to ensure regular and timely communication of organisational priorities and decisions and full and detailed feedback of the operational position. This has ensured that detailed operational feedback is fed into decision making and planning by EMT.

LRMs are involved in developing the Operational Plan for 2022/23, a draft of which is attached at Annexure 2. This addresses the challenges and priority areas identified and highlighted during the LPRs and picks up actions from the Staff Survey. The objectives in the Operational Plan will be adopted in Locality Plans for 2022/23.

Planning and performance are the domain of the Planning and Performance Network (PPN). It is now meeting regularly again and provides the forum for LRMs to come together to keep the Operational Plan under review and to ensure that its aims and objectives remain current.

7. Conclusion

The response of our people to the personal and professional pressures of the pandemic remains extraordinary. We must not ignore the cumulative impact of working and living in a pandemic for two years.

The SOM reviews were an opportunity to recognise the progress that locality teams have continued to make. They were an opportunity to gather detailed feedback from the frontline, to reflect on the continuing organisational response to the pandemic, to identify new and continuing challenges and to plan for the future.

The SOMs are able to assure the Board that, notwithstanding the significant challenges which the pandemic continued to present in 2022, the operational response has ensured that, not only has a continuous service been provided, we are at or close to reaching a recovered position by reference to the recovery performance metrics. In addition significant progress has been made in embedding and improving our key digital strategies, CSAS, the SOM and Virtual Hearings.

However, there is further work to be done to optimise and improve the efficiencies of our processes and systems and to ensure the confidence and productivity of our people. The long term impact of the pandemic on everyone in the organisation cannot be understated and the wellbeing of our people must remain a priority in the coming year.

8. Recommendation

To note the outcome of the Locality Performance Reviews.

Annexure 1

ZOHO summary

The following (Image 1) provides a monthly breakdown of tasks completed versus planned for all locality plans.

Open Tasks: Refers to all the open (live) tasks (**168**).
 Closed Tasks Includes the total tasks completed (**257**).
 Closed Task %: The total percentage of completed tasks (**60.5%**).
 Overdue Tasks: All tasks that are overdue up to 21st February 2022 (**21**).

Image 1.



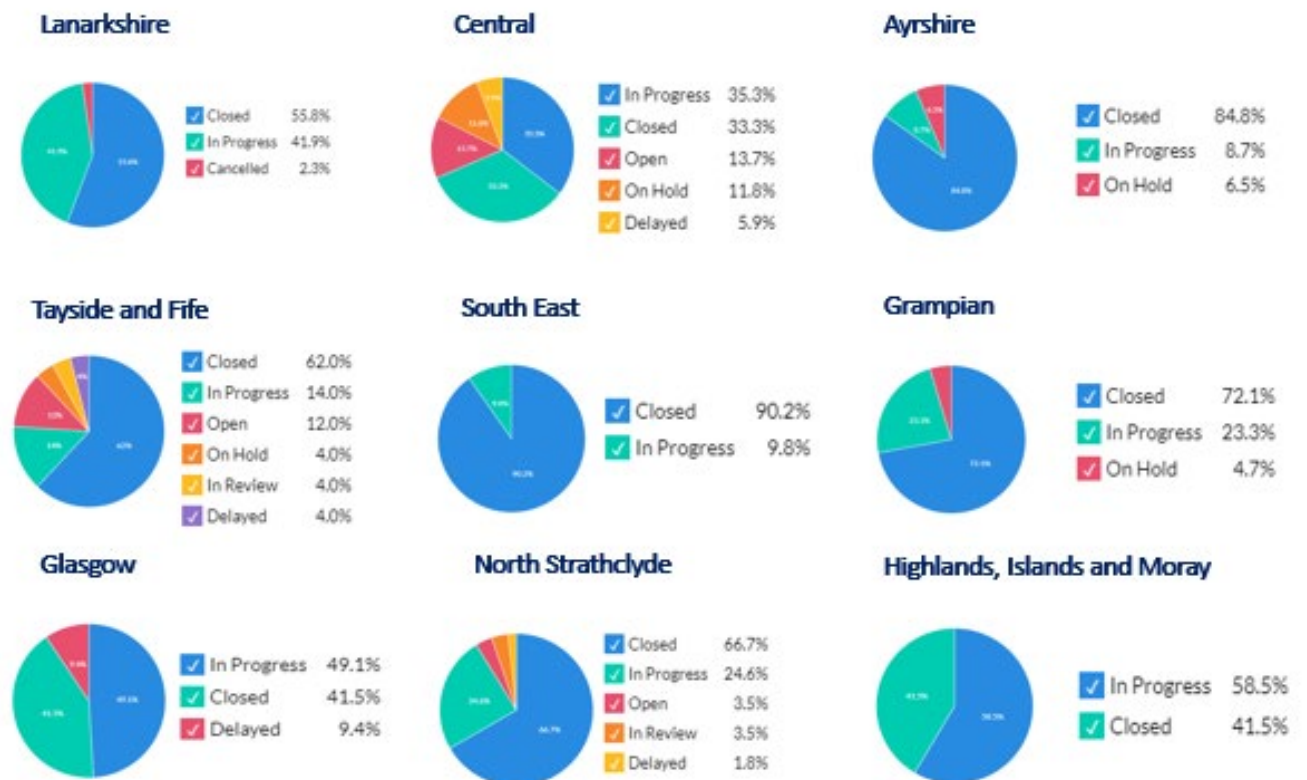
A breakdown of the task(s) status per locality plan is presented in image 2.

Image 2.

	Open	In Progress	In Review	On Hold	Closed	Delayed	Cancelled	Total Tasks
Ayrshire		4		3	39			46
Central	7	18		6	17	3		51
Glasgow		26			22	5		53
Grampian		10		2	31			43
Highlands and Islands and Moray		24			17			41
Lanarkshire, Dumfries & Galloway		18			24		1	43
North Strathclyde	2	14	2		38	1		57
South East		4			37			41
Tayside and Fife	6	7	2	2	31	2		50
Total	15	125	4	13	256	11	1	425

Image 3 provides a percentage chart of the task(s) status for each locality.

Image 3.



Annexure 2

Operational Plan 2022/23

Annexure 2

Operational Plan 2022/23

Operational Plan 2022-23							
CP Ref	Org. Priorities No.	Priority (H,M,L)	Objectives	Actions	Lead(s)	Timescale	
						Start	End
CP:1.2	P3.1 P3.2 P4.1	High	1: Contribute towards and support the work of SCRA's KTP Team.	1.1: Participate in development of qualitative improvements aligned to the Promise Routeplan including alignment of the Standard Operating Model with The Promise.			
				1.2: Support digital engagement with children, young people and families.			
				1.3: Re-engage with local champions boards to take forward the Promise Routeplan.			
				1.4: Work collaboratively with local partners to support and implement The Promise through existing improvement work and to ensure alignment and cohesion in system wide improvements.			
				1.5: Promote and ensure engagement by all managers and locality teams on consultations on reform of the Hearing System outline in Plan 2021-24.			
CP:1.5	P1.6	High	2: Develop a digitally confident and mature workforce.	2.1 : Participate in a baseline assessment of digital skills and analysis of training required.			
				2.2: Promote and support L&D to address assessed skills gaps and ensure digital confidence and maturity.			
				2.3: Identify and train locality digital leads to promote the use of digital tools, ensure hardware is operational and lead digital L&D.			
CP:3.2	P1.2	High	3: Embed a flexible and agile working model.	3.1: Revisit and refine local implementation of the Agile Working Policy.			
				3.2: Provide L&D to support managers leading dispersed teams.			

Annexure 2

Operational Plan 2022/23

				3.3: Review and develop model of flexible service delivery and cross locality support, including preparing for ending of resource and support provided by temporary recovery team.			
CP:3.2	P1.1	High	4: Ensure organisation is ready and equipped for improvement and transformational change.	4.1: Assess and identify skills gaps and ensure managers and their teams have the necessary information, skills and tools to successfully lead and deliver change and to be confident participants in change.			
				4.2: Provide support and capacity to effectively plan for and successfully implement change.			
				4.3: Review and improve contact and engagement between local teams and the senior team to improve transparency and approachability.			
CP:3.3	P1.3 P1.4	High	5: Promote and ensure staff wellbeing.	5.1: Deliver national and local programmes to ensure physical and mental wellbeing and resilience of individuals and teams.			
				5.2 : Support and implement wellbeing activities and changes which enhance people's experience of work.			
				5.3: Review and update L&D plans and PDPs, to reflect individual and organisational objectives.			
				5.4 : Support and promote access to learning and development opportunities to support development and ensure people are skilled to deliver individual and organisational objectives.			
				5.5 : Review and update Senior Practitioner led locality L&D to reflect team and organisational objectives.			
				5.5: Embed and promote regular learning and development time for individuals and teams.			
CP:2.5	P1.5 P1.7	Med	6: Promote the equality, diversity and inclusion in the workforce.	6.1: Promote a culture where people feel included, valued respected and cared for, promoting rights, equalities and inclusion.			
				6.2 : Work with HR Partners to implement e-recruitment.			

Annexure 2

Operational Plan 2022/23

CP:3.2		Med	7: Work towards improving environmental sustainability.	7.1: Work collaboratively with the Property Team, and share best practice with Localities to enable the delivery of the 2021-24 Locality Sustainability Plan towards Net Zero			
CP2.5	P2.1	High	8: Develop and embed an agile effective operating model.	8.1: Align the reviewed staff profile to effectively deliver the Standard Operating Model.			
				8.2: Participate in developing best practice in operation of CSAS, Practice Direction and operational process.			
				8.3: Implement a balanced model for national and local management of virtual hearings.			
				8.4: Participate in development of further iteration of the Standard Operating Model to reflect user feedback, expand its scope to include virtual hearings and develop best practice on hearing arrangement in alignment with The Promise.			
	P2.2	High	9: Engage with developments to optimise and enhance the operating model for effective and efficient service delivery.	9.1: Engage with consultation on and development of core operational systems architecture to maximise ease of use and efficiencies.			
				9.2: Engage with review and development of the ongoing need for virtual hearings post pandemic and its coupling with CSAS.			
				9.3: Engagement by localities through Digital Champions to optimise the CSAS MVP and deliver enhancements where the existing functionality can/should be improved.			

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION
ANNUAL WORKFORCE REPORT

Accountable Lead: Head of Human
Resources

Date: 22nd March, 2022

Recommendations:

1. To note the composition of the current workforce
2. Approve the workforce report for 2022/23 in line with Year 3 of the 2020/2024 People Strategy.

Reason for Report: For Board discussion

Resource Implications: Within approved budgets

Strategy: Corporate Plan
People Strategy
Operational Strategy

Consultation: Executive Management Team
UNISON
HR Sub Group

Equalities Duties EHRIA completed and submitted to ERG
Outcome - a positive impact on all staff regardless of protected characteristics with a clear focus on wellbeing and attracting a more diverse range of applicants to SCRA and supporting their development and progression.

Document Classification: Not Protectively Marked

1. Introduction

- 1.1 SCRA's People Strategy originally set the strategic direction for our workforce until 2023. As a supporting strategy to the extended Corporate Plan, the strategic aims of the People Strategy is now in place until 2024. The Annual workforce report for 2022/23 aims to meet the third year of the People Strategy, and the objectives of this plan are also included in our Business Plan for the same period.
- 1.2 Whilst this workforce plan has real ambition in continuing to support and develop our people, as well as align our work with the Promise Route Map, we are cognisant that our people started 2022 with ongoing COVID-19 restrictions in place and anticipated challenging cost of living indications, both of which have clearly impacted on wellbeing. Added to that our staff tell us workload capacity continues to impact morale and a general feeling of fatigue has been described. We do, however, see some positive 'green shoots' appearing as some of the restrictions being to lift and people can gradually begin to phase back to more office based work alongside their colleagues. This is something that is important for our workforce.
- 1.3 The particular challenge we have for workforce planning in 2022/23 is balancing the need for a period of consolidation and stability with the need to continue to improve and enhance our processes in our service delivery. These improvements aim to release capacity and efficiencies to be refocused on our improvement programme and developments, and productivity, as well as releasing individual capacity to engage in workgroups, consultations, communications and team developments.
- 1.4 The investment in our workforce over the next 12 – 18 months will focus on ensuring we have a skilled and confident workforce, through learning and development, resilience and wellbeing, releasing their digital capabilities, reviewing what roles and responsibilities we need now and in the future as well as preparing our managers and our people to be able to manage change. To enable us to do this, we know that workforce planning is a key aspect of how we will achieve that.
- 1.5 Given our experiences over the past two years, we know that things don't remain constant therefore, this workforce plan has to be flexible and responsive to the challenges ahead. It will be reviewed regularly, in partnership, to ensure its continued fit with the business, purpose and objectives of other supporting strategies.
- 1.6 What we achieved in the 2021/22 Workforce Plan in what was arguably another challenging year for staff is highlighted in Appendix 1. The planned actions for 2022/23 are detailed at Appendix 2.

2. Our Workforce Data

- 2.1 To ensure that we plan accurately and appropriately, it is essential that we understand the composition of our workforce, and what actions/plans we might need to put in place based on what that tells us.
- 2.2 We have advised that we do not intend to reduce the headcount of our workforce through any VR/VER programmes in 2022/23. Our focus is the retention of our skilled people so that we are able to plan and prioritise the outcomes of our work in Keeping the Promise as well as meeting the outcomes of the 2022/23 business plan. It is important, however, as we start to understand the impact of the Promise work on the shape of our workforce, we remain flexible in our consideration of this as we develop a planned approach to potential VR/VER opportunities in future years.
- 2.3 We introduced our Agile Working Policy in September 2021 which offers staff the opportunity to work, in a balanced way, between the office and home/remotely. Whilst the COVID-19 restrictions have been in place throughout 2021, the advice being work from home if you can, it is really only now that we will see Localities maximising the use of the policy. We have committed to reviewing the policy regularly in partnership to ensure it continues to meet our needs. Regardless of agile working, SCRA has a long history of offering staff the opportunities to work flexibly, and we have an extensive range of opportunities including full-time, part-time, job share, term-time, compressed hours and secondments and we saw a slight increase in part-time working of 2% in 2021/22. Whilst we remain committed to promoting and offering flexible working patterns, we have to be cognisant of the impact that this can have on the size of management to staff ratios (in terms of headcount) as well as perpetuating the female workforce turnover as it is predominantly women (as the main carers) who seek part-time working.

61% of employees are full-time with
39% working part-time (96% of
all part-time workers are female)

- 2.4 88% of our employees are female and 12% are male – a consistent figure with 2021. The majority of our support roles are undertaken by female employees, which in itself has a significant impact on SCRA's reported gender pay gap, which although reduced slightly in 2021, remains high. The high percentage of female employees has a direct correlation on the level of part-time working across the organisation.

96% of all staff earning
below £26k are female –
this is the same as 2020/21

The average length of service is 12.6 years – a marginal increase of 0.13 years from 2020/21 data

2.5 Whilst the average length of service is as outlined above, a fifth of our workforce has over 20 years' service, of which over 7% have 30+ years' service. This shape provides a wealth of experience amongst our people.

2.6 The average age of staff is 46.4 years of age, which is a decrease of 0.1 years on 2020/21. 31% (163 headcount) of staff are currently over the age of 50, with a further 8.7% (45 headcount) over the age of 60. The age profile of our staff remains as a strategic risk in terms of succession planning and the potential loss of skills and experience. Locality and Head Office Managers are actively considering what this might mean for them in terms of succession planning.

There were 74 internal recruitment exercises, which lead to 27 external recruitment exercises

Composition of staff over the age of 50
Frontline Support Staff – 37% (-6%)
Frontline Reporter Staff – 31% (+1%)
Head Office/Management – 32% (+5%)

2.7 Recruitment activity increased throughout 2021 which saw an increase of 37% in recruiting to vacancies. This is as a result of the implementation of a Virtual Hearings Team and an Organisational Helpdesk Team which saw around circa 30 fte staff seconded to these roles. Localities required to backfill these secondments which increased the level of recruitment.

2.8 This activity has had a consequential impact on the number of fixed term contracts. In January 2022, there were 55.23 fte fixed term employees working on temporary contracts with end dates ranging from March 2022 to March 2023. This is an increase of 16.73 fte since 2020 and equates to around 13.5% of all contracts. This number does not include staff in substantive posts who have been seconded to temporary teams/positions within the organisation. SCRA have historically managed fixed term contracts at around a 5% - 6% level to cover business as usual requirements. We have committed to reducing the our use of fixed term contracts over the next 12 months, seeking to recruit and retain trained staff into substantive vacancies as they arise. Unfortunately, it is possible that we may not be able to retain all fixed term staff and our procedures will be followed appropriately to support staff where that is the case.

2.9 Turnover for the 12 month period from 28/02/21 is 7.8% which is an increase of 2.2%. This is higher than SCRA has experienced for a number of years but can be explained by a number of staff moving on through ill-health, early retirement as well as staff on fixed term contracts moving on to substantive posts elsewhere.

- 2.8 The agreed core establishment at 31st December 2021 is broken down as follows:-

Role	2021	2020	2019	2018
Caretaker/Security	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.6
Support Assistant (Reception)	33.98	34.03	33.91	33.17
Support Administrator	96.22	95.38	97.7	97.1
Locality Support Manager	19.75	20.06	21.89	22.53
Assistant Reporter	35.59	35.54	24.37	23.88
Reporter	114.04	113.35	116	115.8
Senior Practitioner	18.6	17.01	15.18	15.18
Locality Reporter Manager	20.5	20.11	21.86	21.91
Business Manager	2	2	2	2
Area Assistant	1	1	1	1
EMT (including PR/CE)	8	7	7.5	7.5
Head Office roles (management)	60.44 (Mgt 16)	55.94 (Mgt 13.9)	53.44 (Mgt 15.4)	54.01 (mgt 14.5)
Total	410.72	402.62	396.05	395.68

- 2.9 The core establishment has increased by 8.1 fte over the past 12 months through reshaping and restructure. The core establishment is further supported by two Modern Apprentices/Trainee Support Administrators and a number of other non-core roles. SCRA are also hosting the Our Hearings Our Voice project which is being led by a secondment from CELCIS.
- 2.10 Management roles make up 15.6% of all posts across the organisation (an increase of 1.6% from last year).
- 2.11 Head Office represents 14.7% of the establishment which is a reduction of 1.7% compared to 2020/21, however, a significant percentage of those staff are front facing business partners and data providers who support statutory requirements such as production of accounts, property provision and procurement, or transactional staff for example payroll and IT systems management.
- 2.13 Short term sickness absence for 2021 (as at 31st December 2021) was 1.5% (up 0.37% from 2020), well within our 2% target. We had always anticipated that the focused work we would undertake on sickness absence would have the most impact on short term absence. Long term absence is less predictable and our absence rate of 4% (up 0.6% from 2020) remains higher than our target of 2%.

- 2.14 This absence rate is the equivalent of 12 days per employee, which has increased this year by around 2 days. We have not been able to benchmark ourselves this year against the CIPD Health and Wellbeing at Work Report 2021. CIPD¹ have stated:-

“The COVID-19 pandemic has already posed unimaginable risks to populations across the globe. Its impact has extended directly into UK workplaces and is obvious across a number of our survey findings. The huge disruption caused to employee attendance means this is the first time in 20 years that we haven’t been able to provide a reliable sickness absence rate, for example. The survey also highlights a very high level of concern on the part of HR professionals for people’s mental health as a result of the challenges they face”.

- 2.15 The highest recorded reason in 2021 of 39% of all absence was attributed to Psychological absences, which include stress symptoms, anxiety, depression etc.. This is the same as in 2020 and the table below shows the breakdown across this %age. In terms of per capita absences, this equates to around 5 days for Reporters staff, 5 days for Support staff, just under 3 days for Managers and just over 7 days for Head Office staff.. We see a spike in head office absences, some of which can be attributed to a small number of staff being absent as a result of close family bereavements. The mental health and wellbeing of our people is at the core of all our strategies including our corporate and business plans.

	Psychological Absences	
	2021	2020
Head Office	21%	1.86%
Manager	5%	2.79%
Reporter	41%	49.92%
Support	33%	45.43%

- 2.16 SCRA is taking action to increase the diversity of our workforce (see para 3.6) . We have recognised that we have made insufficient headway in this area over a number of years. Through our Inclusion, Diversity and People action plans, we are seeking to engage the support from third party and external groups in helping us to inform our strategy and reach those communities that are under-represented in our workforce. We will aim to understand what the barriers are to applying to work with SCRA, increasing our visibility as an employer and providing the necessary support to encourage a broader and more diverse pool of candidates to SCRA.

- 2.17 In the meantime, whilst overall, recording in this area is lower this year, our workforce is comprised as follows:-

- **Disability:** We are a “Disability Confident” employer with 4.2% of our staff having declared a disability although we believe the actual figure covered by the Equality Act 2010 will be higher. This is a decrease of 0.7% on 2020. We continue to work toward becoming a Disability Confident Leader. Occupational Health continue to work with our managers and staff to identify

¹ CIPD Health & Wellbeing at Work Report 2021

the reasonable adjustments that could be implemented to provide the appropriate support for each individual at work

- **Ethnic Origin:** Our ethnicity data shows the majority of our staff are white 63.8% (down 6.5% from 2020), BAME 2.3% (increase of 0.3%) and 33.9% (up 6.2%) of staff have chosen not to declare. We would expect these figures to improve following our next monitoring campaign.
- **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** The majority of our staff are married/in a civil partnership/living with a partner/are widowers/in relationships at 43.5% (down 6.3%), with 12.5% being single (up 0.4%) and 43.9% (up 5.8%) of staff choosing not to declare or recording 'other'.
- **Pregnancy and Maternity:** SCRA currently has 17 staff on maternity/adoption leave. For many years now, we have had 100% of our staff returning to work following adoption/maternity/ paternity leave.
- **Religion and Belief:** The majority of SCRA staff (74%) have not declared their religion/belief, 6.9% recording they have no religion/belief with 19.1% stating that they do have a religion/belief.
- **Sexual Orientation:** We know that in terms of sexual orientation: 72.3% of staff have chosen not to declare, 25.2% (up 2.2%) are heterosexual and 2.5% (up 0.7%) are LGBT.
- **Gender Reassignment:** No staff have advised of their transition or intent to transition their gender.

3. Workforce Planning Objectives for 2022/23

- 3.1 Appendix 2 details the planned objectives and actions for 2022/23. These objectives align with SCRA's Business Plan and respond to the high level issues which arose from the 2021 staff survey. These have been developed to help us support a productive and resilient workforce that will be able to plan and focus on change/future change, be flexible in their roles to meet the needs of our service whilst at the same time engaging in the development within the organisation and prioritising their personal and professional learning and development. Underpinning all of that is our wellbeing and inclusion strategies that aim to promote a positive culture and working environment.
- 3.2 Whilst we will remain flexible in our approach and may prioritise other actions throughout the year if required, some of the committed actions are outlined in the following paragraphs.

