

SCRA Board Meeting

A G E N D A

Wednesday 21 September 2022 at 10.30 a.m.
By Teams

		<i>Papers</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Owner</i>
1.1	AOB			
1.2	Apologies			
2.	Declarations of Interest			
3.	Updates			
4.	Minutes/Committees			
4.1	Minute of Meeting	Attached	Approval	
4.2	Workplan			
4.3	Matters Arising			
4.4	Remuneration & Nomination Committee Draft minute of Meeting	Attached	Noting	
4.5	Audit & Risk Committee Draft Minute of Meeting	Attached	Noting	
	Reports			
5.	Board Member Recruitment – Update	Verbal	Information	MM
6.	Chief Executive's Report	Attached	Noting	NH
7.	OPR	Attached	Approval	DL
8.	Budget Monitoring Report	Attached	Approval	EM
9.	Financial Strategy	Attached	Approval	EM
10.	Annual Accounts 2022-22 & Management Representation Letter	Attached	Approval	EM
11.	Annual Procurement Report	Attached	Noting	EM
12.	SCRA Annual Report	Attached	Approval	LB
13.	Keeping The Promise - Update	Attached	Noting	LB
14.	New Risks	Verbal	Discussion	All
15.	Proposed 2022 Board/Committee Dates	Attached	Approval	PA
	Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 14 December 2022, by Teams			



Present:

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

In Attendance:

Neil Hunter (Principal Reporter/Chief Executive),
Ed Morrison (Head of Finance & Resources),
Susan Deery (Head of Human Resources),
Helen Etchells (Senior Operational Manager, North and West Scotland)
Donald Lamb (Data Manager) Item 5
Roma Bruce-Davies (Keeping The Promise Programme Manager)
Stephen Eodanable (Information Governance Manager)
Monica Sweeny (UNISON Branch Secretary)
Pamela Armstrong (Governance Officer)

		Timescale	Action
1.1	AOB None		
1.2	Apologies Suzie Vestri – Board Member Paul Mulvanny (Senior Operational Manager, East and Central Scotland) Lisa Bennett (Head of Strategy & OD), Alistair Hogg (Head of Practice & Policy)		
2.	Declarations of Interest None		
3.	Minutes/Committees		
3.1	Draft Minute of the meeting held on 22 March 2022 Agreed Board Action Log and Workplan Agreed Matters Arising None		

		Timescale	Action
3.2	<p>Audit & Risk Committee Draft Minute of Meeting held on 19 May 2022 Jim Edgar, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and Board Member, spoke to the minute of the May Audit and Risk Committee.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report 2021/22 • Information Governance – Interim report • Quality Assurance and Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report on voluntary measures decisions ○ Programme Update • External Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual Audit Plan 2021/22 ○ Annual Accounts 2021/22 ○ General Update • Internal Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Culture ○ Learning & Development ○ Locality Strategic Planning ○ Follow Up ○ Annual Report 2021/22 • Strategic & Operational Risk Registers 		
3.2.1	<p>Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report Jim Edgar, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and Board Member introduced the report, the purpose of which was to summarise the work undertaken by SCRA's Audit and Risk Committee in 2021/22 and to support preparation of the Governance Statement.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the work undertaken by SCRA's Audit and Risk Committee in 2021/22 and to support preparation of the Governance Statement. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board thanked the Audit and Risk Committee to the work undertaken over the Course of the year. <p>Agreed: To approve the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report for 2021/22.</p>		