A learning culture

3.3 SCRA has implemented a Learning Network, which brings together leads from across the organisation who have some responsibility for the identification/development of learning needs. This group has developed the Learning Strategy and associated plan for 2022 – 2024 [Learning Development Plan 2022/23](#). The strategy aims to provide a blend of learning options for all staff across management development, professional and practice training, further education opportunities, career pathway planning as well as corporate and self-directed learning. Our aim is to reinvigorate a two way commitment to corporate and individual learning and development increasing access to a wide variety of options for learning ensuring that this approach is aligned to the Promise Route map and complements our wellbeing and inclusion strategies. The Learning Plan and Strategy will focus on:

- Developing a Learning Hub on Connect to publicise our learning and development opportunities for all staff and provide wider access to internal and external courses and learning events.
- Developing our approach to Continuing Professional Development for staff publicising opportunities on our Learning Hub.
- Embedding our Learning Network and establishing strong links with our Localities and Head Office Teams to ensure learning and development needs are identified and reflected in our Learning Plan
- Further development and embedding of Personal Development Planning to ensure all staff have the development required for their role and future career development.
- Consideration of our approaches to learning and development, including using virtual technologies, to provide a blended approach to learning in SCRA
- Our continued commitment to Management Development and Women into Leadership programmes
- Maximising the use of our e-hr system to facilitate personal development planning and learning needs analysis as well as recording and reporting on our learning activities.
- Establishing a process for feedback, evaluation and reflection on our learning and development provision to ensure our development opportunities meet the needs of staff.

A focus on wellbeing

3.4 We will research, design, develop and deliver a Wellbeing Strategy which supports and implements wellbeing activities and changes which enhance our employee's experience of work. The Strategy will bring together into one place, wellbeing goals and activities being led out nationally and locally. Through this work we will achieve the nationally recognised Mental Health Standards at Work accreditation, and build on our existing Healthy Working Lives accreditation, both of which measure our wellbeing performance and culture. Specific activities will be agreed within the Mental Wealth and Health and Wellbeing Groups.

3.5 The HR Sub Group, a sub group of the National Partnership Forum, have agreed the policies to be reviewed/developed in 2022. We intend to engage with staff on these developments in a range of ways. For example, the work that is being done on Inclusive Behaviours and Staff Code of Conduct will require significant consultation with the workforce whereas, a review of the Volunteering Policy will require less consultation within the group. The Policies are as follows:-

- Staff Code of Conduct *
- Performance Appraisal (as it is related to Supervision)
- Right to Disconnect Policy
- Career Break
- Volunteering Policy
- Ongoing review of Agile Working Policy and associated policies/guidance.

* this policy will require to be approved by the Board in due course in line with the Board's Governance Framework.

Workforce Diversity

3.6 We have for some time recognised the need to increase the diversity of our workforce. Active steps are being taken to increase diversity from black and ethnic minority communities through seeking external support and advice on our recruitment approaches and reviewing our recruitment pages to include more information on our commitment and approach to inclusion (as well as using real life case studies). We are also considering the impact of our recruitment adverts and their placement as well benchmarking ourselves against the SG Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit, we need to also focus our activity across the range of protected characteristics. For example, there is a real need to balance the gender split across our workforce, particularly in support roles – although we have seen improvement in our gender pay gap over the past 5 years, there is still more to be done. A targeted approach to increase staff reporting on protected characteristics will also be progressed in 2022, using case studies to demonstrate the importance of accurate data and reporting.

Pay and Reward

3.7 The SG Pay Policy Guidance for 2022/23 has been published, which is limited in its provision, and alongside the challenging increase in cost of living increases being faced by staff this year, means that potentially pay negotiations could be protracted. We will work closely with UNISON, where we can, to deliver a pay offer, whilst meeting SG parameters, and that can align in some way with staff expectations.

Digitally confident workforce

- 3.8 A specific strategy will also be developed to help our people become a digitally mature workforce. We need our people to feel confident in the tools that they use to deliver their roles and to be able to maximise the capability of the software available to them. This will release efficiency and capacity in roles that can then be refocused on a reformed and changing environment. We will seek external support in the development of this strategy to fully understand the implications for our people as well as our learning strategy. It is anticipated that this will stretch over a two year timescale. Maximising the capacity in our software is not limited to Microsoft Office tools, albeit that is the main software in use, but we would also see the use of our e-hr and e-learning systems being fully developed into areas for e-recruitment, personal development and skills mapping. This will be further mapped out once resource requirements are known.

Coaching, shadowing and mentoring

- 3.9 When we launch our agreed Shadowing and Mentoring Scheme, it will create opportunities and partnerships, outside the normal line management relationship, to enhance career development, performance, learning or development opportunities for staff. We will consider this in a phased approach so that we can provide the breadth of support required. In advance of the launch, we will seek to recruit internal mentors and provide them with on-line learning so that they are equipped and ready to support mentees on the launch of the scheme. The scheme will also provide for external shadowing and mentoring opportunities and key contacts will be made to support this where requested.

4. Summary

- 4.1 SCRA clearly recognises that in order to achieve its outcomes outlined in the 2020/23 Business Plan and People Strategy, it is important that we invest in our workforce. We anticipate that as we emerge from the two year pandemic that we have a clear opportunity to take forward the plans that will see that investment in people start to take shape.
- 4.2 This workforce plan will deliver the third year of the 2020/24 People Strategy.
- 4.3 We will discuss the workforce plan and its implementation in partnership with UNISON.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 The Board are asked to note the current workforce metrics and approve the workforce plan for 202/23.

Appendix 1

What did we achieve in 2021/22?

- We provided significant support and advice to the workforce during COVID-19, through a programme of FAQ updates and support.
- We worked in partnership with Health Protection Scotland to continuously review our robust risk assessments to support our staff returning to the office and in the provision of face-to-face hearings.
- We implemented a new Agile Working Policy following significant consultation with staff and managers.
- We delivered Leading Hybrid Teams training for all managers.
- We offered wellbeing supports/days to our workforce to recognise the challenging impacts of working within COVID-19 restrictions.
- We created a learning network and developed a new learning and development strategy for 2022/24 with associated learning plan.
- We reviewed the staff survey to ensure that we retained consistency across the reporting years but brought it up to date and improved it's flow.
- We commenced the first review of our roles, starting with Support Administrators and Support Assistant (Reception) staff.
- We have developed an Inclusive Behaviours Framework (name to be reviewed) and which will be consulted on during 22/23
- We assessed SCRA's Partnership Approach against the SG's Fair Work in Public Bodies principles, noting that we are performing well in these areas
- We held partnership meetings outwith the normal National Partnership Forum to focus on issues arising from the Promise and other elements of change
- We engaged with a specialist recruitment agent that extends the reach of our recruitment adverts into broadly under-represented communities. There is more to derive from this relationship in 2022/23.
- We delivered recruitment and selection e-learning training for all recruiting managers, without which they cannot be a member of any recruitment panel.
- We reviewed our Whistleblowing, Discipline, Grievance and Investigation Policies.
- We developed a wellbeing brochure that is on Connect sign-post staff to additional supports available to them
- We provided refresher training to our cohort of Mental Health First Aiders

Appendix 2

People Plan 2022/23

Priority 1: Investment in People Investment in People will deliver a programme that will foster a culture of positive and managed change as we respond to ongoing improvements in our systems, processes and the service that we provide to children and families. Staff will feel skilled and able to embrace these changes and will be supported to develop their skills and expertise. A strong emphasis on wellbeing will be key to this ongoing delivery.				
Objective	Internal Strategy	Timescale		Corporate Plan Ref.
P1.1: We will lead a planned and coordinated approach to Change Management – ensuring managers and their teams have the necessary information, skills and tools to successfully lead and deliver change across the organisation that enables us to meet our aims, The Promise, and other external and internal requirements.	People Operational Practice & Policy	August	March	CP1.5
P1.2: We will ensure an effective and efficient service through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of roles and responsibilities within the organisation. • Rolling out and embedding tools, training and supports to enable an agile and flexible workforce. • Conducting an analysis of workloading, capacity and improvement activity to ensure a fair and equitable workload division so that all staff have a fair and equal opportunity to engage with wider organisational activity. 	People Operational	April April Sept	March June Dec	
P1.3: We will develop a Learning & Development Plan in consultation with staff, Localities, Head Office Teams and the SCRA Learning Network to ensure staff have quality access to a range of learning opportunities, coaching and mentoring to support their development, ensuring that they have the skills to deliver their objectives and respond to our Promise Route Map.	People Operational Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting	April	March	CP2.4
P1.4: A strategy for organisational Wellbeing will be designed, developed and delivered to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and implement wellbeing activities and changes which enhance peoples experience of work. • Deliver national and local programmes to ensure physical and mental wellbeing and resilience of individuals and teams. • Support people as we move out of the pandemic and into a more stable environment – taking learning and not losing our ability to adapt as we do so. 	People Operational Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting	June	Sept	CP2.5
P1.5: We will focus on effective and inclusive recruitment:	People			CP1.5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a pilot of e-recruitment across Head Office, roll out e-recruitment to Localities using ensuring the process adds value to good recruitment decision making across the organisation. We will aim to make our workforce more diverse through our recruitment and selection processes. 	Operational Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting	April	March	
P1.6: Over a two year period, we will develop a digitally confident and mature workforce. The first year will focus on undertaking a baseline assessment, analysis of training required and sourcing learning to meet the established need.	People Digital Operational	April	March	CP1.4
P1.7: Our organisation will foster a culture where our people feel included, valued, respected and cared for – promoting rights, equalities and inclusion.	Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting	April	March	CP3.4

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Environmental Update Report

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive

Date: 22nd March 2022

Report Author: Head of Property

Recommendation(s):

- 1 To note the contents of this report, the public sector duties placed on SCRA and our most recent emissions figures, as submitted in the mandatory Climate Change report.
- 2 To note that resources will require to be allocated to meet some of the challenges highlighted as well as the new reporting requirement to set a target date for achieving Net Zero.

Reason for Report: To Update The Board On Progress

Resource Implications: Not Applicable

Strategy: Within agreed plans

Consultation: Head of Finance and Resources
Executive Management Team

Equalities Duties Not Applicable

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

1.0 Introduction

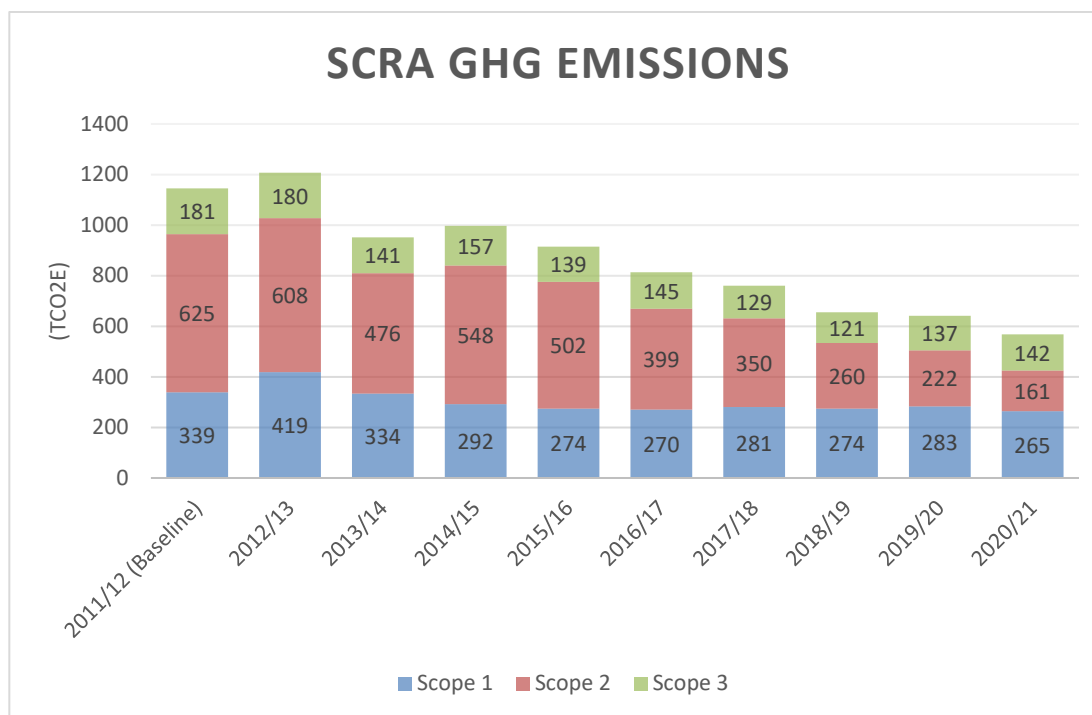
- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an update on recent developments and the progress set out in annual Climate Change report to Scottish Government.
- 1.2 Last year's report included a focus on the Internal Audit review of our organisational approach to sustainability/ climate change along with some recommendations for how we can progress the challenges facing us as we work towards our Net Zero obligations.
- 1.3 Whilst there has been some progress in the areas identified, it has been limited overall largely due to ongoing priority of recovering from the impact of the pandemic.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Since 2011 specific environmental duties were placed on public bodies to fulfil during the course of delivering their services. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act SCRA is required to:
 - contribute to delivery of Scotland's national net zero target (**mitigation** – reducing greenhouse gas emissions);
 - help deliver Scotland's climate change adaptation programme (**adaptation** – resilience to the impacts of a changing climate); and
 - **act sustainably** (sustainable development as a core value).
- 2.2 The Scottish Government declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and introduced new legislation bringing forward more ambitious emission reduction targets within the following timescale:
 - 2030 - GHG emissions to be reduced by 75%
 - 2040 - GHG emissions to be reduced by 90%
 - 2045 - Net Zero GHG emissions
- 2.3 Our Corporate Plan for 2020-24 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 minimises our impact on the environment.
- 2.4 An Internal Audit review was completed by BDO at the end of 2020 to assess the sustainability/ climate change arrangements in place across our organisation. A number of areas were identified where action and improvement is required. The risk identified by BDO is that SCRA is not fully engaged in supporting the Scotland wide emission reduction targets and climate change policies.
- 2.5 The level of change envisaged by Government requires every part of the organisation to be engaged and responsibility for delivering change requires to be allocated to the most appropriate teams. This will require a plan with achievable targets for reducing GHG emissions.

3.0 Current Position

- 3.1 Our annual Climate Change report was submitted to Scottish Government in November 2021 and includes our emissions figures for 2020/21. A further reduction in emissions for 2020/21 can be seen in the graph below, primarily for scope 2 emissions. Whilst the graph shows a continued reduction in emissions, this is not through direct action by SCRA and our consumption figures remain relatively consistent.



Scope 1 - emissions from Heating (oil & gas)

Scope 2 - emissions from Electricity use

Scope 3 - emissions from Electricity Transmission, Travel & Waste

Our emissions reduction from 2019/20 to 2020/21 is 11.5% and a more detailed breakdown of our reported consumption and emission figures for the period 2016 to 2021 is attached at Appendix A. This breakdown highlights that the reduction in our carbon emissions were more attributable to decarbonisation of the electricity network than a reduction in consumption. The exception being 2021 where consumption has reduced during the pandemic.

- 3.2 Scottish Government regularly publishes strategy and guidance documents relating to climate change and Net Zero targets. Public Sector Leadership and Heat in Buildings Strategy documents were published during 2021. Following COP26, the Climate Change Commission published its report to the Scottish Parliament providing an assessment of the progress made to date. A brief summary and links to these documents are provided at Appendix B.
- 3.3 With regards to SCRA's progress, the Internal Audit review conducted in 2020, highlighted five key findings for further action:
- **Environmental Objectives:** SCRA has environmental objectives outlined in their Corporate Plan however these do not flow down to locality plans. Preparation of locality plans for 2020/21 were set aside as a result of covid-19;

Update - Environmental Objectives now form part of Locality Planning and Sustainability plans were implemented in January 2022. These set out the objectives/ actions that localities require to contribute towards the Scottish Governments climate change targets and Net Zero. Locality sustainability planning will be extended to 2024 in line with other organisational plans.

- **Emissions Targets:** SCRA does not have any emissions targets; **Update** - An interim 3 year target of achieving a 10-20% reduction in Emissions was included within the Board report.
- **Consumption Data Capture:** SCRA does not regularly analyse consumption of utilities; **Update** - Progress has been made with consumption data capture, Business Managers have engaged with suppliers on monitoring the data we receive, supported by the Head of Property.
- **Sustainability Training:** SCRA currently does not have climate change awareness training included within its induction programme; **Update** – Implemented.
- **Environmental Champions:** there are currently no Environmental Champions in SCRA. **Update** – further discussion to take place in 2022/23 to build a team of Environmental Ambassadors to provide support in localities in the delivery of their plans.

3.4 Whilst there was an 11.5% annual reduction in our emissions for 2020/21, these figures are heavily influenced by the impact of the pandemic and decarbonisation of the electricity network. The figures include an estimate homeworking based on an estimate for staff who were working from home over the course of the year. Many of the factors influencing our emissions figures in 20/21 will have continued into 21/22 and we may, therefore, see an increase in emissions in 22/23 as use of our buildings and business-related travel starts to increase.

3.5 Although we have set an overall 3 year target of reducing GHG emissions there is a risk that they will start to increase again and we do not yet currently have clear plans in place for how the March 2024 target will be achieved. Partly this will be influenced by progress on the audit actions and other actions in the 2021 Board report.

3.6 To monitor how well public sector organisations are contributing to Scotland's Climate Change targets, secondary legislation was introduced in September 2020 requiring additional information to be provided in our annual climate change reports. Specifically, with effect from this year we are required to state how we will use our resources to reduce emissions and to provide a date for reaching Net Zero (see Appendix B).

3.7 Our climate change and sustainability duties require every part of the organisation to be involved. Previous reports have set out the key areas for organisational action and these remain relevant:

- Property Use
- Energy Consumption
- Business Travel
- Waste Minimisation
- Sustainable Procurement
- Biodiversity

- Staff Awareness, Engagement and Behaviour Change
- Improving Data Capture & Analysis

3.8 With the above key areas in mind the March 2021 report set out some of the challenges that require to be tackled and the parts of our organisation that are best placed to progress them.

<u>Challenge</u>	<u>Lead</u>
Operating model and digital delivery of services	SOMs
Continued use of Daily Hire hearing premises	SOMs
Digital Hearings	SOMs & IT
Heat and Power in our buildings	Property
Estate Management and Rationalisation	Property
New Ways Of Working (Agile/ Smart Working)	HR & SOMs
Energy Consumption	Business Managers & Property
Business Travel	HR
Staff Awareness, Culture and Behaviour Change	HR
Embedding Climate Change and Sustainability into Locality Planning	SOMs
Biodiversity	Health & Wellbeing, Localities
Adaptation	Business Continuity
Waste minimisation	SOMs & Localities
Sustainable Procurement	Procurement Team
Annual Public Body Reporting	Property & Planning
Data Capture & Analysis	Planning & Property

3.9 Whilst we can point to some areas where there has been progress with these challenges, they will require to be given higher priority in line with increasing expectations. A Sustainability Working Group is meeting regularly to try and make progress and consideration will be given to agreeing a Sustainability lead to drive further progress.

4.0 Conclusions

4.1 Following changes introduced in 2020 the mandatory annual climate change reporting requirements have been strengthened and require each public sector organisation to state how it will use its resources to reduce emissions and to provide a date for reaching Net Zero. This statement needs to be included in the 2021/22 report to be submitted by November 2022.

4.2 The 2020 Internal Audit review identified areas where action and improvement are required. These actions are being progressed although the impact of the pandemic has delayed full implementation. The March 20 Board report set out some immediate challenges and the areas of the organisation best placed to lead on them. There has been some progress but again pandemic recovery has been the priority for the organisation up to this point. The risk remains that SCRA are not fully supporting the Scotland wide emission reduction targets and climate change policies.

- 4.3 Whilst an interim target has been set and our latest emissions data is in line with the target there is potential for our emissions to increase as we recover from the pandemic. The detailed breakdown at Appendix A highlights that consumption has not reduced significantly in a number of areas.
- 4.4 The legislative and policy position from Scottish Government envisages transformational change to deliver a Net Zero economy. Achieving Net Zero will require every part of our organisation to be involved, engaged and contributing to this objective. Delivering change will require responsibility to be allocated to the most appropriate teams. The impact on resourcing and the need for external support will require consideration by EMT.

5.0 Recommendations

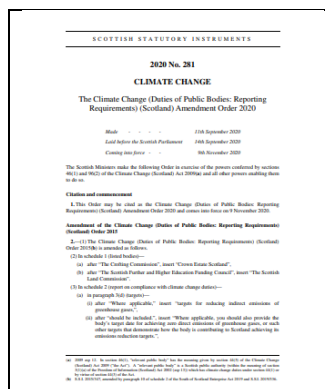
- 5.1 To note the contents of this report, the public sector duties placed on SCRA and our most recent emissions figures, as submitted in the mandatory Climate Change report.
- 5.2 To note that resources will require to be allocated to meet some of the challenges highlighted as well as the new reporting requirement to set a target date for achieving Net Zero.

Reported Consumption and Emissions 2016 to 2021

<u>Emission Source</u>			<u>2020/21</u>		<u>2019/20</u>		<u>2018/19</u>		<u>2017/18</u>		<u>2016/17</u>		<u>2015/16</u>	
	<u>Scope</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>E</u>
Heating - Natural Gas	1	kWh	1,439,020	264.59	1,472,322	270.72	1,451,515	267.02	1,482,421	273.01	1,421,096	261.71	1,435,855	264.80
Heating - Oil	1	litres			4,869	12.37	2,579	6.54	3,160	8.00	3,200	8.10	3,900	9.90
Electricity (generation)	2	kWh	688,999	160.63	951,993	221.95	919,461	260.27	996,702	350.40	969,565	340.86	1,085,562	501.70
Electricity (transmission losses)	3	kWh	688,999	13.81	951,993	19.09	919,461	22.19	996,702	32.76	969,565	31.87	1,085,562	41.40
Business Travel - miles	3	miles	42,018	11.79	294,848	82.71	294,850	87.16	284,410	84.98	297,232	88.82	461,716	86.00
Water - Supply	3	m3	2,081	0.23	4,390	1.51	4,617	1.59	3,874	1.33	4,229	1.45	3,816	1.30
Water - Treatment	3	m3	2,081	0.48	4,171	2.95	4,386	3.11	3,680	2.61	4,017	2.84	3,625	2.60
Waste - mixed recycling	3	tonnes	21	0.46	46	0.99	82	1.76	70	1.52	107	2.33	100	2.10
Waste - paper recycling	3	tonnes	12	0.25	13	0.29	11	0.24	14	0.31	10	0.21	12	0.30
Waste - Landfill	3	tonnes	37	17.09	63	29.00	45	4.51	54	5.38	53	5.27	53	4.90
Homeworking emissions	3	% home-based	75.00%	98.23										
Total			567.56		641.57		654.39		760.30		743.46		915.00	

C – Consumption in units

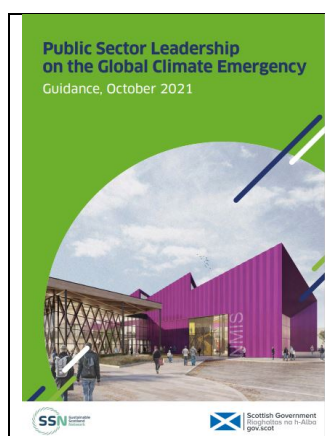
E – Emissions (tCO₂e) calculated from consumption using emissions factor provided

Guidance/ Update Documents**Appendix B****Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020**

Climate change reports must now also include:

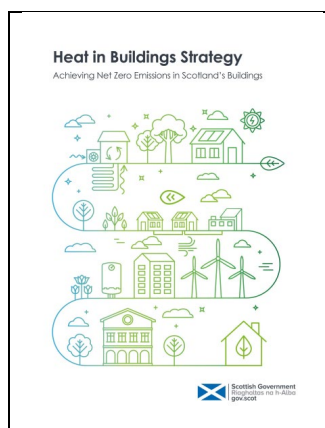
- where applicable, the body's target date for achieving zero direct emissions of greenhouse gases, or such other targets that demonstrate how the body is contributing to Scotland achieving its emissions reduction targets;
- where applicable, targets for reducing indirect emissions of greenhouse gases;
- how the body will align its spending plans and use of resources to contribute to reducing emissions and delivering its emissions reduction targets;
- how the body will publish, or otherwise make available, its progress to achieving its emissions reduction targets; and
- where applicable, what contribution the body has made to helping deliver Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Programme (currently the 2019-2024 Programme).