		Timescale	Action
4.	Accountable Office		
4.1	<p>Chief Executive's Report</p> <p>The PR/CE introduced the report, providing updates from the following areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Partnership • Strategic Partnerships • Pandemic recovery Update • Scottish Government Liaison • Digital Developments <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Partnership Forum met on 24 May. The substantive item for the Forum was the ongoing review of SCRA's Support Administrator (SA) job description. This review was initiated prior to the COVID pandemic. The need to review the SA role was anticipated as a consequence of the introduction of CSAS, the increased automation and digitisation of some tasks and the impact of the standard operating model on divisions of labour between support staff and Reporters (and this continues to be subject to review and adjustment). In addition, SCRA has continually sought to increase our overall ability and capacity to fulfil our statutory duties as a corporate parent in terms of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. • The Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) met in early May and a number of ongoing issues and programmes of work were reviewed. • The Youth Justice Improvement Board (YJIB) met in late May and focussed on a presentation from the Children's Care and Justice Bill Team Leader and updates from the Whole System Approach Group and the Youth Justice Right group. • At the March 2022 Board the Senior Operational Managers indicated that in terms of the recovery metrics which we have reported against, we are now able to say that we have reached a broadly recovered position • No formal Scottish Government/SCRA Accountability meetings have taken place since the March Board. However, a wide-ranging Scottish Government Policy Brief has been given to various strategic fora such as CHIP and YJIB. • We continue to develop the Standard Operating 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Model to ensure alignment and optimisation between the case management system and day-to-day operational processes and practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2021/22 programme of investment on stabilisation, improvement and development of CSAS has been completed and over 70 new aspects were deployed over the spring and summer period. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board welcomed the return into a recovery position and were given insight into recovery from SOM's perspective, including the ongoing work embedding the changes that were made at pace. There is much more engagement between Reporters/Assistant Reporters, children and their families about options, choices and preference than there has ever been. SCRA are moving ever forward with this bespoke and personalised approach to hearing scheduling. 		
4.2	<p>SCRA Internal Review</p> <p>The PR/CE introduced the report, asking the Board To note the</p> <p>Intention to undertake an internal review into the historic case, which has recently resulted in a guilty verdict in a criminal court.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board will be aware of the recent guilty verdict in relation to the criminal actions by a former SCRA manager against members of SCRA staff. Those staff remain in our employment and a wrap-around of support has been put in place, and will continue to be in place for the foreseeable future. The LRM and HR Manager have ensured that their availability to support staff and this has been greatly appreciated. The Principal Reporter has also met with the members of staff and offered further support as well as an apology on behalf the organisation. It must be noted that the members of staff have conducted themselves at all times professionally with strength and clarity throughout the process, to their credit. SCRA has communicated with the wider workforce on this issue, and has reinforced the expectations on behaviours in the workplace and has been made clear that we will not tolerate inappropriate or criminal behaviours at any time. That 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>communication also encouraged staff to raise any issues that would fall within the parameters of the Dignity at Work Policy and we should stand ready to support staff who do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We also have a further opportunity to communicate with staff about raising issues through the re-launch of SCRA's Whistleblowing Policy. • As an organisation, we need to take learning from this situation and ensure that staff are able and supported to raise any concerns about behaviours or other actions that are not appropriate. We have committed to undertaking an internal review and we will progress this, in discussion and with the co-operation of the victims in this case. The Principal Reporter has discussed the internal review with the particular members of staff when he met with them and they were also keen to ensure that staff are aware of the importance of raising any concerns and that there will be action taken where appropriate. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the internal review whilst engaging with an external expert advising agency. • A review point at the September Board with final reporting to the December Board 		NH
	Reports		
5.	<p>OPR & introduction to official statistics</p> <p>The Data Manager introduced the report. The report uses a balanced scorecard approach, which attributes measures within the organisation into four quadrants; three aligned to the aims within our business plan: Care; Connect; and Protect and another quadrant around recovery or exceptions. This provides a concise report, which enables a fuller focus on the key areas of performance throughout SCRA. Continuing feedback from the Board will be used to inform future development.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarter 4 continued to be testing for the hearings system with contingency planning around the Omicron surge followed by a relaxation in the working from home guidance on 25th January and subsequent scoping around agile working and the flexible use of office space across agencies. This has been accompanied by an increase in face-to-face Hearings since the beginning of March. • SCRA have developed process and procedures to continue delivering a service with the safety of 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>everyone using SCRA offices and Hearing suites prioritised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarter 4 is showing an increase in the number of children referred, on both non-offence grounds and offence grounds. Both are still below pre pandemic levels though and it is this level along with the trends that we will monitor closely. This will let us see whether the number of children referred is returning to normal pre-pandemic levels or not. Alongside this increase, the number of referrals open over 100 working days at 120 remains low. We note that short-term absence is now above our target. Agile working across the pandemic has in part contributed to the low levels seen in prior quarters as home working enables staff to maintain attendance on days when, due to illness, they would have been unable to travel to an office. As we have increased office based working, this rate has increased. Long-term absence remains above target. All long-term absences have an appropriate management plan in place to support a return to work as quickly as possible. A weekly overview of absence is shared with the Senior Operational Managers to inform Locality resourcing. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be helpful to understand oldest cases by locality, for information. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the Fourth Quarter Organisational Performance Report 2021/22: (1 January to 31 March 2022). 		
6.	<p>Keeping The Promise Update Report</p> <p>The Keeping the Promise Programme Manager introduced the report which seeks to provide the Board with a high level update on the work being undertaken to address the Promise in SCRA in the previous quarter.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key focus of the last quarter has been around the Reform strand of SCRA's Route Plan to Keep The Promise. The combined effort within the Hearing System Working Group (HSWG) to take this work forward has been positive and productive. A Joint Project 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Initiation Document (PID) was agreed as well as the contextual framework to support it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the PID, a Collaborative Redesign Project has been initiated. This is a partnership between the Scottish Government's Office of the Chief Designer, The Promise Scotland, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and Children's Hearings Scotland. The project is working on the consultation / engagement and design that is needed to produce proposals for redesign of the Children's Hearings System (Plan 21-24 The Promise). The collaborative redesign project is overseen by the Hearings System Working Group (HSWG), who have been tasked with producing the proposals and providing them to the Scottish Government by Spring 2023. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board agreed with the transfer of risk to the Programme Board. 		
7.	<p>2021/22 Draft Budget Outturn</p> <p>The Head of Finance & Resources introduced the report, providing a summary of SCRA's unaudited financial position for year to March 2022.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report provides information in the following areas; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue Efficiencies Core Capital Financial planning and Resource Spending Review The overall accruals based revenue underspend against budget is lower than the forecast underspend. EMT will work with Sponsor to ensure unspent 2021/22 capital resource is available to cover work in 2022/23. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To agree the draft revenue and capital outturn positions for the year to March 2022. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve allocation of property capital underspend up to £191k to complete 2021/22 projects in 2022/23. 		
8.	<p>Property Strategy</p> <p>The Head of Finance & Resources introduced the report, providing the Board with an update on the work carried out over the last year along with the actions that are planned for the current financial year.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adoption of agile, hybrid and smart working are changing the role of the workplace and how much space we need. The pandemic has provided the catalyst for accelerating changes enabled by technology improvements and more flexible working policies. Our offices no longer require large numbers of desks allocated to individuals and instead there will be greater sharing of workspaces with areas for collaboration, meetings and breakout spaces. Our overall requirement for space will continue to reduce in size over time. Where space is no longer needed for office purposes and bulk filing storage systems opportunities are created for improving the public facing areas of our buildings. How we deliver children's hearings and the spaces needed is also changing; some hearing rooms will be enlarged (where space allows) and consideration is being given to how we provide small suitable spaces away from workspaces for virtual hearings to be conducted. Our planned activity for 2022/23 is aligned to our core Corporate Plan objectives and includes two major smart working projects in Hamilton and Stirling that include hearing room and virtual hearing space alterations. In addition, further hearing room improvements are planned along with the management of upcoming lease expires. Our organisation's response to Climate Change and fulfilling our public sector duties will need to be more prominent during 2022/23. Changes to the public sector reporting requirements require us to state our target dates for achieving zero direct emissions and reducing indirect emissions. This goes beyond GHG emissions from property and includes travel, waste, energy, procurement and supply chain. It is a requirement of the new regulations that SCRA states how our spending 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>plans and resources will be aligned to achieve the target dates. Climate change and achieving Net Zero impacts every part of the organisation and how our services are delivered. EMT will consider the actions necessary to meet our statutory duties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost pressures are evident in the wider economy, which are leading to increasing costs of holding and operating from our properties. Following increased public spending during the pandemic there is a risk of financial pressures in the years ahead and reducing budgets in real terms. As every organisation reviews its future space requirements there is a risk that the income received from tenanted property will reduce where tenants choose to vacate at lease expiry. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions are ongoing with colleagues around potential impacts of future projects and legislative changes. 		
9.	<p>Annual Procurement report - Update</p> <p>The Head of Finance & Resources introduced the report, advising the Board the Scottish Procurement and Property Directorate (SPPD) are working on a Scottish Procurement Policy Note regarding annual procurement reports and this will be published in the coming weeks. As well as possible changes to the reporting requirements, it is understood the SPPD are contemplating including a question on climate change in the template that accompanies the report.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In recent years, SCRA has presented the Annual Procurement Report to the Board without all the published spend data for the year. The whole dataset will again not be available this year in time for the Board and SCRA is as yet unclear as to when it will be available. • It is proposed that the Procurement Team present a complete report to the Board for offline approval as soon as practical, likely to be late July 2022. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the arrangements for completing and submitting the 2021/22 Annual Procurement Report 2021/22. 		

		Timescale	Action
10.	<p>Inclusion & Diversity Annual Report</p> <p>The Head of introduced the report, providing the Board with an update on SCRA's Inclusion & Diversity programme of work since June 2020.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA's Inclusion & Diversity Steering Group will set another ambitious and detailed programme of work for the forthcoming year, with a focus on achieving real and tangible improvements to enable us to encourage good practice. • We will implement change that will have a positive impact on our staff and responds to the individual needs of the children and families we work with. • To ensure highest impact and good use of resources, we will ensure that our work is evidence-driven and needs based and we will use available equalities data (of the workforce and of the children and families who come to Children's Hearings) to ensure this occurs. • We recognise that COVID-19 has widened existing inequalities (in particular around gender, poverty and well-being) due to the consequent rising cost of living. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further work is required on SCRA recruitment campaigns. • It is important to demonstrate how work done around inclusion and diversity is being mainstreamed. • The Board would like to read the Corporate Parenting report alongside the Rights Inclusion Progress Report. Have we achieved what we wanted to achieve and further consider how to better present information linked to the business plan. <p>Agreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To agree the Inclusion and Diversity Annual Report and associated programme of work. 		
11.	<p>Communications Plan - Update</p> <p>The PR/CE introduced the report introduced the report recommending the Board note progress on actions within SCRA's Communications and Engagement Strategy 2020-2023 two year on.</p>		