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2020/281/pdfs/ssi_20200281_en.pdf

**Public Sector Leadership on the Global Climate Emergency**

Published in October 2021, this document provides good information on the scale of the challenges ahead and the actions that public bodies need to put in place. It provides an overview of the policies in place, leadership and governance arrangements as well considering organisational capability, reporting and target setting.

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2021/10/public-sector-leadership-global-climate-emergency/documents/public-sector-leadership-global-climate-emergency/public-sector-leadership-global-climate-emergency/govscot%3Adocument/public-sector-leadership-global-climate-emergency.pdf>

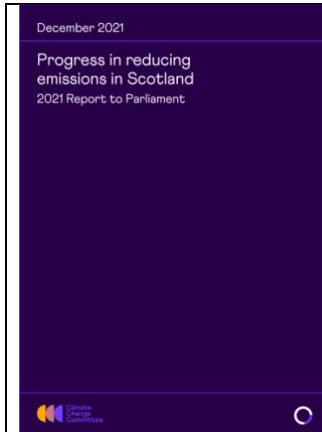
**Heat In Buildings Strategy**

This sets out the proposed introduction of new regulations that will require a move away from fossil fuel burning systems to zero emissions heating systems. For public sector buildings, government is committed to showing leadership and a series of phased targets is planned from 2024 with all publicly-owned buildings meeting zero emission heating requirements by 2038.

The heat strategy states that regulations are currently being developed that will require all new buildings from 2024 (that require a building warrant) to use a zero emissions heating system.

For existing buildings, the new regulations are expected to propose the introduction of trigger points for installing a zero emissions heating system. These trigger points may include point of sale, change of tenancy, major refurbishment or replacement of the existing heating system.

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2021/10/heat-buildings-strategy-achieving-net-zero-emissions-scotlands-buildings/documents/heat-buildings-strategy-achieving-net-zero-emissions-scotlands-buildings/heat-buildings-strategy-achieving-net-zero-emissions-scotlands-buildings/govscot%3Adocument/heat-buildings-strategy-achieving-net-zero-emissions-scotlands-buildings.pdf>



Climate Change Commission Report to Scottish Parliament

Following on from COP26, the Climate Change Committee published their report to the Scottish Parliament in December 2021 setting out “Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland”. This is a detailed and comprehensive assessment of progress to date that highlights the significant action required during the 2020’s if the 75% 2030 GHG target is to be achieved. The report highlights that this target “is more ambitious than that recommended by the Committee and will be difficult to achieve.”

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Progress-reducing-emissions-in-Scotland-2021-Report-to-Parliament-1.pdf>

SCRA Climate Change Report 2020/21

Appendix C



SCRA CC Return
2020-21 - Board - Ma

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION
HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

Accountable Director: Head of Human
Resources

Date: 22nd March 2022

Report Author: Health and Safety Adviser

Recommendations:

- 1. To note the activity in 2021/22 and planned future activities.**

Reason for Report: Board Update

Resource Implications: Within approved budgets

Consultation: EMT

Document Classification: Unmarked

**Equality Impact
Assessment:** Not applicable

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Health and Safety Annual Report covers the period from 1st April 2021 - 1st March 2022 during which time SCRA has continued to manage and respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 This report provides an update to the Board on our response to the ongoing pandemic and business as usual Health and Safety developments across SCRA, including the number of incidents reported during that time. It also provides updates on policy developments, Healthy Working Lives status and wellbeing initiatives that have been introduced within the last 12 months.

2. COVID-19

- 2.1 We have continued to liaise with Public Health Scotland on our risk assessment process and we have implemented the clear recommendations in each locality. The main mitigations continued to focus mainly on FACTS e.g. wearing a face covering in communal areas and whilst moving around the office and hearing suites. We limited the number of staff in offices to those that required to be there for face to face hearings and accessing physical systems. Hand sanitizer was provided so good hand hygiene could be maintained and we introduced physical distancing of 2 metres (now reduced to 1m) in line with Scottish Government recommendations. We have developed clear guidance on good room/hearing suite ventilation and our FAQ COVID-19 guidance, covering a myriad of issues which have arisen during the pandemic, has been very well received and used.
- 2.2 We note that as of 21st March, 2022, the guidance will change again and all legal requirements will become guidance for employers. We will encourage staff to take all necessary steps to keep themselves safe and well.
- 2.3 Continued partnership working and engagement with UNISON has been a primary consideration in all health and safety aspects and we have consulted with them on our approach to organisational risk assessments, working from home risk assessments and concerns or issues that staff have raised in relation to ensuring the safety within our premises.
- 2.4 Staff have mainly continued to work from home, with a limited number of staff back in offices. We anticipate that this number will increase as we move into spring 2022 and in line with our Agile Working Policy. This flexibility of agile working can demonstrate our flexibility as an organisation to respond to potential future pandemic restrictions as required. To support staff to continue to work flexibly, we have developed a Working from Home Risk Assessments process to ensure that SCRA complies with the DSE regulations regardless of whether staff are working in the office or at home.
- 2.5 As part of the working from home assessment process, we intend to undertake a consolidation inventory exercise to ascertain what equipment staff currently have at home, whether this was purchased during the pandemic or had been taken from the office.

3. Accident and Incident Reporting

- 3.1 Since 1st April 2021 until the creation of this report (3rd March 2022), there have been a total of 6 incidents reported to the Health and Safety Adviser. This is similar to the 2020 pandemic year where there were n=5 incidents. Both pandemic years are lower than in previous years where the average number of incidents was just under 33 (n=32.7). This is likely due to less f2f hearings taking place as well as staff continuing to work from home.

3.2 RIDDOR

There have been no incidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR.

3.3 Injuries and Ill-Health

There has been only 1 incident where a minor injury occurred and 1 incident of ill-health in hearing rooms. Both incidents were handled quickly and efficiently by SCRA staff.

3.4 Assaults / aggression

There were 3 verbal incidents of aggression including racial hand gestures during a virtual hearing, a social worker being threatened during the hearing by a relevant person and the third was a verbal threats via the telephone. All were reported and managed appropriately.

In partnership with Unison we will be encouraging staff to report verbal aggression as we believe this is an area of under-reporting.

3.5 Other (security incident)

The final incident reported involved a Safeguarder informing SCRA staff that they were followed home after a hearing. This was reported to the Police and appropriate recording of the incident took place.

4. Policy Development

- 4.1 There were two policies updated in 2021/22. Fire Risk Assessment Policy and SCRA's Stress Policy) as well as an advice sheet on driving during inclement weather.

5. Training

- 5.1 Staff continue to complete e-learning courses with 575 courses completed from 1st March 2021 to 23rd February 2023. The course that was completed most during that timeframe was "recruitment and selection" (n=60) followed by cyber security (n=46). We will continue to advise staff of their requirement to complete the mandatory health and safety e-learning every 3 years. We will also be launching a Deaf Awareness Course for staff within the next month.

6. Mental Health & Wellbeing

- 6.1 Mental health and wellbeing continues to be a key focus for SCRA and a significant effort has been put in to promote and encourage staff to consider their own and others mental wellbeing. At the end of December we ran a 1 day refresher virtual refresher course for existing MHFAs where those attending could discuss the complexities of providing a service virtually. As the restrictions have now been eased, we intend to recruit additional MHFAs and offer associated training with their role.
- 6.2 The organisation also continues to engage the HELP Employee Assistance Programme which encourages and supports wellbeing in the workplace. HELP gives access to a team of trained welfare and counselling practitioners who will support employees by offering confidential, independent and counselling and guidance by telephone, on-line and through face-to-face appointments for a wide variety of issues including (but not limited to) mental health, sickness absence, debt, bereavement and childcare issues.
- 6.3 In recognition of another challenging year for staff as a result of the ongoing Covid pandemic, a package of additional wellbeing supports were approved by SCRA's Health & Wellbeing Group towards the end of 2021, which included a Wellbeing day over the festive period and a wellbeing voucher to purchase a wellbeing activity/item.
- 6.4 Staff have also been encouraged to take a proper break over the lunchtime period to support everyone to get outside in daylight hours, particularly in the winter months.

6.5 Time to Talk

For the 2022 Time to Talk Event on February 3rd 2022, SCRA hosted an externally provided (Shine Workplace Wellbeing) Mental Health Awareness webinar entitled "Employee Mental Health Awareness". In addition, two mindfulness sessions were provided and the Mental Health First Aiders provided case studies on why they had become MHFAs.

6.6 Hidden Disability Sunflower Scheme

In the UK, 1 in 5 people have a disability, 80% have a hidden disability. Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard discreetly indicates to people that the person wearing it (or someone with them) has a hidden disability and may need additional support, help or more time.

In December 2021, SCRA introduced the scheme within our offices following a successful trial within the Glasgow office run by Collette Gallagher. Collette is part of the Disability Subgroup and has delivered a number of awareness raising sessions on Teams on the scheme

6.7 The Big Team Walking Challenges

In April 2021, SCRA organised the Big Team Challenge - a virtual walk round Scotland which took place from the 10th May 2021 for 6 weeks. Teams of up to 5 individuals tracked their steps over the period to walk around the whole of Scotland. Teams really got into the competitive spirit of the challenge with some amazing inputs and there was real interest in organising another event.

We repeated but extended the challenge in the Autumn with the Big Downunder Challenge. That challenge began on the 13th September and saw teams walking the virtual equivalent of Melbourne to Brisbane. At intervals along the way, updates were provided to the teams (which included one cyclist) and at the end, small prizes were awarded to the first individual to complete the distance (both cycling and walking) as well as the first team to pass the finish line. We hope to run another event over the summer – though the route has not yet been decided.

6.8 Health and Wellbeing Brochure

October saw the launch of the SCRA Health & Wellbeing Brochure – the aim of which was to bring together supports that were available to staff into one location and which would make it easier for staff to find these supports. This included information on topics such as;

- Mindfulness sessions available for staff,
- Optimise (Optima Health's comprehensive wellbeing assessment available to staff and their families),
- Vicarious trauma support
- Wellbeing action plans

This brochure is intended to be a live document in that it will be updated as more resources are added.

7. Healthy Working Lives

- 7.1 SCRA successfully retained the Bronze Award from Healthy Working Lives for a sixth year despite staff continuing to working from home. Recognition was given to the mental health support we had provided to staff during the pandemic.

8. Flu Vaccination

- 8.1 SCRA once again offered staff the Flu Vaccination in 2021. A total of 170 staff took up the vaccination. SCRA will continue to offer the flu vaccination and preparations are underway for 2022

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 The Board is asked to note the health, safety and wellbeing update and developments outlined in this report.



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Head of Service: Lisa Bennett, Head of Strategy

Date: 22nd March 2022

Report Author: Lisa Bennett

Recommendation:

- 1. To note the progress update on SCRA's Keeping the Promise Programme.**

Reason for Report: For Noting

Resource Implications: Within current budget.

Strategy/Service Plan Implications: Corporate Plan and all related strategies

Consultation: Head of Practice and Policy
Keeping the Promise Programme
Manager

EHRIA Duties: Not Applicable

Document Classification: Not protectively marked/protectively
marked/commercially sensitive

1	Introduction and Background	
	1.1	SCRA is committed to Keeping the Promise and to working positively and effectively with our partners in doing so.
	1.2	Previous reports have set out our direction and approach to developing and establishing our work and our partnerships.
	1.3	This report seeks to provide the Board with a high level update on the work being undertaken to address the Promise in SCRA
	1.4	This report seeks to provide the Board with a high level update of the activity that has been taking place as well as provide visibility of a number of related reports and work.
	1.5	SCRA's Keeping The Promise Programme Board, Chaired by Michelle Miller, that oversees delivery of our Promise work receives detailed reporting to ensure that plans are supported, aligned and that any risks or issues are visible.
	1.6	This report does not seek to provide the detail given to the Programme Board to allow them to carry out their function of oversight whilst providing the Board with information and assurance.

2	Progress Update	
	2.1	SCRA's internal Keeping the Promise Structure
	2.2	A Keeping the Promise project team has now been fully established with representation from Participation, Practice, Communications and Engagement, Policy, Research, Inclusion, Improvement, Operations and Unison. Three full team meetings have taken place to finalise plans, agree priorities, consider consultations etc. followed by a number of smaller meetings with leads to look at specific approaches, planning and projects.
	2.3	SCRA's Route Plan has now been approved by the Programme Board and published internally as well as externally with full social media coverage. Access to the Route Plan, supported by cartoon animation and BSL translation can be found here - Keeping The Promise - SCRA
	2.4	The Route Plan lays out a series of projects to take forward our journey for improvement. Project leads have now been identified for all of these and work is taking place to develop project charters for each to ensure a consistent approach and transparent reporting.

2.5	The Project Charters provide structure to the plans but also push us to consider evaluation from the outset – how we will measure impact/improvement – and not just change.
2.6	We are using research and improvement methodology to support our charters and the internal research team and the Business Integration lead are providing learning, guidance and support with this.
2.7	The Keeping the Promise Programme Board has now met three times and has approved both the Route Plan and the Project Initiation Document (PID) for Reform (more about this later). The Programme Board are meeting in line with the Hearings System Working Group meetings to ensure the opportunity to debrief from these and agree approaches for the next.
2.8	Detailed plans for the first project to be undertaken (Options, Choices and Participation) have been shared with and approved by the Programme Board. An approach to reporting was discussed and agreed to allow visibility and assurance but allowing the internal team maximum autonomy and flexibility for delivery.
2.9	External Governance and engagement
2.10	The Hearings System Working Group (HSWG) has now met four times and have been developing a Contextual Framework for the group to work within. Key to this is the 'Issues List' for reform – a set of categorised questions and prompts to aid exploration and consultation on the redesign of the Hearings System. The Issues List along with appropriate context was published on 11 th March 22. The Hearings System Working Group: Issues List - The Promise
2.11	The Promise Scotland and CHS both have dedicated programme managers, as we do, to ensure robust process and governance. The programme managers from SCRA, CHS and the Promise now have regular meetings and are developing a joint PID to clearly define the work of the HSWG in terms of vision, aims, deliverables, approach and roles to support this work.
2.12	A second, and very positive meeting has taken place between the Chairs of SCRA (Michelle Miller), CHS (Garry Coutts) and the Promise Oversight Committee (Fiona Duncan) – and this meeting was fully supportive of the approach being taken towards having a joint PID and on board engagement with the Office of the Chief Designer from Scottish Government.

2.13	Communication and Engagement
2.14	A detailed communication and engagement plan for the Promise is now in place setting out everything from publications, social media interactions and importantly, our internal engagement and consultations. Through January, February and March, internal engagement sessions have been taking place across the organisation, led by Roma Bruce-Davies – the Programme Manager, and Colette Gallagher, the operational change lead. These have provided a two way conversation and have been open to all staff – to come along, learn a bit more about the Promise and our plans, but also to explore ideas and ask questions. Very positive feedback has been received about these sessions.
2.15	The internal sessions are an introduction to the work, and consideration is now being given to the more in depth consultation that we will be having around the broader topics contained within the 'Issues List' to ensure that there are opportunities for everyone to be and feel involved in the work of reform.
2.16	Internal communications were prepared and put out ahead of the list being published by the Promise to allow our staff time to read over and understand what it meant and what their involvement could be before seeing this publically.
2.17	Close working with UNISON has been important in ensuring that our plans and communication are placed and pitched appropriately.
2.18	Partnership working
2.19	In February, a joint session between the SCRA Board and the CHS Board was held which allowed space for the two Boards to explore the Issues List and discuss views, concerns, suggestions.
2.20	Sherriff David Mackie, the Independent Chair of the HSWG, attended this meeting in part and gave an update on his role in the work and his thoughts about timelines and deliverables.
2.21	Neil Hunter, PR/CEO, has since had a further meeting with Sherriff Mackie who gave reassurance around the key role that the Reporter (and associated roles) play and his keenness to engage with our staff on the work and the opportunities that this review brings.

3	Issues/Areas for consideration	
	3.1	Issues/Areas for consideration
	3.2	In the report presented to the Board in December, we flagged a number of areas for us to 'keep an eye on' as work progressed and these are set out below. It still feels right to follow this approach and updates have been provided against each point – to close or to remain on.
	3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising the change and improvement that is and has historically been happening – albeit slowly and seeing the evolving Promise Action Plan as significantly adding to this in terms of scale of ambition – acknowledged within plans and through locality engagement – propose to remove. • Recognising (and accepting) that certain organisations such as SCRA are in an acute pandemic response and recovery state and balancing a plethora of competing pressures, operational risks and challenges – remains relevant and probably the area most in need of monitoring – this came across very clearly in all of the engagement sessions. • The need for a programme of engagement at regional and national level – at the appropriate time – bringing a wider range of voices into the conversation – contained within approved plans and being monitored by programme board – propose to remove • Keeping a watching brief on the 'structural' discussions to ensure that they do not go in the wrong direction, follow all due process, don't consume all of our energy and preoccupy our time. – remains relevant
	3.4	If any of these issues were to escalate or others become apparent, further detail would be brought forward to the Board for visibility/discussion.

4	Recommendation	
	4.1	1. To note the progress update on SCRA's Keeping the Promise Programme.

Appendices

A – SCRA Keeping the Promise Routemap

SCRA Keeping The Promise 2021-24 Route Plan



Children and young people will be listened to, protected and supported to have a positive future where they are safe, valued and respected.





Our Vision and Commitment

Our vision is that children and young people will be listened to, protected and supported to have a positive future where they are safe, valued and respected.

SCRA is committed to Keeping The Promise. In order for us to demonstrate our commitment, plan our journey and show our activity to get there, SCRA has developed this Keeping The Promise Route Plan. The Route Plan contains the high level activity we will do to Keep The Promise. It will sit alongside detailed project plans with actions through which these activities will be delivered.

Our Keeping The Promise 2021-24 Route Plan contains two interlinked strands of work – Improvement and Reform. This Route Plan focusses mainly on improvement. SCRA is also actively involved in reform through our work as a member of the Hearings System Working Group (HSWG). We will work with partners in key organisations and with children and families to redesign the structures, processes and legislation of the Children's Hearings System.



Keeping the Promise Aims 2021-24

SCRA's aims are led by the Promise Change Plan 2021-24. Some of the work that we will do to give effect to this includes:

- Hearings will be inclusive, rights based and trauma informed.
- Everyone attending Hearings will have the information they need, be prepared and be able to participate.
- The reasons for coming to a Hearing will be clear and explained as will the decisions of the Hearing.
- Rights to appeal will be clear and accessible.
- Everyone in our organisation will work with children and families with kindness.
- The language that we use to talk and to give information will be clear, accessible and appropriate.
- We will be open and constructive in our conversation with partners about how the Children's Hearing can and should change, and we will do all we can to prepare our staff for this change, whilst continuing to improve the current Children's Hearing experience of children and families.





Keeping The Promise Approach

SCRA is Keeping The Promise across the organisation by ensuring every member of staff can be involved, promoting an inclusive approach to achieve sustainable improvement and delivering on The Promise.

A Keeping The Promise team, comprised of roles from across the organisation and led by a Programme Manager, has been identified and will be working together to develop plans, engage with staff, partners, and children and families, to help us transform our plans into demonstrable actions.



Keeping The Promise Activity

1. Preparation for your Hearing – Options, Choices and Participation

This is an area of work that already has a lot of evidence for improvement as well as recommendations and achievements in Better Hearings to build from. A Better Hearing is inclusive, it is listening, it is rights based. Everyone going to a Better Hearing is well prepared, has all of the information that they need, know what they would like to say – how they would like to say it, and what they need to support them. This will see children and young people have a far more personal interaction with the Reporter and enable the sense of a bespoke Hearing. To enable this:

- We will evaluate, consolidate and expand the good work from Better Hearings to promote and embed the different aspects of what makes a good hearing across the country.
- Review and analyse experiences from virtual and hybrid Hearings during the pandemic to inform what children and young people need to support effective and accessible virtual attendance, and identify the most appropriate method.
- This work will look at introductory letters from the Reporter – explaining who they are and what their role is.
- This strand will focus on needs and inclusive service provision to ensure equity for everyone attending.
- We will develop an easy to use form (electronic and paper) detailing what to expect, what is available and asking what would be preferable – what would help support them when they come in (in person or virtually) if they have any particular needs.
- It will incorporate and build on the new 'Hearing about Me' form, which has been developed in partnership with Proud 2 Care to replace the All about me and is far more about what young people would like the panel to know – about them, their situation, what they would like to happen.
- We will also consider methods of participation and explore video content, as well as more creative options to participate.



- Explore with local partners different options for Hearing locations and for Hearing scheduling – to make sure these work for children and families. With our partners, we will consider who should to be involved in scheduling and interacting with families.
- We will work with our partners to ensure that young people are as prepared as they can be to attend their Hearings by receiving support in advance of their Hearing from knowledgeable professionals.

2. Rights Based Grounds

An exploration of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in grounds – this piece of work takes the description of the grounds for referral and re-frames it from a rights based perspective to shift blame to an unfulfilled right. This is at an early stage and requires to be scrutinised in terms of practice and operational enablement – in partnership with CELCIS.

3. Reports for Hearings

We will work with partners to promote more concise, relevant reports for Hearings which genuinely support high quality decision-making for children – building on work carried out in response to COVID-19, and one of the clear recommendations coming through from The Promise, as well as from Better Hearings - in partnership with CELCIS and Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV).

4. Hearing Rooms

We will do all we can to promote the safety, comfort and privacy of children at the Hearing centre by ensuring our Hearing rooms are upgraded to make them feel safe, inclusive and support participation. We will be exploring Hearing rooms that take a sensory approach. We have another set of rooms that are being re-designed this year – and another lot the following year. Options, Choices and Participation work will be developing this to ensure that the views of young people are at the heart of the redesign process.

5. Child Friendly Compulsory Supervision Orders (CSOs)

Looking at how a Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO) and its conditions can be described in a way that is family friendly – accessible and able to be explained, whilst still fulfilling statutory requirements. Working in partnership with CELCIS and Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV).

6. Trauma Training

Staff awareness raising and training on trauma – understanding trauma and its impact, vicarious trauma, what trauma informed practice is and how to become a



trauma informed workforce/place. We will ensure that our staff carry forward this approach into the work they do.

7. Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to the harm or risk that can be faced by children out of the family home – at school or in the wider community. A greater understanding of this approach will be promoted in order for the exploitation of children in Scotland to be fully understood and addressed – without a child taking the blame for their ‘behaviour’. We will link this work with the trauma informed approach and wider work on promoting rights based approaches for children and young people. We will carry forward lessons from research on exploitation of children to ensure that reporters play a key role in ensuring exploited children are treated appropriately and fairly in the Hearings System.

8. Referrals

We will work with our partners locally and nationally to ensure that we have the right referrals for the right children at the right time. We will take a data informed approach to understanding referral patterns and outcomes. As well as focussing on care and protection referrals, we will work together with our partners at Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal’s Service (COPFS) to promote that children in conflict with the law are retained within the Children’s Hearings System rather than entering the adult criminal justice system. We will work together with partners to maximise clarity in communication about care plans and interventions and to minimise delay in decision-making on joint referrals.

9. Your Rights

Your Rights – working with a group of reporters to present creative ways to let people know and understand their rights. This piece of work will produce full and detailed information for people about their rights in the system and when coming to Hearings – to include the rights of children in hearings, relevant persons in hearings, brothers and sisters, victims, rights around offending and around secure care. Working in collaboration with Children and Young People’s Centre for Justice (CYCJ) Staf and others to ensure consistent messaging and clear links.

10. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Staff awareness raising and training on UNCRC and in particular Article 12 through a series of workshops. We will work to expand the knowledge of our staff and embed a rights-based approach to our work.

To find out more about how we are approaching this work, read on... and to find out *even more* our strategy can be accessed [here](#)





Getting the conditions right

To ensure that the improvements outlined in our Route Plan are as bold and sustainable as they can be SCRA will support our staff to engage in and deliver improvement. SCRA will focus on 'getting the conditions right' through workforce awareness, support and training, capacity planning, inclusive recruitment, good data collection, research, and much more. The activities outlined in the following section aims to capture the actions to get the conditions right.

What we will do next to make this happen

- Conduct a UNCRC audit in the organisation.
- Work with The Promise team - looking at data to provide the information required to support them.
- Look at our own data to make sure we are collecting and reporting on the things that matter.
- Undertake research to understand the impact of the pandemic and how we can use this to inform our improvement journey.
- Use a range of platforms to engage with our motivated workforce to participate in delivering on The Promise and to communicate our plans and work with children, young people, families and partner agencies.
- Continue to focus on staff wellbeing as a priority to support our staff to do their best at work and have the space and time to be involved in sustainable improvements.
- Ensure that we promote staff in all roles in SCRA, becoming involved in testing and delivering improvements to the experience of children and young people attending Children's Hearings.

Inclusive language and communications

Working with Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) and Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV) and other partners in the system, we will look at recommendations around language, from both The Promise and 40 Calls To Action. We will develop communication standards for the information that we provide, which will impact all aspects of how we communicate. The work of this group will help inform the Options, Choices and Participation work, along with work on all the information and communications that we provide. It will also seek to recognise and address the areas that are not just about language, more a lack of information - making it feel inaccessible.



Working in Partnership

We will be working with our partners in the Hearings system to take forward the actions – working with CHS, with Social Work, with Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, with Advocacy Providers, and with many other partners.

Key to our partnership work will be the work that we do with children and young people. We are not looking to go forward and consult on our work, we are looking to genuinely develop our work going forward in partnership at every stage. This is going to take time and commitment to get right across the country. Please tell us when you have feedback about how we are doing. KeepingthePromise@scra.gov.uk
communications@scra.gov.uk



Keeping The Promise- Monitoring, Evaluation and Governance

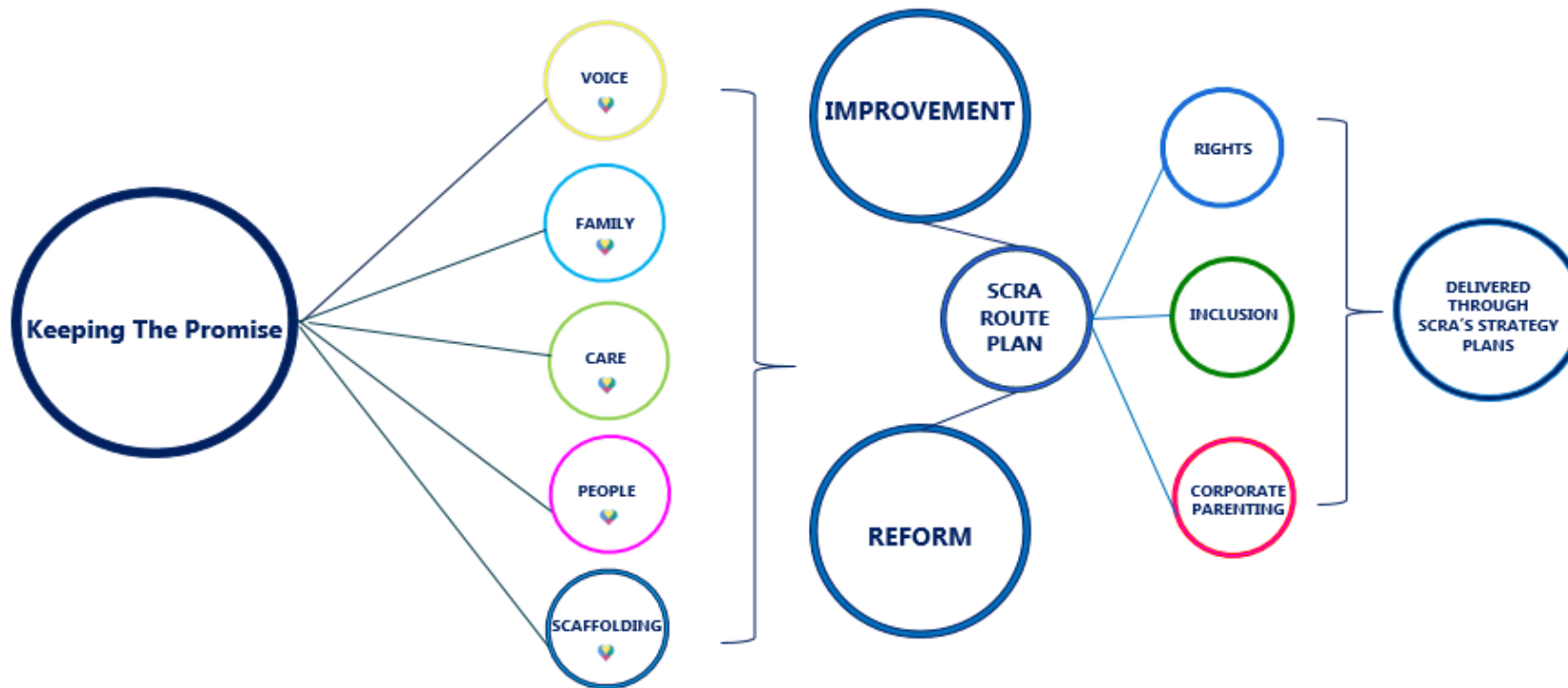
The SCRA Route Plan will be approved by the Keeping The Promise Programme Board and will be led and reported on by the Programme Manager. The Programme Board will review progress on a quarterly basis. The Route Plan is a fluid and live document, and will be subject to change, as we continue to further consult and engage with internal and external stakeholders.

All of our Route Plan activities will have detailed project plans and actions with timelines and leads, journey maps and full descriptions of the actions to enable the Keeping the Promise Programme Board to monitor and have an oversight of our progress. We will plot our activities across our route plan, under the themes of Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting.

We have staff trained and qualified in Improvement Methodology and it is our intention to use robust methodology to test, monitor, evaluate and improve as an integral part of our approach. Throughout, we will be accountable to children and families and seek feedback on how we are doing.



Strategic Framework.



The [Rights Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy](#) creates a dynamic way for us to plan and manage the activity required to #KeepThePromise in SCRA. We will recognise actions, develop plans, establish and support working groups and ask for support and advice from our expert partners across Scotland. Our dynamic approach means that we will be able to change what we are doing if that becomes necessary. We are determined that we recognise what doesn't work and that we promote and encourage what does work.





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



#KeepThePromise



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy - Year 1

Head of Service: Head of HR
Head of Practice and Policy
Head of Strategy and Organisational
Development

Date: 22nd March 2022

Recommendation:

1. The Board note the progress against Year 1 of the Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting strategy
2. The Board note that this report now replaces the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mainstreaming Report.
3. The Board note the supplementary Rights data provided.

Reason for Report: For Noting

Resource Implications: Within agreed budgets

Strategy/Service Plan Implications: Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting.

Consultation: Policy, HR, Planning, Comms

EHRIA Duties: Not required

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

1	Introduction and Background
1.1	In April 2021, SCRA published its Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy. RICP Strategy
1.2	The strategy brought together key strands of work with natural crossover and interplay to provide SCRA with a framework to deliver the legislative duties in relation to Human Rights, Equalities and Corporate Parenting.
1.3	The strategy also took cognisance of the current policy environment and on the drive for change and improvement across the system – led by the voice of experience. Our Hearings, Our Voices' 40 Calls to Action were incorporated along with our approach to responding to the asks of The Promise.
1.4	This report is to provide the Board with an update on the work undertaken to deliver on Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting following the first year of the newly integrated strategy.

2	Purpose of report
2.1	SCRA have statutory duties to report on children's rights, inclusion and corporate parenting and the attached report (appendix A) seeks to provide an update on the activity undertaken in recognition of these duties using an accessible, integrated and contemporary approach.
2.2	<p>This report provides an update on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what SCRA has done to ensure human rights are respected and met as set out in Part 2 of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014; • how SCRA has worked to meet the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty; and • the activity undertaken to ensure we meet our corporate parenting duties as outlined in Part 61 of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
2.3	In addition to the main report, a Data Report has been developed (appendix B) to supplement the work – and how we begin to understand and measure impact of decision making. This is the first time that we have looked at this data and reported in this way and will be seen as an iterative process as we develop this further.

3	Recommendation	
	3.1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Board note the progress against Year 1 of the Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting strategy 2. The Board note that this report now replaces the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mainstreaming Report. 3. The Board note the supplementary data provided.
4	Appendices	
	4.1	<p>Appendix A – Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Year Report Card 2021/22</p> <p>Appendix B – RICP Data Report.</p>



Our Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Year Report Card (still to be formatted for publication)

Reporting Year: 2021-2022
(1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022)

Purpose of Report:

This report meets SCRA's statutory duty to report on children's rights, inclusion and corporate parenting. It replaces our previous annual Equality Mainstreaming Report, and is the way we will report on human rights. As such, this report provides an update on what SCRA has done to ensure human rights are respected and met as set out in Part 2 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014; how SCRA has worked to meet the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty; and the activity undertaken to ensure we meet our corporate parenting duties as outlined in Part 61 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

About SCRA:

Our Vision: Children and young people will be listened to, protected and supported to realise a positive future where they are safe, valued and respected.

Our Mission: We protect and support Scotland's children and young people, by making high quality decisions, upholding their rights and working collaboratively as compassionate, inclusive corporate parents to enable the most positive and personalised experience of the Children's Hearings System.

Our Values: Our values are the shared motivations, beliefs and behaviours that underpin all that we do. We are supportive, child-centred; respectful and accountable.

Key Achievements:

SCRA's Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) – SCRA introduced our bespoke approach to integrated impact assessment with inbuilt governance and quality assurance through our Equality Review Group in early 2020. Throughout the reporting period we have been further developing this approach and embedding it across the full breadth of our work.

SCRA's Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting (RICP) Strategy – at the beginning of 2021, it felt right to widen our integrated approach and to combine three intersectional elements of our statutory strategic work – human rights, inclusion and diversity and corporate parenting. This approach enables us to take a rights-based approach to everything we do (for children, families, our workforce and our partners). It encourages us to recognise that there are people who require additional support in order for their rights to be realised and that, as caring and committed corporate parents for the children we work with, we will do we all we can to uphold and defend these rights and ensure they are included, respected and valued.

This strategic approach is equally managed across three key SCRA areas of work – Practice and Policy (rights), Human Resources (inclusion and diversity) and Strategy (corporate parenting) which ensures it is embedded and

links into, and across everything we do. The RICP Strategy also aligns with our corporate objectives of Care, Connect and Protect in SCRA's 2020-24 Corporate Plan.

Remote Attendance Virtual Hearing Interface (RAVHI) – This national team was developed in response to barriers to engagement and participation using technology in Virtual Hearings, as highlighted in feedback from those attending Virtual Hearings and in the EHRIA and ERG review of SCRA's approach to Virtual Hearings. As a result, this team was created in recognition that we can do more to support people who have a right to be fully included in their Children's Hearing. The RAVHI team check connectivity in advance of a Virtual Hearing and is available on the day to help facilitate access – and, therefore, participation – to the Virtual Hearing.

Keeping The Promise – SCRA published its Keeping The Promise Route Plan, recruited a Keeping The Promise Programme Manager and brought existing staff members together in our Keeping The Promise team to coordinate and support our work on the route plan. The governance structure for SCRA to Keep The Promise is aligned to the three RICP strands of Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting. RICP is the key strategic plan and delivery mechanism for SCRA's Keeping The Promise work. Alignment to Our Hearings, Our Voice's 40 Calls to Action along with previous research, plays a key part of our Keeping The Promise work – there is already a lot of work underway to improve what we do.

Hearings System Working Group – SCRA is a key partner in this key group set up to oversee the reform agenda of the Children's Hearings System, to Keep The Promise. The group is working collaboratively with partners to determine the approach, scope and timescales for the delivery of a reform plan.

Our Data:

Please also look at our accompanying [RICY's Data Sheet 2021 \(Appendix A\)](#), which includes much more information and detail.

What comes next:

- A large focus for 2022/23 will be on further developing, embedding and managing our EHRIA process. This will include: embedding EHRIA in our corporate planning process to encourage proactive and timely change management; training all managers and appropriate officer's to further raise awareness of the legal and moral importance of impact assessment to further embed impact assessment across all areas of our business and, in particular, locality decisions; building in systematic review of completed EHRIA's to assess perceived and actual impacts and adjust our approach if required; and recognising EHRIA within SCRA's national strategic risk management and governance procedures.
- Specifically, EHRIA's will be conducted on: SCRA's decision-making and the statutory powers of the Principal Reporter (SCRA's Practice Direction); SCRA's Digital Programme work; and SCRA's Property Programme work. The nature of SCRA's work has transformed since 2020, as a result of the pandemic and the rapid deployment of technology, which impacts on our estate and property portfolio. The impact of this change must be recognised and addressed.
- With our partners, Scottish Government and The Promise Scotland, we will be working to deliver on The Promise – through the improvements that we can make now, and through the opportunities that the Reform agenda brings.

- SCRA is a collaborative corporate parent; we already focus on partnership working with our Children's Hearings Scotland colleagues through our [My Corporate Parents](#) website. We will promote this collaboration more effectively and we will work with other partners to be the best corporate parents we can be.
- We will actively develop our approach to values-based recruitment and inclusive leadership and behavior to ensure our workforce is diverse and inclusive to enable us to better represent the children and families we work with. Only with a diverse and inclusive workforce will SCRA be able to realise our ambitious, vision and mission.

Subject: Rights

Why are Rights important?

Human rights are fundamental to everything we do in SCRA. They underpin the way we work with all our staff and they determine the ways in which we make decisions that affect children and families across Scotland. As statutory decision-makers and committed corporate parents, SCRA makes decisions that are in the best interests of children to promote their individual wellbeing. These decisions can, and do, have an impact on the rights of a child and their family. When this happens, we must recognise the impact of our decision-making. We must make sure children and families understand the impact of our decisions have and fully support them to question these decisions, if they want.

SCRA is committed to becoming a rights-respecting and rights-defending organisation. We want to treat our staff, the professional partners we work with and the children and families we become involved with fairly and equitably. We are working to ensure we are fully compliant with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). We are also proactively developing our work to ensure we are compliant with Scotland's planned Human Rights Bill, which will incorporate specific rights from: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Key Achievements:

- We have developed an internal plan to focus on rights and children's rights – SCRA's Rights Respecting Approach.
- We have established a Right Direction Group of independent experts from outside SCRA to help us in our journey towards becoming rights defenders. We recognise that the expertise that others bring, in acting as an expert reference group who can oversee and influence our ideas, is invaluable.
- We have developed a collaborative approach to the distinctive decision-making in the Children's Hearing and Family Group Decision Making, which we hope will be useful and informative.
- We believe in advocacy as a key support for children. We continue to be members of the National Advocacy Expert Reference Group and have developed positive national and local working relationships with Advocacy Partners. We worked with the Scottish Government in planning, design and input to an online advocacy event for practitioners. We continue to promote the [Advocacy for Children's Hearing Website](#) across social media.

- We have developed and promoted the Scottish Government introductory training on children's rights across SCRA's staff group.
- We have worked with Article 12 in Scotland, (a young person focused Scottish non government organisation that works to promote young people's rights as set out in international human rights charters) to fully consider what Article 12 means for us all in SCRA and the wider Children's Hearings System.
- We have finalised and implemented a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and provided locality training in respect of the policy for all staff.
- We have developed a new practice direction for Reporters, [Practice Direction 33 - Participation Rights and Legislative Changes](#) - in July 2021 and included new information on our website for [children](#) and for young people to explain what these participation rights mean for you in your Children's Hearing. We created and launched a [cartoon animation to promote sibling/participation/rights](#) on social media. We also worked with partners to develop extensive [materials for partners](#) to use in training or for information to help the implementation of the new legislation.

What comes next?:

- SCRA's training on the UNCRC and its impact across our work will be developed, particularly in relation to Article 12.
- We will be exploring different ways in which we can gather feedback from children and families and how we act on that feedback. This will link into the ways in which we explain and manage complaints from children.
- SCRA's information on rights will be developed; to include more detailed information and to make it more accessible online – for children, parents and carers and for victims of offending behaviour.
- The Secure Care Pathway and Standards and the Youth Justice Standards are relevant to SCRA, and we will focus on internal awareness raising and training.
- SCRA will develop and implement a new Domestic Abuse Policy, which will complement the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, as well as focus our attention on gender-based violence.

Subject: Inclusion & Diversity

Why is Inclusion & Diversity important?

As a public sector organisation, SCRA must adhere to the Equality Act 2010. This includes the three elements of the **general duty**: elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations across nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy, maternity and breastfeeding; race; religion and belief; sex; sexual orientation; and marriage/civil partnership) – SCRA also recognises a tenth 'protected characteristic' of care experience. In Scotland, the Public Sector Equality Duty sets **specific** duties that help us to meet the general duty in the Act. This means we must set Equality Outcomes every three years and report every two years on our progress towards meeting these outcomes and 'mainstreaming' (making sure equality is considered in everything we do) the Equality Duty. Our Equality Outcomes 2020-2023 are:

1. Children, young people and their families are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. They understand and are able to access our services in ways that suit their individual needs.
2. We will build an inclusive culture which values and develops our people, providing them with the tools and support they need to be skilled, confident, valued respected and cared for to maximise their potential.
3. We will actively tackle under-representation and create a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.

SCRA's approach to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion goes beyond our legal responsibilities; it aspires and strives to develop an inclusive ethos within the organisation based on fairness, equality, cultural diversity, dignity and respect. To reflect this approach, SCRA is also committed to meeting the Fairer Scotland Duty and Islands (and remote and rural) Communities Impact Assessment. Being inclusive in every way not only makes SCRA a great place to work, it ensures that we are delivering the best possible service to children and their families – one that is accessible to all, meets their individual needs and upholds their rights.

Our approach to inclusion and diversity has been restructured and embedded into a wider strategic approach, ensuring equality, equity, diversity and inclusion sits at the heart of *everything* we do – now and in the future. Our inclusion and diversity work is now led by SCRA's Inclusion & Diversity Manager and an Inclusion & Diversity Steering Group (chaired by the Head of HR). It is supported by topical inclusion and diversity groups: our LGBT Group, Disability Group and a new Race & Ethnicity Group, as well as a network of 33 Inclusion Ambassadors from varying locations and roles throughout SCRA, who continually champion our inclusion and diversity work in their localities.

To ensure continual improvement and sharing of best practice to enable us to become industry leaders in our approach to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, SCRA are members of: Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei); NDPB Equality Forum; First Minister's National Advisory Council for Women & Girls, the Scottish Government's BSL Justice Advisory Group, and the Cross Justice Working Group on Race Data & Evidence. SCRA were previously members of the Pride in Justice Group, but this group has been inactive since early 2020.

SCRA remains committed to equal pay and the Scottish Living Wage.

Our Data:

- Board Diversity Data - The gender split of our Board is 63% female and 37% male and we will be actively seeking to increase the diversity of our Board in future recruitments.
- Our Employee Statistics are published on our website.
- Our 2021/22 staff survey sought to understand what our workforce understood about inclusion and diversity for them, for others and for the organisation. Here is what they told us.
 - 81% of staff told us they felt included and respected in SCRA
 - 87% of staff said that SCRA is committed to equalities, diversity and inclusion
 - 81% said that people of all cultures and backgrounds are respected and valued in SCRA
 - 67% said that SCRA provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs
 - 84% of staff knew where and how to report harassment or discrimination
 - 94% of staff understood their own responsibility for inclusion and diversity
 - 77% of staff said that their line manager demonstrates commitment to and support of inclusion and diversity.
- Our Gender Pay Gap as at 31st March 2021, was 24.32%. Our Disability and Ethnicity Pay Gaps are in favour of those with a declared disability, and those who have declared are non-White British. Our Pay Gap report is available on our website.

Key Achievements:

- Our new Race & Ethnicity Group is chaired by our Principal Reporter/CEO to ensure our race equality work is a strategic priority. This work will be driven by our desire to be anti-racist in everything that we do. We are using the Scottish Government's Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit to identify areas in our recruitment, selection and retention to better diversify our workforce.
- SCRA has been used as a case study for good practice for our approach to Employee Equality Monitoring by enei [Case Study Template \(enei.org.uk\)](https://enei.org.uk) and the collection and use of equality monitoring data of children referred to SCRA by the Scottish Government [A good practice case study of the collection and use of equality data: Scottish Children's Reporter Administration - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/a-good-practice-case-study-of-the-collection-and-use-of-equality-data/pages/2.aspx).
- SCRA is committed to promoting the mental health of our people. Throughout the pandemic we have specifically focused on proactively supporting our workforce with their well-being, including the introduction of Wellness Action Plans and an organisational Wellbeing Brochure to provide a single place to see all of the support available for our people. We have continued to provide mindfulness sessions through our 12 Mindfulness Champions across the organisation. We have 7 trained Mental Health First Aiders.
- We implemented the Hidden Disability Sunflower Scheme across all our offices to discreetly support people who have a hidden disability and who may need additional support, help or more time. A hidden disability is one that may not be immediately obvious such as learning difficulties, mental health as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing loss.
- A Disability Toolkit has been developed and piloted by SCRA's Research Team. This is the first such toolkit that: 1) allows for the identification of additional needs that could have substantial and long term impacts

upon a child's ability to carry out normal day to day activities; and 2) provides an indicator of wider vulnerability and contextual factors that were pertinent to understanding child protection risk.