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	<p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA's latest three year Communications and Engagement Strategy 2020-2023 was approved by the Board in June 2020. It was launched shortly afterwards and is available on Connect, our staff intranet and our external website. • The Communications and Engagement Strategy aims to ensure SCRA continues to have an integrated approach to communications and engagement, and one that supports the organisations' vision and values. • The Communications and Engagement Strategy is supported by an action plan and this report provides Board Members with an update on actions in the last 12 months, which covers the first year of the strategy. • The report provides information in the following areas; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internal Communications ○ External Communications ○ Participation and engagement with children and young people <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p>		
12.	<p>Annual Complaints Report</p> <p>The Information Governance Manager introduced the report on the review of complaints 2021-22.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA's Complaints Handling Procedure has been in place since 2011 and follows the Model Complaints Handling Procedures (MCHP) provided by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), which was most recently updated in January 2020. Its main features are to allow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ more pro-active recording of issues as complaints ○ greater resolution at front line ○ greater visibility of issues of learning. • The report provides information in the following areas; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number and sources of complaints requiring further investigation in 2021-22 ○ Localities and number of complaints ○ Types of complaints ○ Complaint resolution 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Care Inspectorate is looking into reasons why children do not complain. SCRA Will request feedback to gain a better understanding. • It is important to constantly look for new ways for children and young people to be heard. 		
13.	<p>Influencing Report 01 December 2021 to 01 June 2022</p> <p>The PR/CE introduced the Influencing Report outlining the key areas where SCRA has been able to be influential and apply its professional expertise, data and research to particular issues at a national level.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <p>Updates were provided in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pending Legislation and Parliamentary Work; • Other Consultation Responses • Current partnership & collaborative work • Research • Additional Work • Other Influencing Work and Training. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report highlights the breadth and influence SCRA has. • A huge amount of work is being undertaken to ensure we take a good legislative position. 		
14.	<p>SCRA Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>The Governance Officer introduced the report.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board as part of its annual business programme is scheduled to undertake a review of its governance arrangements. This provides evidence that it has considered its Standing Orders and to bring them in line with any pertinent changes in Legislation, or procedures. • The Terms of Reference set out the working arrangements of the Board and Committees. • Board and Committee Terms of Reference are a key part of the corporate governance framework for SCRA. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review and approve SCRA's Standing Orders • The Board approved the strategic and operational risk registers. • To review and approve SCRA Board Terms of Reference • To review and approve SCRA Audit & Risk Committee Terms of Reference. • To review and approve SCRA Appeals Committee Terms of Reference. • To agree to the formation of a SCRA Remuneration and Nominations Committee, replacing the separate Remuneration and Succession Planning and Nominations Committees. • To review and approve SCRA Remuneration and Nominations Committee Terms of Reference. • To agree SCRA Remuneration and Nominations Committee membership. 		
15.	Risk		
15.1	<p>Strategic & Operational Risk Registers</p> <p>The PR/CE introduced the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers report for review by the Board.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA's revised Risk Management Policy was approved by the Board at its meeting in March 2022. The Board has responsibility for the system of internal control and risk management within SCRA. The Risk Management Policy will next be reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee in February 2023 and any changes reported to the March 2023 Board for approval. The Board charges the Audit and Risk Committee with overseeing the operation of the system of internal control and with ensuring robust risk management arrangements within SCRA, including reviewing the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers six-monthly. • The risks across both registers focus on the ongoing challenges in the delivery of a safe and effective service with the focus on capacity, resources and information governance. • Strategic Risk Register: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A new risk - Inability to meet staff 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>expectations on pay/reward resulting in operational disruption/staff engagement in change has been developed by the Head of HR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational Risk Register <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New risk - Absence of a roadmap to a new way standard way of operating inhibits the organisations ability to manage the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. ○ New risk - Lack of capacity in SCRA and key partners negatively impacts on efficient case processing (e.g. delays, missing KPIs) and delivery of hearings. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers 		
15.2	<p>New Risks None</p>		
	<p>Date of Next Meeting: Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 21 September 2022, by Teams</p>		

SCRA Board Meeting Workplan June 2022

Business Item	Wed 22/06/22	Wed 21/9/22	Wed 14/12/22	Wed 25/01/23	03/23 TBC
Strategic/Corporate					
Policy & Influencing Report	✓		✓		
Research Programme			✓		
Risk Register	✓		✓		
Governance					
Audit Committee Minutes	✓	✓	✓		
Committee Annual Reports	✓				✓
Remuneration & Nominations Committee Minutes	✓	✓			
Board Committee Membership	✓		✓		✓
SCRA Standing Orders Review (Next due March 2025)	✓				
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	✓				✓
Inclusion Annual Report	✓				

Business Item	Wed 22/06/22	Wed 21/9/22	Wed 14/12/22	Wed 25/01/23	03/23 TBC
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)					

* Annual Procurement report in September 2022, for noting



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Chief Executives Report

**Accountable
Director:**

Neil Hunter

Date: 21 September 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 Required/Completed	Impact	Assessment
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☐

Yes

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No

Issues/action points:-

Consultation

EMT/Communications Manager/Information and Research Manager

Document Classification

Open

1. Staff Partnership

- 1.1 The National Partnership Forum (NPF) met in late August and focussed on a number of standing items including Covid recovery, digital update, planned staff pay negotiations staff, equalities and staff wellbeing. In relation to staff wellbeing the substantive issue was staff welfare in the context of the current economic crisis. The NPF agreed to come forward with a single integrated offering in the course of September which includes:
- Signposting and access to free advice services for staff experiencing difficulties with money and/or debt, possibly via existing community based organisations across Scotland
 - Access to our Employee Assistance Service advice and support with emotional, stress related and or/psychological support
 - Direct measures accessed via line managers and HR Business partners for staff members experiencing severe financial hardship
- 1.2 Both UNISON and SCRA agree that the cornerstone of this approach to the economic crisis is a fair and reasonable pay award for our staff. However negotiations are at an early stage and it is likely that some members of staff will be already experiencing distress. We recognise the need to destigmatise the process of encouraging members of staff coming forward and feeling able to talk to their employer on issues of money, debt and hardship in the expectation that they will receive a helpful, supportive and resonant response. This issue was also highlighted in the recent Team Brief and associated online calls with the PR/CE.