- We published an LGBTQ+ Inclusive Language Guidance Note to support our communications and interactions to avoid biases, slang or expressions that exclude certain groups based on gender identity or sexual orientation.
- We implemented an Agile Working Policy to support our people to better balance their home and work life.
- We published our BSL Action Plan in March 2021 and we continue to actively implement the Plan.
- We introduced Visual Information Guides/Social Stories for children [attending a virtual hearing](#) and we plan to develop guides for children attending their Hearing in person, across the country.
- We added 'care experience' into our Employee Equality Monitoring to reflect SCRA's commitment to recognising care experience as a tenth protected characteristic.
- SCRA's inclusion and diversity work was subject to internal audit in October 2021, which found a 'substantial' level of assurance of the design and operational effectiveness of this programme of work. It highlighted areas for improvement around governance, training and impact assessment. These recommendations have been prioritised in our work for 2022/23.
- SCRA received the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei) Bronze TIDE Award in July 2021. TIDE is enei's self-assessment evaluation and benchmarking tool which measures an organisation's approach and progress on diversity and inclusion to encourage flexible and inclusive management of diversity and inclusion work programmes. Participation in this benchmarking exercise identified areas for improvement that we will focus on in 2022/23 including training and procurement.

What comes next:

- We will introduce and consult on an Inclusive Leadership & Behavioural Framework which will sit alongside our Code of Conduct to ensure our people reflect SCRA's values and expected associated behaviours.
- Our race equality work will be a significant focus of our inclusion and diversity work, including the development of an ambitious Race Equality Action Plan. We will engage with external organisations and individuals to do this in recognition that a wider expert reference group is required to fully enable us to realise our ambitions around racial equality and diversity.
- We will work towards gaining our Disability Confident Leader Accreditation.
- We will work towards meeting the Mental Health at Work Standards – and our Mental Wealth Group will lead SCRA on this journey. As part of this work we will develop and implement a Well-being Strategy.
- We will train more Mental Health First Aiders to support the mental health and well-being of our people after a particularly challenging period brought about as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and organisational and legislative change.

- We will reinvigorate our Women into Leadership Network, which currently has over 30 members and we are looking to recruit more.
- We will focus on training our workforce on inclusion and diversity. This will start with ensuring SCRA's Board are fully trained in their role as a Board in terms of legal compliance and risk. We will provide baseline training to all staff to raise awareness of inclusion and diversity, with a deeper focus on inclusive behaviours and language.
- We will recommend action to address the diversity of SCRA's Board. This work will inform the ongoing improvement work around increasing the diversity of our workforce and the tools we use to attract, recruit and retain a broad and diverse workforce.
- We will develop our work on the following areas, where we may develop new policy, guidance, information or training: inclusion & diversity; the menopause; grief and bereavement and neurodiversity. We will revise our Reasonable Adjustments Guidance Note.
- We will focus on inclusive and sustainable procurement. The Procurement Strategy has been reviewed to reflect that we will consider equality, diversity and inclusion throughout tender processes and comply fully with legislation. Where relevant and proportionate in our regulated procurements, we will carry out an Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) at procurement stage and suppliers are required to provide details of any equality policies and systems that they have in place and that will be utilised when delivering the contract. We will develop an Equality Diversity Form and a Supplier Guide on Inclusion & Diversity to include in our tenders to promote and monitor inclusive procurement. We will also explore opportunities to provide Diversity Training or an awareness video for suppliers in the future.

Subject: Corporate Parenting

Why is Corporate Parenting important?

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 put the concept of 'corporate parenting' into Scots Law and defines corporate parenting as 'the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers'. Part 9 of the Act means that we have to do certain things for the children we are responsible for and we have to report to Scottish Ministers on how we are doing this.

A compassionate and committed corporate parent wants the best outcomes for looked after children, listens to them and makes their needs a priority.

At SCRA, we are all proud and committed corporate parents and do our best to make the experience of having contact with the Reporter, or coming to a Children's Hearings, the best that it can be - in a system that is focussed on care and protection. We have been working closely with Children and Young people as well as our Partners to look at how we can improve in the way that we deliver our service and The Promise has offered us the opportunity to really focus our Corporate Parenting efforts – and gives us, and all of the other Corporate Parents, the same mandate – to really encourage strong, collaborative working to deliver on the asks.

Key Achievements:

- SCRA has appointed a Keeping The Promise Programme Manager to lead our Promise work – across both Reform and Improvement and an Operational Change Lead to ensure close working between the project team and operations, these roles are part of a wider Keeping The Promise Team.
- SCRA's [2021-24 Keeping the Promise Route Plan](#) has been developed and published to describe what SCRA will be doing to Keep the Promise and an internal Promise Programme Board is in place to oversee this work. We also created an animation about our [approach to this journey](#).
- Working with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) we have developed a programme of Trauma training for all staff – the first two modules are complete and ready to be rolled out.
- With Our Hearings, Our Voice, we prioritised their calls to action by the things that we could take forward in SCRA, and those that we will work with others on. The asks form part of our direction for participation group and are part of our Promise work. We provided OHOV and our partners with our '1 year on' progress report.
- The Dolly Parton Book Gifting programme was successfully rolled out to all localities, you can find out more about it [here](#).
- Another six Hearings rooms were revamped to make them more child and family friendly in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Bellshill, Lochgilphead, Inverness and Kirkwall.
- Individual takeaway sensory and colouring kits were available in all our Hearing centres for children to take when attending Hearings during the pandemic.

- A care-experienced Modern Apprentice was recruited and appointed to the Dumbarton office - our 13th Modern Apprentice.
- In partnership with Proud to Care in Inverclyde, new 'Hearing About Me' forms were designed and developed to replace the All About Me Forms. These will be available electronically, by email or on paper.
- SCRA has been working with partners e.g. CELCIS and STAF Participation Network to explore different approaches to participation and to hear from others what has worked (or not) and we will continue to work with others as we look at improving how we can enable more effective participation through our Promise work.
- We recently undertook the level 2 consultation with care experienced Modern Apprentices in partnership with Health Improvement Scotland to provide advice and consultation on the Barnahus Standards
- The Born Into Care research by the Universities of Lancaster and Stirling and SCRA research report has been submitted to the Scottish Government and considers the impacts of inequality.
- On behalf of Stand Up For Siblings SCRA and CHS undertook surveys of Panel Members on their experience and observations of siblings participation rights before and after implementation of the new laws to assess how they were working in practice.

What comes next:

- Delivery of the Keeping The Promise Route Plan is our key priority for Corporate Parenting and we will be engaging with staff across the organisation as we take forward The Promise work – ensuring everyone has the opportunity to be part of the discussion and the improvement
- A project called 'Options, Choices and Participation' is one of the first areas that will be looked at under Promise Improvement work - this focusses on how we can:
 - better prepare Children if they are going to be attending a Hearing – understanding what their needs are, how we can support them and how we better enable them to participate – in ways that suit them.
 - better support and enable participation for children who don't attend their Hearings.
- We will be working with Our Hearings, Our Voice and Hearings System Partners to look at language – how we can improve it and then how we can improve the information that we provide to children and families guided by this.
- An integrated learning programme will continue to be developed and rolled out for staff across Rights, Inclusion, and Corporate Parenting;
 - We will deliver refreshed training for staff on what Corporate Parenting is and means – and how it links to the Promise. We will support this with a Corporate Parenting Guide.
 - We will roll out of the Trauma Training Programme across our full staff group through e-learning, group and team work and, individual learning.

- There will be a real focus on collaborative delivery - working with others to ensure the outcomes for children are positive.
- There will be more revamped Hearings Centres – another six planned for next year and we will do this in partnership with young people to make sure we are getting it right!

Through our Research we will be:

- Supporting the use of the Disability Toolkit that has been developed and piloted by SCRA's Research Team. This is the first such toolkit that: 1) allows for the identification of additional needs that could have substantial and long term impacts upon a child's ability to carry out normal day to day activities; and 2) provides an indicator of wider vulnerability and contextual factors that were pertinent to understanding child protection risk.
- Exploring the possibility of using the research toolkit of indicators of child sexual exploitation (CSE) with SCRA, the Scottish Government and expert partners. This toolkit was developed by SCRA and Barnardo's Scotland for their research on CSE in Scotland, and technology to support Reporter decision making.
- Planning ways to test the Rogon Wellbeing Toolkit to measure children's wellbeing at individual and aggregated levels to assess the impact on interventions on children's wellbeing .
- Progressing research into Virtual Hearings and Siblings in Prison and completing work on the Age of Criminal Responsibility and Children under 12 in residential care in Scotland.

Final thoughts from our Principal Reporter, Neil Hunter

During a period that came with so much challenge, it gives me a real sense of optimism to see what our staff – operational and support, have continued to deliver, progress and remain absolutely committed to.

The RICP strategy provides a fusion of three critical areas – that in coming together only strengthen what they can deliver – and how they can support us, as a statutory body, to deliver that service in a way that is right – rights respecting, inclusive and with compassion.

An incredible amount of work has gone in to driving forward this agenda, already delivering tangible and lasting change and improvement – and with a hugely ambitious plan ahead - as we work towards Keeping The Promise, being rights defenders and ensuring that inclusivity and diversity is part of our organisational DNA.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. We hope you found it informative and inspiring. If you have any questions or comments, please [get in touch](#). We would love to hear from you.

SCRA Children's Rights Data 2021 (still to be formatted for publication)

Children's rights have always been an integral part of the work of Children's Reporters within the Children's Hearing. However, the welcome spotlight on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Scotland means that we are also focused on children's rights; on how we understand them; how we uphold them as corporate parents, how we defend children's rights in all the work we do and how we support children to understand and realise their own rights.

We want to take a rights respecting approach and to make sure that the impact of this approach makes a positive difference to children and their families both in the decision making of Children's Reporters and decision making at the Children's Hearing. As we develop this approach the data we collect and report on will change.

Children's Reporters work within Scotland's Children's Hearing approach to child protection and children in conflict with the law. The Children's Hearing is the distinct statutory way in which Scotland responds to concerns about a child's circumstances (whether about the care or treatment of the child by adults or the behaviour of the child). Such concerns are assessed by professionals and are then considered by Children's Reporters and if required by panel members in a Children's Hearing, who make a decision about whether there needs to be compulsory professional involvement with the child and family. This compulsory involvement takes the form of a Compulsory Supervision Order.

In the Children's Hearing:

- ✓ the rights of children and families are respected
- ✓ the needs of children or young people are addressed in an integrated approach which considers all the circumstances of the child and the child's welfare
- ✓ the welfare of the child remains at the centre of all decision making and the child's best interests are paramount throughout
- ✓ the child's engagement and participation is crucial to good decision making

The role and purpose of SCRA is:

- ✓ To receive referrals for children/young people who may be at risk.
- ✓ To make sure that other public agencies carry out enquiries and assessments into children's circumstances so we can make informed decisions about children referred to us.
- ✓ To make the decision on whether to refer a child to a Children's Hearing, if they need compulsory measures of supervision.
- ✓ To draft the grounds for any referral to the Hearing.
- ✓ To arrange for Hearings to take place when we decide that compulsory measures of supervision are necessary and where there is sufficient evidence to prove the grounds.
- ✓ To make sure the Hearing follows fair process, including meeting the rights of those in attendance.
- ✓ To be responsible for establishing grounds of referral in court, where these are contested, and for defending decisions of Children's Hearings which are subject to appeal.

SCRA's work is managed through our Core Systems Applications Solution, or CSAS, which is also the live data repository for all of our information. Our data is recorded in relation to individual children and a child record is opened up when a child is referred to SCRA. The data in this briefing refers to 2021 and we hope begins to give a picture of the impact of the decision making of Children's Reporters and the Children's Hearing on the rights of children across Scotland. It is worth noting that 2021 was a pandemic year and the data may therefore be affected as a result.

Compulsory Supervision

Article 9 – Separation from parents

Article 20 – Children unable to live with their family

A Compulsory Supervision Order is a statutory intervention in the life of a child and family. A Compulsory Supervision Order can detail where a child should live and who they can see, as well as other things in relation to a child's life. On 31st December 2021 there were 7,412 children subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO) across Scotland and the average length of time these children had been on their CSO was 3 years.

On 31st December 2021 1,884 children subject to a CSO were living at home. The average length of time these 1,884 children had been on a CSO was 2 years (although not all of this time was spent living at home for all of the children). The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on the numbers of children subject to a CSO at home as these families may not have presented with immediate high level safety or protection concerns¹.

In 2021 there were 692 first or new CSOs made which required a child to live at home. Of these 692 CSOs there were 66 children who had a subsequent CSO which made a decision to move the child to live somewhere other than their home address.

The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 gives new rights in relation to Children's Hearings, if certain criteria are met by brothers and sisters, or those with a brother or sister type relationship with a child. These provisions only came into force on 26th July 2021 – so we can only report on a few months. In addition, it will take some time for system recording to be accurate and consistent in every case, so the numbers reported here have a note of caution attached. Since the end of July 2021, 25 participation individual siblings were recorded as having attended Hearings (there are also additional children marked as brother/sister in SCRA's system but not as participation individuals, so they are not included in this number). SCRA's recording and reporting of this data will develop over time and it is worth noting that 2021 was a pandemic year and the data may therefore be affected as a result.

Permanent Care away from family of birth

Article 21- Adoption

¹ in 2018 SCRA's research reported on 4,270 children with a home CSO ([Summary-Briefing-Paper.pdf \(scra.gov.uk\)](https://www.scra.gov.uk/summary-briefing-paper)). The 2021 figure of 1,884 is considerably less than this – further research may be required to assess why this is but at least some is in terms of a narrowing of how home CSOs are documented within CSAS (a new computer system) as opposed to our prior recording system.

The Adoption (Scotland) Act 2007 gives different ways for a child to be cared for permanently – the main legal orders to determine this are an Adoption Order or a Permanence Order. SCRA's data is about those children who are on a Compulsory Supervision Order where there are parallel Court proceedings to make decisions about permanent care.

In 2021 there were 444 Children's Hearings that gave advice to the Court about a plan for adoption or permanence and this was 2.1% of all the Hearings in 2021. The average age of a child with an advice Hearing was 6 years old. 196 children had advice given to Court at the same time as a sibling.

Review of decisions

Article 25 – review of treatment in care

Any Compulsory Supervision Order can only last for 12 months before it has to be reviewed. Whilst the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 was in force this time period was allowed to be extended up to 18 months². If there is a need to change an order at any time it can be reviewed at the request of a local authority; children and their relevant persons³ can also ask for a review of a CSO. In 2021 there were 14,010 review Children's Hearings. 5,829 of these reviews were because the CSO would expire if it was not reviewed; 2,007 were reviews that were requested by the local authority; 1,279 were reviews requested by a relevant person and 40 children requested a review of their own Compulsory Supervision Order⁴.

Specific situations of concern for children

Article 28 – Right to an education; Article 33 – drug abuse; Article 34 – sexual exploitation

The Children's Hearing becomes involved with a child and family as a result of detailed individual concerns which are written by the Children's Reporter in [Section 67 Grounds for Referral](#). There are currently 17 different Section 67 Grounds, all specified by a letter of the alphabet. The Children's Reporter selects the most relevant Section 67 ground for referral, to depict in the fullest way possible the situation that a child is in.

In 2021 there were 541 children who had a referral on 'o' grounds – non-attendance at school without reasonable excuse and 154 of these 541 children went to a Children's Hearing as a result of this concern; there were 34 children who had a referral on 'k' or 'l' grounds – misuse of alcohol or a drug and 3 of these children went to a Children's Hearing as a result of this

² The [Coronavirus \(Scotland\) Act 2020 Schedule 3](#) provisions in force for the Children's Hearing from 6th April 2020 to 30th September 2021.

³ [Section 200](#) of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act defines relevant persons. Children and relevant persons can ask for a review of a CSO to occur not earlier than three months after the making of an order (set out in [Section 132](#) of the 2011 Act).

⁴ There are additional reasons for review which are not reported here and a child may have more than one reason for their Children's Hearing.

concern; there were 1,542 children who had a referral on 'e'⁵ or on 'm'⁶ grounds relating to the child's contact with adults and their conduct and 249 of these children went to a Children's Hearing as a result of this concern.

Sexual exploitation is not a current section 67 ground of referral and children for whom this is a concern will be referred to a Children's Hearing under a number of different potential grounds; 'e' and 'm' are the most likely but 'c' grounds (lack of parental care) or 'b' grounds (victim of a schedule 1 offence) / 'g' grounds (close connection with someone who has committed an offence under the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 are also likely.

Secure care

Article 37 – Inhumane treatment and detention

In 2021 there were 77 children who had a Children's Hearing following an emergency transfer to secure accommodation and 20 of those children had new grounds for referral following this emergency transfer.

There were 87⁷ children who were subject to secure accommodation authorisation as a requirement of an order issued by a Children's Hearing in 2021. As of 22nd February 2022 there were 32 of these children still subject to secure accommodation as a requirement of their CSO or Interim Order⁸; the average time that these children had been in secure accommodation was 207 calendar days (although this average is increased by a small number of children who have been in secure care for more than two years). Of the 87 children, 55 were no longer subject to secure authorisation, and the average time they had been in secure care was 176 calendar days.

For the 87 children the first type of order they were subject to varied – 34 had Secure Accommodation first authorised by a CSO. These children are likely to have been subject to planned moves to Secure Care and would have received information in advance of the Hearing and had the benefit of support provided by a legal representative and possibly an advocacy worker.

⁵ (e)the child is being, or is likely to be, exposed to persons whose conduct is (or has been) such that it is likely that—

(i)the child will be abused or harmed, or

(ii)the child's health, safety or development will be seriously adversely affected,

⁶ (m)the child's conduct has had, or is likely to have, a serious adverse effect on the health, safety or development of the child or another person,

⁷ The child count was 92 – but 5 children had more than one episode of secure care in the year.

⁸ Interim Order – includes Interim Compulsory Supervision orders, Interim Variations of Compulsory Supervision Orders; Interim Continuations of Compulsory Supervision Orders and Interim orders issued by a Court.

53 children had an interim order first authorise secure care. These children are more likely to have been moved to secure care following a crisis incident and the ways in which they are prepared for that move emotionally and practically will be different. Appendix 1 contains a line chart illustrating the first orders made in relation to secure care for the 87 children who had been subject to secure care through 2021 and the average time that is related to each of the orders.

The 87 children had a variety of [Section 67 grounds for referral](#) put at the Children's Hearing which made the first Hearing decision in relation to secure care; 23 had 'm' grounds for referral and an average time of 237 calendar days in secure care. Other grounds put at the Children's Hearing which made the first Hearing decision in relation to secure care were 'a'; 'l', 'j' and 'j' & 'm' (each under 5 children) with a range from 126 calendar days to 175 calendar days in secure care. Some children already subject to secure care did not have any additional grounds for referral put to them.

For 13 children in 2021 a decision that they should live in secure care was made at their first Children's Hearing. 74 children had had a previous Children's Hearing so had some knowledge of how the Hearing works and prior experience of attending a Hearing or of Hearing decision making.

In the 2021 data it appears that the younger a child is when a secure order is first made, the longer they have been subject to secure care (Appendix 2)⁹. Children aged 12 & 13 have very different profiles from the other ages, both being in secure care for over 200 days on average. The lowest time on secure was for 17 year olds at 141 days, although that might be expected as a CSO would need to be reviewed before a child's 18th birthday and cannot currently continue after a child turns 18.

34 girls and 53 boys were subject to secure care in 2021. Girls spent an average of 210 calendar days in secure care and boys 171 calendar days¹⁰.

When the home address of the children in secure care in 2021 is matched against the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation most of the children have a home address in SIMD areas 1-6 (categorised as areas of higher deprivation). Appendix 3 details the SIMD / child / average time in secure.

Deferred decisions and Children's Hearings called within 20 working days of a Reporter decision to arrange a grounds Children's Hearing

Article 3 – Best interests of the child

In 2021 there were 4,662 Children's Hearings which deferred making a decision until another day. These deferred decisions were for 2,929 children. A Children's Hearing can defer a

⁹ This is just in relation to the 2021 data and does not represent any trend over time.

¹⁰ This figure does not differentiate those children whose birth sex and gender identity are different. More work needs to be done on this.

decision for a number of different reasons and work is ongoing in SCRA to consider the different ways we can collect and report on deferred decisions from the Children's Hearing.

Once a Reporter has made the decision to call a Children's Hearing, that Hearing should take place within 20 working days, this is to make sure that the statutory response for children and families takes place with no undue delay. In 2021 53.6% of Children's Hearings to put Section 67 grounds for referral took place within 20 working days (a total of 2,426 Reporter decisions). In 2018 / 18 the figure was 74.8%. It is worth noting that 2021 was a pandemic year and the data may therefore be affected as a result and in addition Children's Hearings will be arranged to suit a child and family and professionals and that may mean that they occur later than 20 working days after a Reporter decision.

Children in conflict with the law

Article 40 – juvenile justice

In 2021 of 18,547 referrals to the Children's Reporter 17.4% of referrals had a Reporter decision to call a Children's Hearing. Of these Reporter decisions there was a higher percentage of girls with a Children's Hearing called by the Reporter (girls, 18.8%, boys 16.4%). For offence concerns the percentage of referrals where there was a Reporter decision to call a Children's Hearing were girls, 4.3% and boys 4.3%.

60% of the children referred as a result of a 'j' ground for referral in 2021 were referred on a single occasion. 16% of these children had 2 offence referrals. 3% of these children had ten or more offence referrals in 2021. Appendix 4 gives a full breakdown.

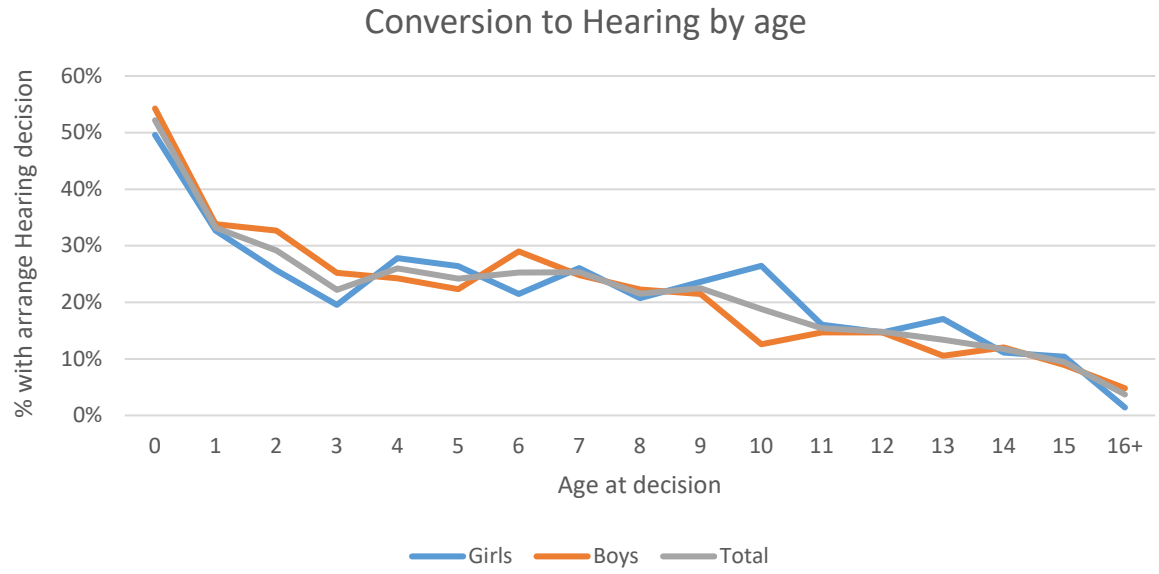
Decision making by the state

Article 19 – Protection from violence, abuse and neglect

The involvement of the Children's Reporter and the Children's Hearing in the life of a child and their family is to provide statutory protection and a framework for change. Not all of the children referred to the Children's Reporter will have a Children's Hearing. In 2021 of the total 18,547 referrals to the Children's Reporter 17.4% of referrals had a Reporter decision to call a Children's Hearing – so 3,233 referrals (one child can have more than one referral in the year). Non offence concerns were the most common reason for calling a Children's Hearing, for girls, 21.8% and for boys 24.6%¹¹.

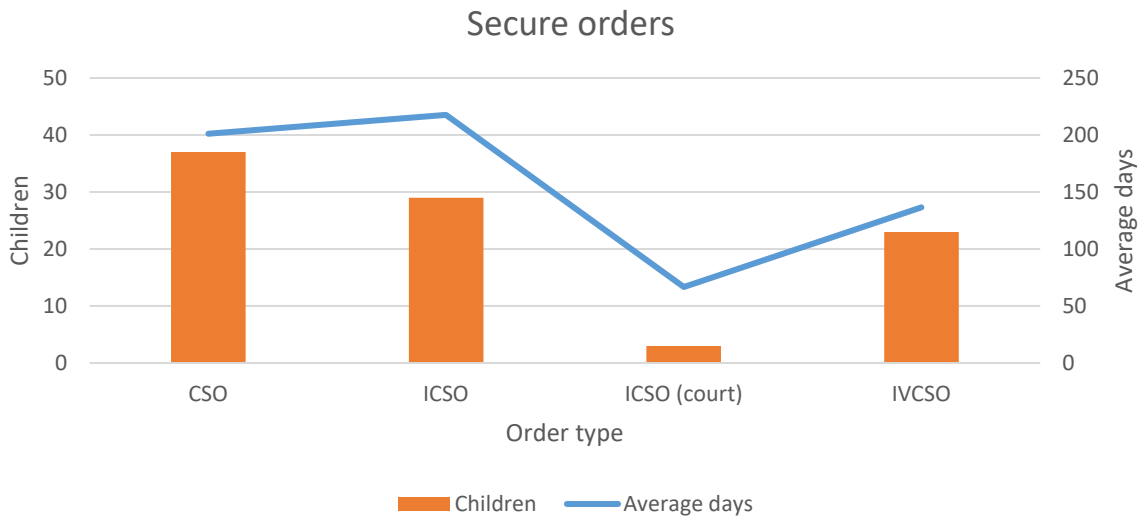
The distribution of Reporter referrals converted to a Children's Hearing by age and by girl / boy is set out below.

¹¹ For a small number of children sex was not recorded.



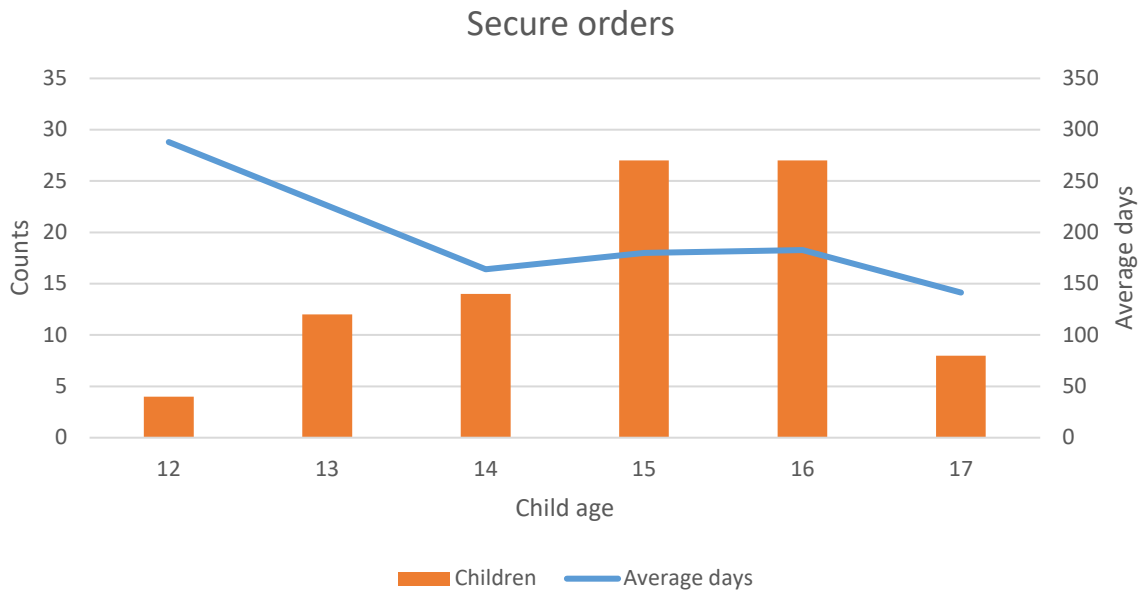
Appendix 1:

Chart 1: First Secure Order and length of time living in secure care following that order (calendar days)



Appendix 2:

Chart 2: Age at first secure and time subject to secure care (calendar days)



Appendix 3:

Chart 3: Scottish index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), numbers of children subject to secure care and average time spent in secure care (calendar days)

**Appendix 4:**

Table 2: Children and number of offence referrals, 2021.

Number of offence referrals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Children	1,402	378	173	118	63	53	46	17	13	71
Percentage	60%	16%	7%	5%	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Board Member Code of Conduct

Accountable Director: SCRA Board Chair

Date: 22 March 2022

Report prepared by: Governance Officer

Recommendation:

1. To approve the revised Board Member Code of Conduct

Reason for Report: For Approval.

Resource Implications: Not applicable

Consultation: SCRA Board Members
Scottish Government Sponsor Team

Equalities Duties: Equalities impact assessment not required

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Purpose of the report is to seek Board approval for the revised Board Members Code of Conduct (Appendix 1)

2. Background

- 2.1 Changes to the Model Code came into effect on 7 December 2021. SCRA will adopt the new Model Code and submit to Scottish Ministers by 10 June 2022.
- 2.2 SCRA's Sponsor team drafted a proposal around the template and amendments suggested by SCRA have been accepted.

3. Revisions to the Board Members Code of Conduct

- 3.1 General changes to the code;

- Plain English
- Removal of most background information, guidance and reasoning
- Removal of repetition
- First person
- Personal responsibility
- Mirrors Councillors' Code where applicable

- 3.2 Notable changes to the code;

1. The revised Model Code highlights need for members to take personal responsibility for their behaviour and have an awareness of the organisation's policies in relation to a number of areas, for example, social media, equality, diversity and bullying and harassment.
2. Section 3 General Conduct states at 3.7 that except where it is written into a role as Board member, or at the invitation of the Chief Executive Officer/Principal Reporter, members will not become involved in operational management of SCRA, as this is the responsibility of the CEO/PR and Executive Team.
3. **Section 5: Declaration of interests** - Members must now highlight any 'connections' as well as registers of interests. A connection is defined as a **link** between the member and the matter being considered, or a person or body associated with the member, for example, it could be a family relationship, social or professional contact.

At 5.5, the Code now states that members should understand that a connection is an interest that requires to be declared where the **objective test** is met, for example, *where a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard a member's*

connection to a particular matter as being so significant that it would be considered as likely to influence the discussion or decision-making.

At 5.8, members can now apply to the Standards Commission for dispensation to be granted to allow them to take part in a discussion or decision where they would otherwise have to withdraw (because of a connection). This needs to be applied for in advance of the discussion and given time for consideration.

4. Recommendation

4.1 It is recommended that the Board approve the revised Code of Conduct.

APPENDIX 1

Code of Conduct for Members of SCRA

CONTENTS

Section 1: Introduction to the Code of Conduct

My Responsibilities
Enforcement

Section 2: Key Principles of the Code of Conduct

Section 3: General Conduct

Respect and Courtesy
Remuneration, Allowances and Expenses
Gifts and Hospitality
Confidentiality
Use of Public Body Resources
Dealing with my Public Body and Preferential Treatment
Appointments to Outside Organisations

Section 4: Registration of Interests

Category One: Remuneration
Category Two: Other Roles
Category Three: Contracts
Category Four: Election Expenses
Category Five: Houses, Land and Buildings
Category Six: Interest in Shares and Securities
Category Seven: Gifts and Hospitality
Category Eight: Non-Financial Interests
Category Nine: Close Family Members

Section 5: Declaration of Interests

Stage 1: Connection
Stage 2: Interest
Stage 3: Participation

Section 6: Lobbying and Access

ANNEXES

Annex A Breaches of the Code
Annex B Definitions

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT

1.1 This Code has been issued by the Scottish Ministers, with the approval of the Scottish Parliament, as required by the [Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2000 \(the “Act”\)](#).

1.2 The purpose of the Code is to set out the conduct expected of those who serve on the boards of public bodies in Scotland.

1.3 The Code has been developed in line with the nine key principles of public life in Scotland. The principles are listed in [Section 2](#) and set out how the provisions of the Code should be interpreted and applied in practice.

My Responsibilities

1.4 I understand that the public has a high expectation of those who serve on the boards of public bodies and the way in which they should conduct themselves in undertaking their duties. I will always seek to meet those expectations by ensuring that I conduct myself in accordance with the Code.

1.5 I will comply with the substantive provisions of this Code, being sections 3 to 6 inclusive, in all situations and at all times where I am acting as a board member of my public body, have referred to myself as a board member or could objectively be considered to be acting as a board member.

1.6 I will comply with the substantive provisions of this Code, being sections 3 to 6 inclusive, in all my dealings with the public, employees and fellow board members, whether formal or informal.

1.7 I understand that it is my personal responsibility to be familiar with the provisions of this Code and that I must also comply with the law and my public body’s rules, standing orders and regulations. I will also ensure that I am familiar with any guidance or advice notes issued by the Standards Commission for Scotland (“Standards Commission”) and my public body, and endeavour to take part in any training offered on the Code.

1.8 I will not, at any time, advocate or encourage any action contrary to this Code.

1.9 I understand that no written information, whether in the Code itself or the associated Guidance or Advice Notes issued by the Standards Commission, can provide for all circumstances. If I am uncertain about how the Code applies, I will seek advice from the Standards Officer of my public body, failing whom the Chair or Chief Executive of my public body. I note that I may also choose to seek external legal advice on how to interpret the provisions of the Code.

Enforcement

1.10 [Part 2 of the Act](#) sets out the provisions for dealing with alleged breaches of the Code, including the sanctions that can be applied if the Standards Commission finds that there has been a breach of the Code. More information on how complaints are dealt with and the sanctions available can be found at [Annex A](#).

SECTION 2: KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

2.1 The Code has been based on the following key principles of public life. I will behave in accordance with these principles and understand that they should be used for guidance and interpreting the provisions in the Code.

2.2 I note that a breach of one or more of the key principles does not in itself amount to a breach of the Code. I note that, for a breach of the Code to be found, there must also be a contravention of one or more of the provisions in sections 3 to 6 inclusive of the Code.

The key principles are:

Duty

I have a duty to uphold the law and act in accordance with the law and the public trust placed in me. I have a duty to act in the interests of the public body of which I am a member and in accordance with the core functions and duties of that body.

Selflessness

I have a duty to take decisions solely in terms of public interest. I must not act in order to gain financial or other material benefit for myself, family or friends.

Integrity

I must not place myself under any financial, or other, obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonably be thought to influence me in the performance of my duties.

Objectivity

I must make decisions solely on merit and in a way that is consistent with the functions of my public body when carrying out public business including making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits.

Accountability and Stewardship

I am accountable to the public for my decisions and actions. I have a duty to consider issues on their merits, taking account of the views of others and I must ensure that my public body uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

Openness

I have a duty to be as open as possible about my decisions and actions, giving reasons for my decisions and restricting information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

I have a duty to act honestly. I must declare any private interests relating to my public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

I have a duty to promote and support these principles by leadership and example, and to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of my public body and its members in conducting public business.

Respect

I must respect all other board members and all employees of my public body and the role they play, treating them with courtesy at all times. Similarly, I must respect members of the public when performing my duties as a board member.

SECTION 3: GENERAL CONDUCT

Respect and Courtesy

3.1 I will treat everyone with courtesy and respect. This includes in person, in writing, at meetings, when I am online and when I am using social media.

3.2 I will not discriminate unlawfully on the basis of race, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief, marital status or pregnancy/maternity; I will advance equality of opportunity and seek to foster good relations between different people.

3.3 I will not engage in any conduct that could amount to bullying or harassment (which includes sexual harassment). I accept that such conduct is completely unacceptable and will be considered to be a breach of this Code.

3.4 I accept that disrespect, bullying and harassment can be:

- a) a one-off incident,
- b) part of a cumulative course of conduct; or
- c) a pattern of behaviour.

3.5 I understand that how, and in what context, I exhibit certain behaviours can be as important as what I communicate, given that disrespect, bullying and harassment can be physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct.

3.6 I accept that it is my responsibility to understand what constitutes bullying and harassment and I will utilise resources, including the Standards Commission's guidance and advice notes, my public body's policies and training material (where appropriate) to ensure that my knowledge and understanding is up to date.

3.7 Except where it is written into my role as Board member, and / or at the invitation of the Chief Executive, I will not become involved in operational management of my public body. I acknowledge and understand that operational management is the responsibility of the Chief Executive and Executive Team.

3.8 I will not undermine any individual employee or group of employees, or raise concerns about their performance, conduct or capability in public. I will raise any concerns I have on such matters in private with senior management as appropriate.

3.9 I will not take, or seek to take, unfair advantage of my position in my dealings with employees of my public body or bring any undue influence to bear on employees to take a certain action. I will not ask or direct employees to do something which I know, or should reasonably know, could compromise them or prevent them from undertaking their duties properly and appropriately.

3.10 I will respect and comply with rulings from the Chair during meetings of:

- a) my public body, its committees; and
- b) any outside organisations that I have been appointed or nominated to by my public body or on which I represent my public body.

3.11 I will respect the principle of collective decision-making and corporate responsibility. This means that once the Board has made a decision, I will support that decision, even if I did not agree with it or vote for it.

Remuneration, Allowances and Expenses

3.12 I will comply with the rules, and the policies of my public body, on the payment of remuneration, allowances and expenses.

Gifts and Hospitality

3.13 I understand that I may be offered gifts (including money raised via crowdfunding or sponsorship), hospitality, material benefits or services ("gift or hospitality") that may be reasonably regarded by a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts as placing me under an improper obligation or being capable of influencing my judgement.

3.14 I will never **ask for** or **seek** any gift or hospitality.

3.15 I will refuse any gift or hospitality, unless it is:

- a) a minor item or token of modest intrinsic value offered on an infrequent basis;
- b) a gift being offered to my public body;
- c) hospitality which would reasonably be associated with my duties as a board member; or
- d) hospitality which has been approved in advance by my public body.

3.16 I will consider whether there could be a reasonable perception that any gift or hospitality received by a person or body connected to me could or would influence my judgement.

3.17 I will not allow the promise of money or other financial advantage to induce me to act improperly in my role as a board member. I accept that the money or advantage (including any gift or hospitality) does not have to be given to me directly. The offer of monies or advantages to others, including community groups, may amount to bribery, if the intention is to induce me to improperly perform a function.

3.18 I will never accept any gift or hospitality from any individual or applicant who is awaiting a decision from, or seeking to do business with, my public body.

3.19 If I consider that declining an offer of a gift would cause offence, I will accept it and hand it over to my public body at the earliest possible opportunity and ask for it to be registered.

3.20 I will promptly advise my public body's Standards Officer if I am offered (but refuse) any gift or hospitality of any significant value and / or if I am offered any gift or hospitality from the same source on a repeated basis, so that my public body can monitor this.

3.21 I will familiarise myself with the terms of the [Bribery Act 2010](#), which provides for offences of bribing another person and offences relating to being bribed.

Confidentiality

3.22 I will not disclose confidential information or information which should reasonably be regarded as being of a confidential or private nature, without the express consent of a person or body authorised to give such consent, or unless required to do so by law. I note that if I cannot obtain such express consent, I should assume it is not given.

3.23 I accept that confidential information can include discussions, documents, and information which is not yet public or never intended to be public, and information deemed confidential by statute.

3.24 I will only use confidential information to undertake my duties as a board member. I will not use it in any way for personal advantage or to discredit my public body (even if my personal view is that the information should be publicly available).

3.25 I note that these confidentiality requirements do not apply to protected whistleblowing disclosures made to the prescribed persons and bodies as identified in statute.

Use of Public Body Resources

3.26 I will only use my public body's resources, including employee assistance, facilities, stationery and IT equipment, for carrying out duties on behalf of the public body, in accordance with its relevant policies.

3.27 I will not use, or in any way enable others to use, my public body's resources:

- a) imprudently (without thinking about the implications or consequences);
- b) unlawfully;
- c) for any political activities or matters relating to these; or
- d) improperly.

Dealing with my Public Body and Preferential Treatment

3.28 I will not use, or attempt to use, my position or influence as a board member to:

- a) improperly confer on or secure for myself, or others, an advantage;
- b) avoid a disadvantage for myself, or create a disadvantage for others or
- c) improperly seek preferential treatment or access for myself or others.

3.29 I will avoid any action which could lead members of the public to believe that preferential treatment or access is being sought.

3.30 I will advise employees of any connection, as defined at [Section 5](#), I may have to a matter, when seeking information or advice or responding to a request for information or advice from them.

Appointments to Outside Organisations

3.31 If I am appointed, or nominated by my public body, as a member of another body or organisation, I will abide by the rules of conduct and will act in the best interests of that body or organisation while acting as a member of it. I will also continue to observe the rules of this Code when carrying out the duties of that body or organisation.

3.32 I accept that if I am a director or trustee (or equivalent) of a company or a charity, I will be responsible for identifying, and taking advice on, any conflicts of interest that may arise between the company or charity and my public body.

SECTION 4: REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 The following paragraphs set out what I have to register when I am appointed and whenever my circumstances change. The register covers my current term of appointment.

4.2 I understand that regulations made by the Scottish Ministers describe the detail and timescale for registering interests; including a requirement that a board member must register their registrable interests within one month of becoming a board member, and register any changes to those interests within one month of those changes having occurred.

4.3 The interests which I am required to register are those set out in the following paragraphs. Other than as required by paragraph 4.23, I understand it is not necessary to register the interests of my spouse or cohabitee.

Category One: Remuneration

4.4 I will register any work for which I receive, or expect to receive, payment. I have a registrable interest where I receive remuneration by virtue of being:

- a) employed;
- b) self-employed;
- c) the holder of an office;
- d) a director of an undertaking;
- e) a partner in a firm;
- f) appointed or nominated by my public body to another body; or
- g) engaged in a trade, profession or vocation or any other work.

4.5 I understand that in relation to 4.4 above, the amount of remuneration does not require to be registered. I understand that any remuneration received as a board member of this specific public body does not have to be registered.

4.6 I understand that if a position is not remunerated it does not need to be registered under this category. However, unremunerated directorships may need to be registered under Category Two, "Other Roles".

4.7 I must register any allowances I receive in relation to membership of any organisation under Category One.

4.8 When registering employment as an employee, I must give the full name of the employer, the nature of its business, and the nature of the post I hold in the organisation.

4.9 When registering remuneration from the categories listed in paragraph 4.4 (b) to (g) above, I must provide the full name and give details of the nature of the business, organisation, undertaking, partnership or other body, as appropriate. I recognise that some other employments may be incompatible with my role as board member of my public body in terms of paragraph [6.7](#) of this Code.

4.10 Where I otherwise undertake a trade, profession or vocation, or any other work, the detail to be given is the nature of the work and how often it is undertaken.

4.11 When registering a directorship, it is necessary to provide the registered name and registered number of the undertaking in which the directorship is held and provide information about the nature of its business.

4.12 I understand that registration of a pension is not required as this falls outside the scope of the category.

Category Two: Other Roles

4.13 I will register any unremunerated directorships where the body in question is a subsidiary or parent company of an undertaking in which I hold a remunerated directorship.

4.14 I will register the registered name and registered number of the subsidiary or parent company or other undertaking and the nature of its business, and its relationship to the company or other undertaking in which I am a director and from which I receive remuneration.

Category Three: Contracts

4.15 I have a registerable interest where I (or a firm in which I am a partner, or an undertaking in which I am a director or in which I have shares of a value as described in paragraph 4.19 below) have made a contract with my public body:

- a) under which goods or services are to be provided, or works are to be executed; and
- b) which has not been fully discharged.

4.16 I will register a description of the contract, including its duration, but excluding the value.

Category Four: Election Expenses

4.17 If I have been elected to my public body, then I will register a description of, and statement of, any assistance towards election expenses relating to election to my public body.

Category Five: Houses, Land and Buildings

4.18 I have a registrable interest where I own or have any other right or interest in houses, land and buildings, which may be significant to, of relevance to, or bear upon, the work and operation of my public body.

4.19 I accept that, when deciding whether or not I need to register any interest I have in houses, land or buildings, the test to be applied is whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as being so significant that it could potentially affect my responsibilities to my public body and to the public, or could influence my actions, speeches or decision-making.

Category Six: Interest in Shares and Securities

4.20 I have a registerable interest where:

- a) I own or have an interest in more than 1% of the issued share capital of the company or other body; or
- b) Where, at the relevant date, the market value of any shares and securities (in any one specific company or body) that I own or have an interest in is greater than £25,000.

Category Seven: Gifts and Hospitality

4.21 I understand the requirements of paragraphs 3.13 to 3.21 regarding gifts and hospitality. As I will not accept any gifts or hospitality, other than under the limited circumstances allowed, I understand there is no longer the need to register any.

Category Eight: Non-Financial Interests

4.22 I may also have other interests and I understand it is equally important that relevant interests such as membership or holding office in other public bodies, companies, clubs, societies and organisations such as trades unions and voluntary organisations, are registered and described. In this context, I understand non-financial interests are those which members of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts might reasonably think could influence my actions, speeches, votes or decision-making in my public body (this includes its Committees and memberships of other organisations to which I have been appointed or nominated by my public body).

Category Nine: Close Family Members

4.23 I will register the interests of any close family member who has transactions with my public body or is likely to have transactions or do business with it.

SECTION 5: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Stage 1: Connection

5.1 For each particular matter I am involved in as a board member, I will first consider whether I have a connection to that matter.

5.2 I understand that a connection is any link between the matter being considered and me, or a person or body I am associated with. This could be a family relationship or a social or professional contact.

5.3 A connection includes anything that I have registered as an interest.

5.4 A connection does not include being a member of a body to which I have been appointed or nominated by my public body as a representative of my public body, unless:

- a) The matter being considered by my public body is quasi-judicial or regulatory; or
- b) I have a personal conflict by reason of my actions, my connections or my legal obligations.

Stage 2: Interest

5.5 I understand my connection is an interest that requires to be declared where the objective test is met – that is where a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard my connection to a particular matter as being so significant that it would be considered as being likely to influence the discussion or decision-making.

Stage 3: Participation

5.6 I will declare my interest as early as possible in meetings. I will not remain in the meeting nor participate in any way in those parts of meetings where I have declared an interest.

5.7 I will consider whether it is appropriate for transparency reasons to state publicly where I have a connection, which I do not consider amounts to an interest.

5.8 I note that I can apply to the Standards Commission and ask it to grant a dispensation to allow me to take part in the discussion and decision-making on a matter where I would otherwise have to declare an interest and withdraw (as a result of having a connection to the matter that would fall within the objective test). I note that such an application must be made in advance of any meetings where the dispensation is sought and that I cannot take part in any discussion or decision-making on the matter in question unless, and until, the application is granted.

5.9 I note that public confidence in a public body is damaged by the perception that decisions taken by that body are substantially influenced by factors other than the public interest. I will not accept a role or appointment if doing so means I will have to declare interests frequently at meetings in respect of my role as a board member. Similarly, if any appointment or nomination to another body would give rise to objective concern because of my existing personal involvement or affiliations, I will not accept the appointment or nomination.

SECTION 6: LOBBYING AND ACCESS

6.1 I understand that a wide range of people will seek access to me as a board member and will try to lobby me, including individuals, organisations and companies. I must distinguish between:

- a) any role I have in dealing with enquiries from the public;
- b) any community engagement where I am working with individuals and organisations to encourage their participation and involvement, and;
- c) lobbying, which is where I am approached by any individual or organisation who is seeking to influence me for financial gain or advantage, particularly those who are seeking to do business with my public body (for example contracts/procurement).

6.2 In deciding whether, and if so how, to respond to such lobbying, I will always have regard to the objective test, which is whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard my conduct as being likely to influence my, or my public body's, decision-making role.

6.3 I will not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation that lobbies, do anything which contravenes this Code or any other relevant rule of my public body or any statutory provision.

6.4 I will not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation that lobbies, act in any way which could bring discredit upon my public body.

6.5 If I have concerns about the approach or methods used by any person or organisation in their contacts with me, I will seek the guidance of the Chair, Chief Executive or Standards Officer of my public body.

6.6 The public must be assured that no person or organisation will gain better access to, or treatment by, me as a result of employing a company or individual to lobby on a fee basis on their behalf. I will not, therefore, offer or accord any preferential access or treatment to those lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients compared with that which I accord any other person or organisation who lobbies or approaches me. I will ensure that those lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients are not given to understand that preferential access or treatment, compared to that accorded to any other person or organisation, might be forthcoming.

6.7 Before taking any action as a result of being lobbied, I will seek to satisfy myself about the identity of the person or organisation that is lobbying and the motive for lobbying. I understand I may choose to act in response to a person or organisation lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients but it is important that I understand the basis on which I am being lobbied in order to ensure that any action taken in connection with the lobbyist complies with the standards set out in this Code and the [Lobbying \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#).

6.8 I will not accept any paid work:

- a) which would involve me lobbying on behalf of any person or organisation or any clients of a person or organisation.
- b) to provide services as a strategist, adviser or consultant, for example, advising on how to influence my public body and its members. This does not prohibit me from being remunerated for activity which may arise because of, or relate to, membership of my public body, such as journalism or broadcasting, or involvement in representative or presentational work, such as participation in delegations, conferences or other events.

ANNEX A: BREACHES OF THE CODE

Introduction

1. [The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#) (“the Act”) provided for a framework to encourage and, where necessary, enforce high ethical standards in public life.
2. The Act provided for the introduction of new codes of conduct for local authority councillors and members of relevant public bodies, imposing on councils and relevant public bodies a duty to help their members comply with the relevant code.
3. The Act and the subsequent Scottish Parliamentary Commissions and Commissioners etc. Act 2010 established the [Standards Commission for Scotland](#) (“Standards Commission”) and the post of [Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland](#) (“ESC”).
4. The Standards Commission and ESC are separate and independent, each with distinct functions. Complaints of breaches of a public body’s Code of Conduct are investigated by the ESC and adjudicated upon by the Standards Commission.
5. The first Model Code of Conduct came into force in 2002. The Code has since been reviewed and re-issued in 2014. The 2021 Code has been issued by the Scottish Ministers following consultation, and with the approval of the Scottish Parliament, as required by the Act.

Investigation of Complaints

6. The ESC is responsible for investigating complaints about members of devolved public bodies. It is not, however, mandatory to report a complaint about a potential breach of the Code to the ESC. It may be more appropriate in some circumstances for attempts to be made to resolve the matter informally at a local level.
7. On conclusion of the investigation, the ESC will send a report to the Standards Commission.

Hearings

8. On receipt of a report from the ESC, the Standards Commission can choose to:
 - Do nothing;
 - Direct the ESC to carry out further investigations; or
 - Hold a Hearing.
9. Hearings are held (usually in public) to determine whether the member concerned has breached their public body’s Code of Conduct. The Hearing Panel comprises of three members of the Standards Commission. The ESC will present evidence and/or make submissions at the Hearing about the investigation and any conclusions as to whether the member has contravened the Code. The member is entitled to attend or be represented at the Hearing and can also present evidence and make submissions. Both parties can call witnesses. Once it has heard all the evidence and submissions, the Hearing Panel will make a determination about whether or not it is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that there has been a contravention of

the Code by the member. If the Hearing Panel decides that a member has breached their public body's Code, it is obliged to impose a sanction.

Sanctions

10. The sanctions that can be imposed following a finding of a breach of the Code are as follows:

- **Censure:** A censure is a formal record of the Standards Commission's severe and public disapproval of the member concerned.
- **Suspension:** This can be a full or partial suspension (for up to one year). A full suspension means that the member is suspended from attending all meetings of the public body. Partial suspension means that the member is suspended from attending some of the meetings of the public body. The Commission can direct that any remuneration or allowance the member receives as a result of their membership of the public body be reduced or not paid during a period of suspension.
- **Disqualification:** Disqualification means that the member is removed from membership of the body and disqualified (for a period not exceeding five years), from membership of the body. Where a member is also a member of another devolved public body (as defined in the Act), the Commission may also remove or disqualify that person in respect of that membership. Full details of the sanctions are set out in section 19 of the Act.

Interim Suspensions

11. Section 21 of the Act provides the Standards Commission with the power to impose an interim suspension on a member on receipt of an interim report from the ESC about an ongoing investigation. In making a decision about whether or not to impose an interim suspension, a Panel comprising of three Members of the Standards Commission will review the interim report and any representations received from the member and will consider whether it is satisfied:

- That the further conduct of the ESC's investigation is likely to be prejudiced if such an action is not taken (for example if there are concerns that the member may try to interfere with evidence or witnesses); or
- That it is otherwise in the public interest to take such a measure. A policy outlining how the Standards Commission makes any decision under Section 21 and the procedures it will follow in doing so, should any such a report be received from the ESC can be found [here](#).

12. The decision to impose an interim suspension is not, and should not be seen as, a finding on the merits of any complaint or the validity of any allegations against a member of a devolved public body, nor should it be viewed as a disciplinary measure.

ANNEX B: DEFINITIONS

“Bullying” is inappropriate and unwelcome behaviour which is offensive and intimidating, and which makes an individual or group feel undermined, humiliated or insulted.

“Chair” includes Board Convener or any other individual discharging a similar function to that of a Chair or Convener under alternative decision-making structures.

“Code” is the code of conduct for members of your devolved public body, which is based on the Model Code of Conduct for members of devolved public bodies in Scotland.

“Cohabitee” includes any person who is living with you in a relationship similar to that of a partner, civil partner, or spouse.

“Confidential Information” includes:

- any information passed on to the public body by a Government department (even if it is not clearly marked as confidential) which does not allow the disclosure of that information to the public;
- information of which the law prohibits disclosure (under statute or by the order of a Court);
- any legal advice provided to the public body; or
- any other information which would reasonably be considered a breach of confidence should it be made public.

“Election expenses” means expenses incurred, whether before, during or after the election, on account of, or in respect of, the conduct or management of the election.

“Employee” includes individuals employed:

- directly by the public body;
- as contractors by the public body, or
- by a contractor to work on the public body’s premises.

“Gifts” a gift can include any item or service received free of charge, or which may be offered or promised at a discounted rate or on terms not available to the general public. Gifts include benefits such as relief from indebtedness, loan concessions, or provision of property, services or facilities at a cost below that generally charged to members of the public. It can also include gifts received directly or gifts received by any company in which the recipient holds a controlling interest in, or by a partnership of which the recipient is a partner.

“Harassment” is any unwelcome behaviour or conduct which makes someone feel offended, humiliated, intimidated, frightened and / or uncomfortable. Harassment can be experienced directly or indirectly and can occur as an isolated incident or as a course of persistent behaviour.

“Hospitality” includes the offer or promise of food, drink, accommodation, entertainment or the opportunity to attend any cultural or sporting event on terms not available to the general public.

“Relevant Date” Where a board member had an interest in shares at the date on which the member was appointed as a member, the relevant date is – (a) that date; and (b) the 5th April immediately following that date and in each succeeding year, where the interest is retained on that 5th April.

“Public body” means a devolved public body listed in Schedule 3 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000, as amended.

“Remuneration” includes any salary, wage, share of profits, fee, other monetary benefit or benefit in kind.

“Securities” a security is a certificate or other financial instrument that has monetary value and can be traded. Securities includes equity and debt securities, such as stocks bonds and debentures.

“Undertaking” means:

- a) a body corporate or partnership; or
- b) an unincorporated association carrying on a trade or business, with or without a view to a profit.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive **Date:** 22 March 2022

Report Authors: Head of Finance & Resources
Governance Officer

Recommendations:

1. To consider and confirm the Board's risk appetite (section 8.4).
2. To approve the revised Risk Management Policy.

Reason for Report: For discussion

Resource Implications: Within approved budgets

Strategy: Within approved plans

Consultation: Executive Management Team

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The current Risk Management Policy was updated and presented to the Audit & Risk Committee at its meeting in November 2021 and again at its meeting in February 2022.
- 1.2 BDO facilitated a risk workshop for Board Members in January 2022. Following the workshop Members were invited to propose any further changes to the Risk Management Policy and to review the risk appetite before final approval at the March Board.

2. Revision of the Risk Management Policy

- 2.1 The main terms of the policy document remain unchanged since November 2021 and changes proposed by Board Members are highlighted in red text.
- 2.2 It is some time since the Board reviewed the risk appetite. The current assessment is as set out in the policy at paragraph 8.4. The Operational/Service Delivery Risks is currently Minimalist to Cautious but is shown as Open to Cautious to reflect the extent of change in the operational model in recent years and likelihood of further change in the coming years. Members are asked to consider this change. Members were content with this change.

A Member of the Audit & Risk Committee has identified a possible change to the Financial Risk (currently Minimalist to Cautious) for consideration by the Board.

- 2.3 At the January workshop it was agreed that the risk management approach had evolved over time and Members are largely content with the current risk management arrangements and Risk Management Policy.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 To consider and confirm the Committee's risk appetite (section 8.4).
- 3.2 To approve the revised Risk Management Policy.

SCRA Risk Management Policy

1. Statement on Risk Management

- 1.1 The Risk Management Policy is founded upon the core principles that risk management is:
 - central to SCRA's corporate governance and internal control arrangements
 - a key tool in the management of the organisation to assist staff to manage risk as part of their day to day workload
 - an important component in ensuring continuity of core activities and to assist SCRA to deliver its business objectives
 - **dynamic, with frequent review and updating, and focused on the most significant risks at the time**
 - is an inclusive process covering all strategic and operational risks.
- 1.2 The definition of a **risk** is the **threat or possibility that an action or event will adversely or beneficially affect an organisations' ability to achieve its objectives.**
- 1.3 The policy applies to all areas of the organisation's activity. It is not only concerned with strategic objectives but encompasses operational and programme/project management activity.
- 1.4 It should be viewed as a top to bottom process, involving all levels of staff, that supports continuous improvement. As well as focusing on possible threats it is important to consider the risks of not taking opportunities that would support innovation (positive risk taking) and improve service delivery.
- 1.5 Locality Management Teams and Head Office Teams are responsible for developing their own risk registers and escalating risks to the Planning and Performance Network (PPN) or EMT as appropriate.
- 1.6 The PPN co-ordinates the operational and locality approach to risk, including the development and maintenance of risks (linked and aligned to locality plans).
- 1.7 The PPN 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.

2. Approach to Risk Management

- 2.1 The risk management policy sets out the approach to risk management and documents the roles, responsibilities of the Board, senior management, the PPN and employees.

- 2.2 In addition, the policy describes the process the Board will use to evaluate the effectiveness of the Administration's internal control procedures.
- 2.3 The following key principles outline SCRA's approach to risk management and internal control:
- the Board has responsibility for the system of internal control and for overseeing risk management within SCRA
 - the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive and senior managers will implement policies on risk management and internal control approved by the Board
 - a positive attitude to risk assessment and solving risk problems is adopted by the Board and senior managers
 - managers at all levels are responsible for encouraging good risk management practice within their areas and all managers consider the consequences of their decisions and actions from a risk management perspective
 - integration of risk management into the planning and performance framework
 - the process will be supported by a programme of audit and review

3. Risk Management Policy

- 3.1 The objectives of the risk management framework are founded on a number of key objectives to:
- ensure the delivery of core **strategic and operational** objectives within available resources
 - support continuous improvement in service delivery
 - inform SCRA business continuity plans
 - support internal controls intended to reduce losses
 - facilitate the timely identification and resolution of risks
 - enable effective stakeholder communication on service delivery
 - enhance SCRA's reputation and image.
- 3.2 The effectiveness of the Risk Management Policy will be reviewed and monitored based on the following measures:
- the extent to which SCRA is successful year on year in achieving its business objectives
 - the incidents of risks which have not been recognised and documented within the Risk Management structures; or which have been inappropriately rated within the structures.
- 3.3 The Risk Management Policy is underpinned by a commitment to training and development in risk management and the recognition of the importance

of staff responsibilities in this area.

4. Risk Management Structure

- 4.1 The Risk Management Structure for SCRA is detailed at Appendix 1. Appendix 2 sets out in general the framework for managing risk (Diagram 1) and the Risk Management Process (Diagram 2).
- 4.2 These arrangements reflect the organisational structure and ensures that risk is embedded throughout the organisation and allows for a straightforward and timely process to response to risk.
- 4.3 **Information Risk Register**
A separate information risk register is maintained by SCRA's Digital Security and Governance Manager and owned by SCRA's Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) given the specific duties placed on the organisation in terms of information risks.
- 4.4 **Joint Risks (SCRA/CHS)**
SCRA and Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) hold regular liaison meetings and any joint risks would be highlighted at joint Board meetings.

5. Risk management as part of the system of internal control

- 5.1 The internal control system encompasses a number of elements including:
 - Strategic planning and budgeting - the strategic planning and budgeting process is used to set objectives, agree priorities and allocate resources. Progress towards meeting objectives is monitored and scrutinised by the Board quarterly **with longer term and strategic objectives reviewed at a frequency to be agreed between the Board and senior management.**
 - Risk Registers – the standard template (Appendix 3) should be used at strategic, operational and locality level. The risk registers should be included in annual business plans at these levels and formally reviewed quarterly. Localities and Head Office (HO) Teams should develop a risk register for inclusion in their Locality/team plans and ensure any risks which require to be escalated are highlighted to the appropriate management group/network and Executive Management Team member.
 - Programmes – SCRA's strategic Programmes and Projects have individual risk profiles based on risks identified by Project Managers some of which are escalated for review to the appropriate management group/network and Executive Management Team member.
 - Audit & Risk Committee - the Audit & Risk Committee will oversee, 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.

- Audit – The Audit programme is informed by an annual needs assessment and encompasses traditional fieldwork and self assessment. The internal audit programme will be focused on the significant strategic and operational risks, as identified by management, and auditing risk management processes across SCRA. External audit provides feedback to the Audit Committee on the operation of internal controls as part of the annual audit.

6. Annual Governance Statement

6.1 The Board is responsible for the effectiveness of governance arrangements within SCRA. The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive, in preparing an annual Governance Statement for inclusion in the Annual Accounts will consider the elements in section 5.1 above and the following:

- SCRA's performance against financial and non-financial targets
- organisational structure and performance of senior managers
- organisation culture with respect to management of risk
- operation of delegated authority
- timeliness in identification of control issues and new significant risks
- prioritisation of risks and action to address areas of high exposure.
- effectiveness with which corrective actions are implemented

7. Risk Management Process

- 7.1 The key elements of the risk management process are set out below and more information is provided in Appendix 8. **Effective risk management is a vehicle for continuous improvement in service delivery.**
- 7.2 Risk Types – it is helpful to categorise risks to ensure consistency in the process of identification, monitoring and reporting of key risks. SCRA has adopted a simple approach based on definitions for seven types of risk that should be sufficiently flexible to cover strategic, operational, group, team and programme risks.
- 7.3 Risk Identification (guidance at Appendix 4) is the process of finding, recognising and describing risks – it is the responsibility of the members of groups/teams at each level to identify risks. A workshop approach is likely to be most effective allowing individuals within the group/team to work together and look beyond their areas of responsibility.
- 7.4 Description of Risk (guidance at Appendix 4) – each risk should be defined by a risk statement which describes the risk (the event) and outlines the consequence for and the impact on the organisation if the risk is crystallised.
- 7.5 Risk Measurement (guidance at Appendix 5) – a numerical value between 1 and 5 is given to two measures of risk – Impact and Likelihood.

- 7.6 Inherent Risk is the exposure arising from a specific risk before any action has been taken to manage it.
- 7.7 Controls – the controls in place to mitigate the risk should be recorded and any new controls to be put in place should be proportional to the risk. Some form of cost benefit analysis might be required to ensure the control action represents value for money in relation to the risk being controlled.
- 7.8 Residual risk is the risk remaining after the application of key mitigating controls and reflects how effective these controls are.
- 7.9 Target Risk is the risk exposure deemed to be acceptable as informed by the organisation's risk appetite.
- 7.10 Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring is continually checking, supervising critically observing or determining the status in order to identify change from the performance level required or expected.
- 7.11 A key element of managing risk is obtaining assurance that key controls are in place and operating effectively. SCRA has a range of internal and external assurance providers who review and provide opinions and statements which enable EMT and the Board to form a view as to whether risks are being managed in line with its expectations. A risk assurance map captures an assessment of the assurance requirements of each risk, whether the assurance is sufficient and any improvements. A risk assurance map template is attached at Appendix 6.
- 7.9 It is important to monitor that action plans are effective and to identify further action that might be necessary. Groups/teams should self- assess their key risks quarterly and report thereon to the appropriate level for the purposes of challenge and scrutiny.
- 7.10 Outputs – the Risk Register is the main output of the process. As well as providing crucial data internally, this document provides evidence for audit that the risk management process is operating. The overall risk management process should help ensure that significant issues are quickly highlighted to the right level of management.

8. Risk Appetite

- 8.1 SCRA recognises that the organisation may be involved in activities that expose the organisation to a measure of risk.
- 8.2 The 'risk appetite' (Appendix 7) is defined as the amount of risk that SCRA is prepared to accept, tolerate or be exposed to at any point in time. Risk appetite is about taking well thought through risks where the long-term rewards are expected to be greater than any short term losses. Risk appetite needs to be considered at all levels.

- 8.3 SCRA has considered its risk appetite using the classifications shown in the table below:

Classification	Description
Averse	Avoidance of risk and uncertainty is a key organisational objective.
Minimalist	Preference for ultra-safe options that have a low degree of inherent risk and a potential for limited reward
Cautious	Preference for safe options that have a low degree of residual risk and limited potential for reward
Open	Willing to consider all options and chose the one that is most likely to result in success, whilst also providing an acceptable level of reward
Hungry	Eager to be innovative and to choose options offering potentially higher rewards despite greater inherent risk

- 8.4 The SCRA Board has to determine its risk appetite against the different categories of risk that it is exposed to as follows:-

Type of Risk		Risk Appetite Agreed (as at June 2019)
Strategic/Policy Risks		Open to Cautious
Operational/Service Delivery Risks		Open to cautious
Finance Risk		Minimalist to Cautious
Reputational/Credibility Risks		Open to Cautious
Accountability/Governance Risks		Open Cautious

- 8.5 Whilst the organisation's approach is to minimise its exposure to reputational, compliance and financial risks it may accept and encourage an increased and proportionate degree of risk in pursuit of opportunities to better achieve its strategic and operational objectives.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

- 9.1 Through allocating specific risk management responsibilities SCRA have created an environment where:

- risk management is integrated into decision-making arrangements, helping to create an environment for continuous improvement and learning

- the adequacy of risk assessment, control measures and action plans are regularly reviewed, taking into account the Board's risk appetite.
- The effectiveness of the risk management framework is reviewed at regular intervals and modified as necessary.

9.2 **Role of the Board**

The Board is responsible for the system of internal control. This includes

- Setting the tone and influencing the culture of risk management
- Setting appropriate policies on internal control
- Seeking regular assurance that the system is functioning effectively
- Approving major decisions affecting SCRA's risk profile or exposure
- Annually reviewing risk management policy and risk appetite.

9.3 In setting the tone and influencing the culture of risk management the Board must determine the level of risk which SCRA is prepared to tolerate i.e. for any particular risk whether SCRA is prepared to accept the risk at its current level or whether any further action is needed to reduce likelihood or impact. It is expected that for all top rated strategic, operational and programme risks the risk owner will develop an action plan to reduce the risk assessment to moderate or escalate the risk to the next level.

9.4 **Role of the Audit & Risk Committee**

The Audit & Risk Committee is charged by the Board with overseeing the operation of the system of internal control and with ensuring robust risk management arrangements within SCRA.

9.5 **The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive**

As Accountable Officer the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive has overall executive responsibility for risk management arrangements within SCRA, leading the risk management systems and ensuring that responsibilities delegated to other senior managers and staff at all levels within SCRA are discharged in an effective manner. The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive is also responsible for signing the Governance Statement which is included in the annual accounts.

In addition to overall executive responsibility for risk management the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive oversees the maintenance of the Operational Risk Register which is owned by EMT.

9.6 **Senior Managers**

All senior managers are responsible for:

- implementing policies on risk management and internal control
- identifying, assessing and developing actions plans for the most significant risks faced by SCRA

9.7 **The Head of Finance & Resources**

The Head of Finance and Resources has specific responsibility for:

- day to day operation of SCRA's risk management arrangements
- regular reporting to the Executive Management Team, Audit & Risk Committee and Board on strategic risks and controls
- facilitating an annual review of the effectiveness of governance arrangements and reporting thereon to the Audit & Risk Committee

9.8 **Planning and Performance Network (PPN)**

The role of the PPN is to act as an internal focus for the development of SCRA's approach to risk issues, providing leadership on the delivery of SCRA's Risk Management Policy at Locality level.

Risk leads within the PPN will act as risk champions which will include:

- having a specific role of raising awareness of both the risk management process and specific risks.
- providing local staff with advice and support on risk management issues
- working with other risk champions to bring consistency of approach to risk management, share knowledge and experience
- assisting with making the necessary changes happen – both process and cultural changes.

9.9 **All Employees**

All employees should have the necessary knowledge, skills, information and authority to establish, operate and monitor the system of internal control and be responsible for managing risks as an integral element of their job.

9.10 **The Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)**

The Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) owns the information risk policy and provides advice to the Accountable Officer on the content of the Governance Statement relating to information risk.

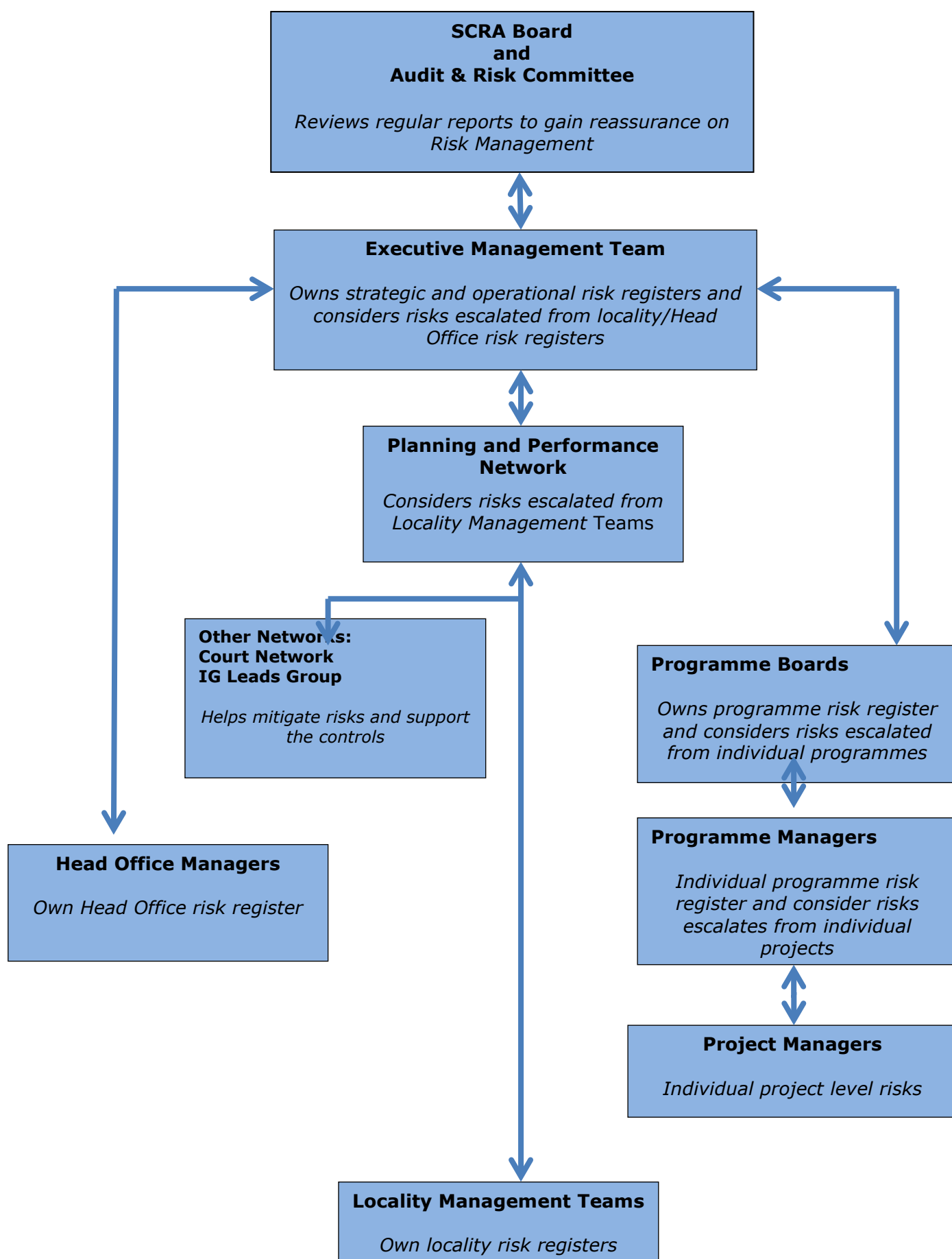
Risk Management Structure

Diagram 1: Relationship between the components of the framework for managing risks:

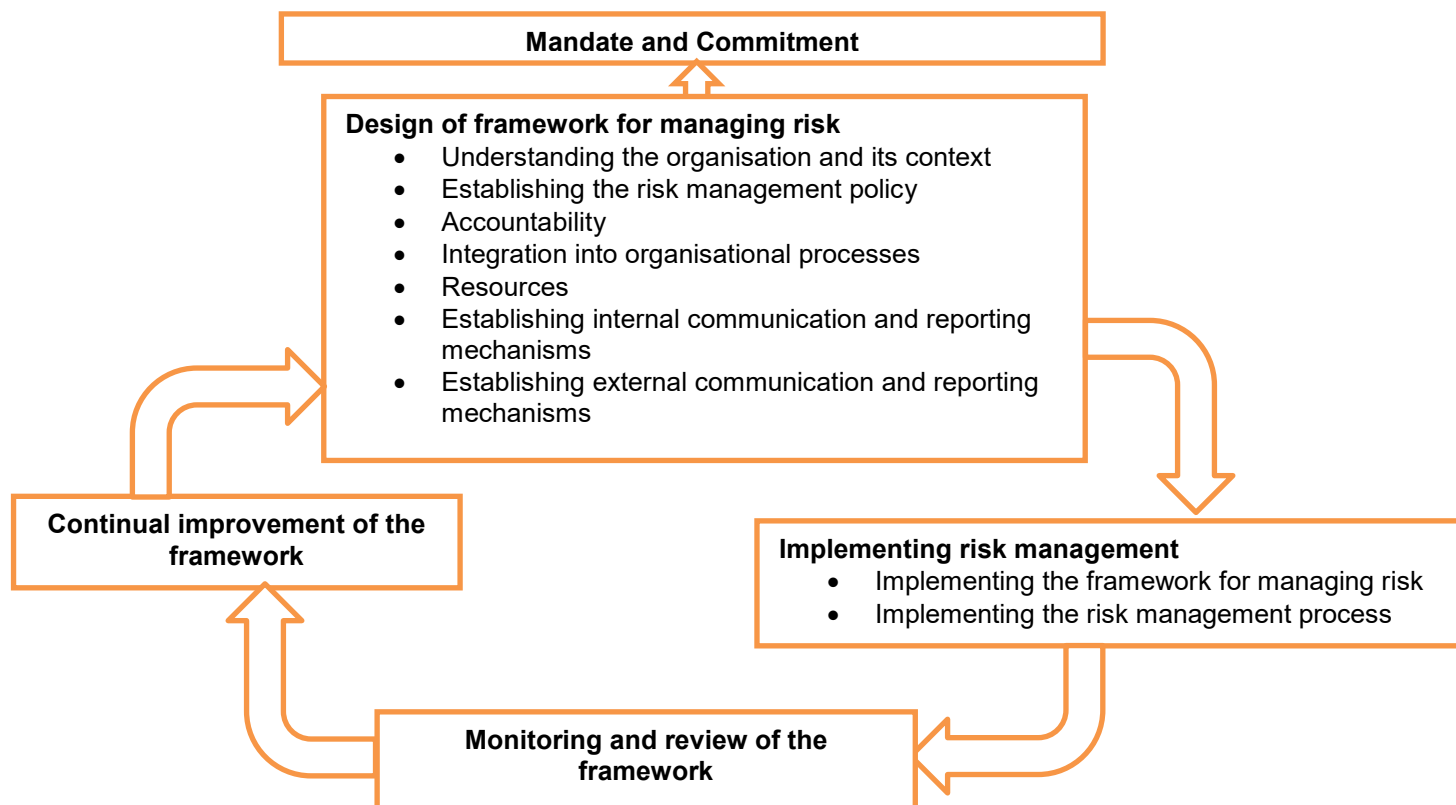
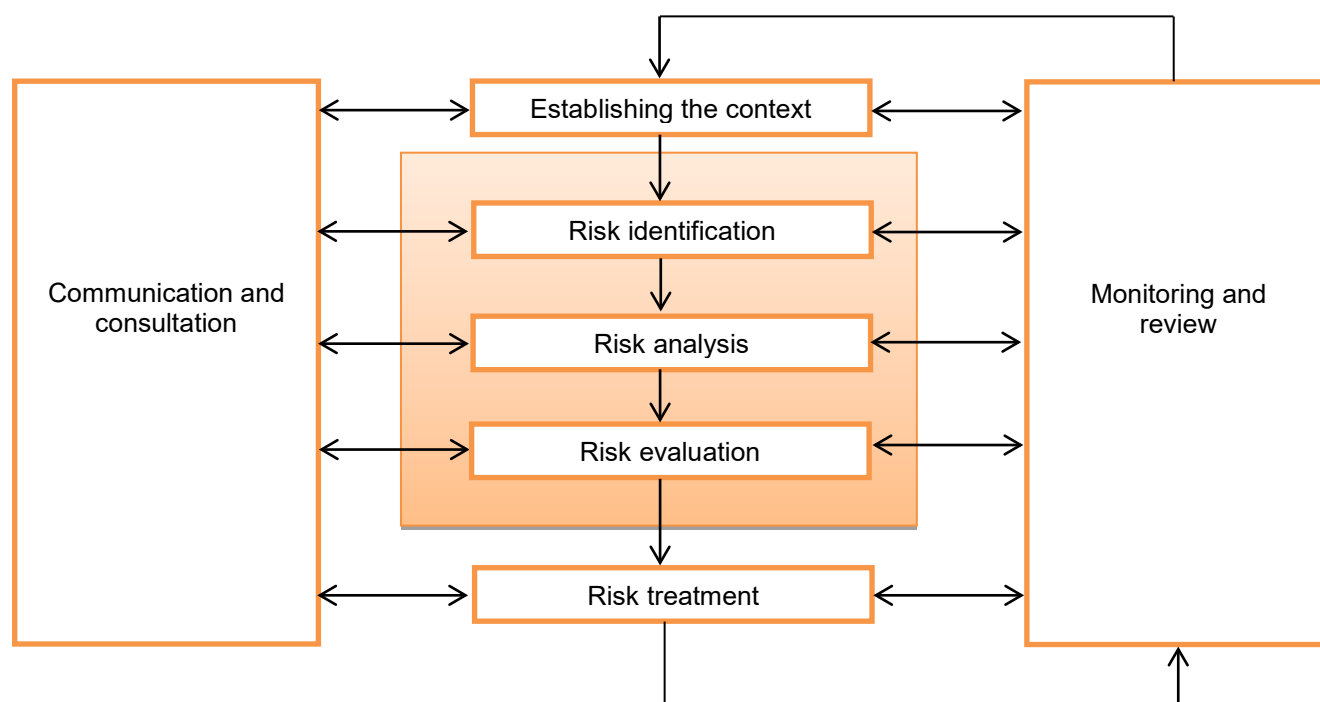


Diagram 2: Risk management process:



APPENDIX 3

Risk Register Template

Risk No	Reference to Locality 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						•					1.	
2						•					1.	
3						•					1.	
4						•					1.	
5						•					1.	
6						•					1.	

Risk Identification Guidelines

The following guidelines have been developed to assist risk leads across SCRA to adopt a consistent approach to identifying new risks (the same approach can be used to identify changes in existing risks or risks which are no longer relevant):

- The existing meeting structures for Locality/Team planning and performance reviews, facilitated by Planning Business Partners, should be used for identifying new risks.
- A facilitated workshop, at least once per year, as part of the Locality/Team meeting is usually the best method of generating new risks.
- Good documentation of discussions is important.
- Consideration should be given as to how to gather input from those staff not involved in the Locality/Team meeting.
- Some pre-work is encouraged e.g. ask those attending the meeting to identify top 5 new risks which can then be discussed and developed further.
- A major refresh of the Locality/Team risk register should take place every two years.
- Consider different types of risks (external, governance, information management, compliance, financial management, human resources, operational).
- As well as facilitated workshops other tools and techniques and sources of information can be used to support identification of new risks (SWOT analysis, PESTLE, questionnaires, checklists, inspection reports, audit findings).
- Risks should be related to objectives in Locality/Team Plans although care should be taken to identify any generic risks which will impact on objectives but might not always be apparent when thinking about particular objectives.
- Risk identification is not an exact science and should be a continuous process which keeps up with changes in the Locality/Team.

The role of risk leads in Head Office (Head of Finance & Resources and Governance Officer) includes supporting and challenging individual Localities/Teams on their risk descriptions and risk scores and comparing risk registers to identify common themes, feeding back findings to the Planning and Performance Network and EMT.

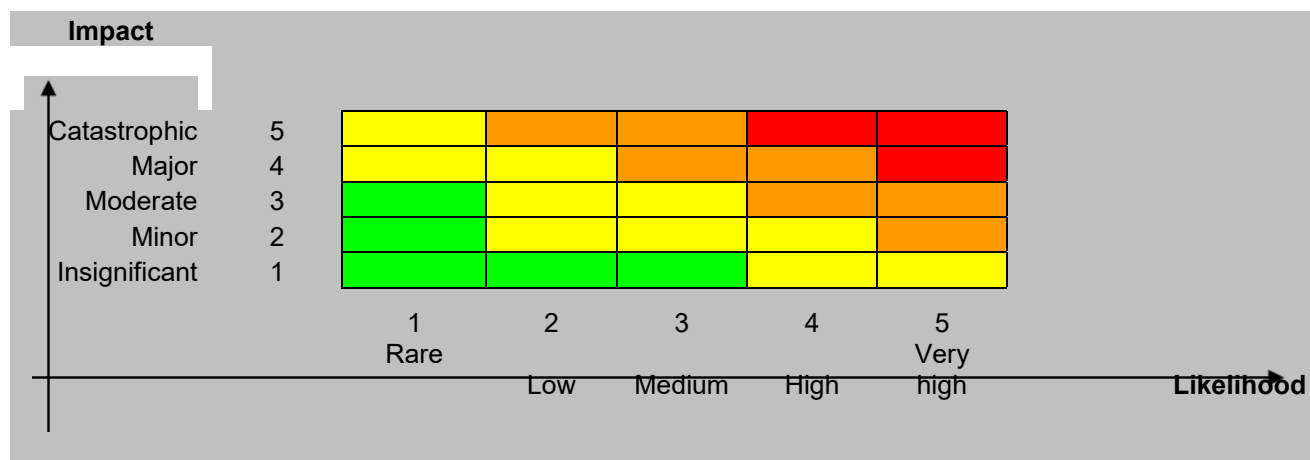
Risk descriptions

Once a new risk has been identified it is important to develop a good description or statement of the risk. There are some basic rules which should be followed:

- Avoid stating impacts which may arise as being the risks themselves, and to avoid stating risks which do not impact on objectives.
- Avoid defining risks which are simply the converse of the objectives.
- Identify the root causes and don't mistake these for the symptoms.
- A statement of risk should encompass the risk event, causes of the impact and the impact to the objective (or consequences) which might arise.
- This should mean you identify a risk which you can't control. For a risk which you can't control it may be advisable to draw up a contingency plan.

Risk Scoring

Risk Matrix



Risk level	Score	Risk level description
Very high	20 - 25	Rating: Unacceptable level of risk exposure that requires immediate mitigating action Reporting: To Accountable Officer/ Audit & Risk Committee for upward reporting to Board
High	10 - 19	Rating: Unacceptable level of risk which requires controls to be put in place to reduce exposure. Reporting: consideration should be given as to whether High risks should be escalated. Scores between 10 - 14: No, scores between 15 - 19 Yes
Medium	4 - 9	Rating: Acceptable level of risk exposure subject to regular active monitoring Reporting: Director level
Low	1 - 3	Rating: Acceptable level of risk exposure subject to regular passive monitoring Reporting: Director level. Do risks that low still exist?

Likelihood of a risk materialising

Score	Likelihood	Definitions
5	Almost certain	81-100% - almost certain will occur. Highly likely, could occur on a regular basis (i.e. several times a year).
4	Likely	51-80% - more likely to occur than not. Likely, could occur, but on sporadic basis (i.e. at least once a year). Potential of it occurring several times within the time period or has occurred recently.
3	Possible	21-50% - fairly likely to occur. Possibly, could occur, but infrequently (i.e. not more than once every 12 months). Could occur more than once within the time period and may be difficult to control due to some external influences.
2	Unlikely	6-20% - low but not impossible. Unlikely, (i.e. an event that is unlikely to occur more than once every few years) or has not occurred historically.
1	Exceptional	0-5% - extremely unlikely or virtually impossible (i.e. one-off event).

Impact of the risk

Score	Impact	Definition	Regulatory	Business Objectives	Reputational	Financial
5	Catastrophic	Likely to threaten the survival or continued effective functioning of SCRA, either financially or reputationally. Likely to have major impact on the whole organisation. Immediate action required. Must be managed with an effective control.	As below causing catastrophic loss.	> 20% variance	Ongoing media campaign, Parliamentary attention.	> £1m
4	Major	Likely substantial financial impact on SCRA. Significant impact on SCRA's strategy or operational activities. Significant stakeholder concern seriously damaging SCRA's ability to deliver its service. Likely to have major impact in many areas of the organisation. Likely to cause some damage, disruption or breach of legislation. Prompt attention required. Risk controls and actions to be developed.	As below causing major loss.	10-20% variance	Short term media campaign, meet partners and Minister to provide reassurance.	> £250k
3	Moderate	Financial impact on SCRA is likely to be moderate. Moderate impact on the SCRA's strategy or operational activities. Moderate stakeholder concern having some impact on the SCRA's ability to deliver its service. Likely to have major impact in one or a few areas of SCRA. Unlikely to cause much damage and/or threaten SCRA. Monitor and review.	As below causing moderate loss.	5-10% variance	Headline media interest causing public embarrassment, proactive contact with partners and Minister.	£50-£250k

Score	Impact	Definition	Regulatory	Business Objectives	Reputational	Financial
2	Minor	Financial impact on SCRA is likely to be small. Low impact on SCRA's strategy or operational activities. Low stakeholder concern. Likely to have minor impact in many areas of SCRA. Primary impact is on the internal business. Unlikely to require specific application of additional resources. Manage through existing controls. Monitor and review.	As below causing minor loss.	2.5-5% variance	Headline media interest, reactive approach to limited interest from partners and Minister.	£25-£50k
1	Insignificant	Likely to have minor impact in one or a few areas of SCRA. No significant impact on SCRA as a whole.	Act or omission causing legal or regulatory breach causing insignificant loss.	< 2.5% variance	Minor media, partner, Ministerial interest	< £25k

Risk Assurance Map template

Risk	Risk Owner	Reference to SCRA objectives	Controls	Assurance Providers			Assessment		
				Business Management (First Line)	Corporate oversight (Second Line)	Independent Assurance (Third Line)	Control RAG rating	Assurance sufficient? Y/N	Improvement Actions

Risk Appetite

SCRA has considered its risk appetite using the classifications shown in the table below:

Classification	Description
Averse	Avoidance of risk and uncertainty is a key organisational objective.
Minimalist	Preference for ultra-safe options that have a low degree of inherent risk and a potential for limited reward
Cautious	Preference for safe options that have a low degree of residual risk and limited potential for reward
Open	Willing to consider all options and chose the one that is most likely to result in success, whilst also providing an acceptable level of reward
Hungry	Eager to be innovative and to choose options offering potentially higher rewards despite greater inherent risk

Current Risk Appetite

Type of Risk	Risk Appetite Agreed (February 2022)
Strategic/Policy Risks	Open to Cautious
Operational/Service Delivery Risks	Open to Cautious
Finance Risk	Minimalist to Cautious
Reputational/Credibility Risks	Open to Cautious
Accountability/Governance Risks	Open Cautious

Risk Management Process

1. Risk Identification (Reference & Link to Business/Group/Programme/Project objective)

It is best practice to integrate risk management into the annual business planning and quarterly performance monitoring process. Risks should be identified, assessed and prioritised in relation to SCRA's objectives. Each risk should have a unique reference number (for audit trail purposes) and be cross-referenced to one or more Business Plan/Locality Plan/Programme/Project objectives. The management of risk at strategic, operational and Programme levels needs to be integrated to ensure actions at different levels are co-ordinated.

Initial risk identification should be carried out as a facilitated group exercise involving the owners of plans and objectives at each level of the organisation. All participants should have the opportunity to identify and assess risks however the exercise should conclude with an overall group view on the risk profile to be captured in the Risk Register. Continuous risk identification and assessment is achieved as part of the quarterly reviews of the Risk Register, although new risks can be identified and assessed outwith the cycle.

The participants in initial and ongoing risk identification exercises will want to consider the following internal factors:

- Annual plans and Quarterly Operational Performance Reports (OPR's)
- Weekly, monthly/quarterly performance reports
- Quality Assurance, External Audit and Internal Audit findings
- Research and Evaluation findings
- Significant Case Reviews
- Casework issues/appeals activity

Identification of risks should involve looking externally as well as internally. Areas for consideration include:

- Stakeholder feedback
- Economic changes
- Issues from other jurisdictions
- Partnership Working issues
- Inspectorate reports and action plans

2. Risk Type

Once identified, individual risks typically fall into natural groupings. Capturing these groupings or categories of risk can act as a check that the range of potential risks that may arise have been considered. The following risk categories should be used at all levels of the organisation:

Strategic Risks - Risks that relate to doing the wrong things

Operational Risks - Risks that relate to doing the right things but doing them in the wrong way

Information Risks - Risks that relate to loss or inaccuracy of data, systems or reported information

Reputation Risks - Risks that relate to SCRA's image

Financial Risks - Risks that relate to losing monetary resources or incurring unacceptable liabilities

People Risks - Risks associated with employees and management

Regulatory Risks - Risks related to the regulatory environment

3. Responsibility for identification, assessment, recording, reporting, management and escalation of risks

Activity	Executive Management Team (strategic and operational risks)	Localities/Head Office	Programme/projects
Risk identification	All Members	All Members	All Members
Risk assessment	All Members	All Members	All Members
Updating Risk Register	Head of Finance & Resources	Risk Lead	Programme Manager
Reporting risks	Head of Finance & Resources	Risk Lead	Programme Manager
Identification/assessment of controls	Risk owner	Risk owner	Risk owner
Action plan and progress	Risk owner	Risk owner	Risk owner
Escalation of risks	PR/CE	SOM/Risk Lead	Programme Manager

4. Key Mitigating Controls and Control Effectiveness

The controls in place should be recorded by the Risk Owner. In addition there should be an assessment of how effectively the controls are operating.

5. Action Plan & Timescales

The key actions required to mitigate the risks should be recorded along with a clear timescale for implementation.

6. Owner

The individual responsible for ensuring that the risk is managed and monitored over time. They should have sufficient authority to ensure the risk is effectively managed but may not be the person who implements the agreed actions.

7. Progress against Action Plan

Progress should be recorded on an ongoing basis on the register, with outstanding actions clearly marked.

8. Escalation

Risks may be escalated for a number of reasons: they can no longer be managed at local level; they are not confined to one area of the business; they cannot be managed effectively in isolation; there are correlations where one risk has an impact on another. The register should record where the risk is to be escalated:

Risks at Locality or Head Office level should be escalated to the Senior Operational Manager (Operational Risk Register) or Executive Management Team (Strategic Risk Register). Project risks should be captured on Programme Risk Registers and where necessary to the Senior Operational Manager (Operational Risk Register) or Executive Management Team (Strategic Risk Register). Risks that may require to be escalated to Executive Management Team (and Board) include risks that pose a significant threat to corporate objectives, targets or resource plans, risks that are deemed intolerable or have potential for significant adverse publicity.

9. Closed risks

Risks that are no longer applicable should be recorded as 'closed' and moved to a closed risk register.