2. Strategic Partnerships

2.1 Childrens Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP).

2.1.1 The CHIP met on 11 August and focussed on :-

- Hearings System Recovery
- Hearing System Working Group
- A programme of work to change and improve language in the Hearings System across all agencies – driven by the work of OHOV's 40 Calls to Action
- SG policy updates – on National Care Service, UNCRC, Age of Criminal Responsibility – amongst others – this update is shown at Appendix A for members information

2.2 Bairns Hoose Governance Group

2.2.1 SCRA have been invited to be part of the national governance group to help steer the development of the Barnahus model across Scotland.

2.2.2 Health Improvement Scotland have recently launched a consultation on [Bairns' Hoose Standards](#) which SCRA will respond fully to. The consultation closes on 4 November 2022.

3. Scottish Government Liaison

- 3.1 Not unexpectedly much of our recent discussions with our sponsor team have been on pay, pay policy, SCRA's budget position and all of the inherent risks an issues that sit within. Whilst we had our routine Accountability meeting in August and dealt with wide array of issues from performance, through practice and legislation, there is no doubt that the current cost of living crisis, implications for pay expectations and the consequential impact on SCRA (and SG) budget positions dominated. The Head of HR and Head of Finance and Resources are in separate, but linked discussions with SG Pay Policy and Finance colleagues respectively on how we advance this issue balanced against the twin imperatives of remaining connected to Ministerial pay policy and demonstrating organisational affordability.
- 3.2 At the beginning of September the Deputy First Minister made public his intention to initiate an emergency budget review no later than 2 weeks after the planned UK Government emergency budget. SCRA have already had some indication from SG officials of a root and branch review of all spending commitments which may have wide reaching implications for public bodies such as SCRA. Further narrative and discussion on this can be taken at item 9 (Financial Strategy) of the Board agenda.

4. Legislative Impact Assessment work

- 4.1 The PR/CE is chairing a cross organisational group seeking to put together an evidence based assessment of the impact of the Childrens Care and Justice Bill (CCJB). The Bill is planned to be introduced to Parliament before the end of the calendar year, alongside the accompanying policy and financial details. It's critical that SCRA makes an accurate assessment of the financial impact on our work, specifically in relation to the increase in the age of referral, although there are other provisions that also may have an impact. The focus of the group is:-
- 4.2 Assess impact of the CCJB on SCRA workload in relation to:-
- Referral
 - Investigation/Assessment
 - Decision Making
 - Hearing Scheduling
 - Administrative support
- 4.3 Data in this area is poor. We are working to 2019 Crown Office (COPFS) offence referral data. Data on care and protection issues is very patchy and we are having to make a number of data and planning assumptions – all of which will be visible in our considerations. We need to factor in volume (COPFS data suggests over 3000 offence referrals alone) and also conversions rates (hearing and CSO) which will reflect a different level of profile, complexity, seriousness and risk.
- 4.4 As well as impact on our core professional roles we will also consider the medium term impact on property, estate and technology.

5. Ministerial Visit

- 5.1 SCRA hosted the Children and Young Peoples Minister on 25 August in Glasgow, This had been arranged at the request of the Ministerial office and was an opportunity to meet staff and managers who have help steer SCRA through the pandemic. There were a number of inputs led by SCRA staff – including on our role and function, our casework and court work, Keeping the Promise and the work of our Virtual Hearings Team. The Minister seemed well engaged by the discussions and we will assess opportunities for further follow up.

6. Staff Event Planning 2023

- 6.1 As part of the August Team brief we consulted staff on a staff event. We have not had a staff event since 2018. The appetite for a spring 2023 event seems strong, although not universal. We will proceed with planning for this event over the next few months and will assess whether to supplement with some smaller scale regional events for staff who would be unable to attend a (likely central belt) national event.

7. Quality Improvement and Managing Change

- 7.1 The senior team recently attended a full day workshop on quality improvement (QI) and change management, This is part of a programme of work which will be rolls out across all SCRA managers and senior practitioners as part of our commitment to improve how we manage change in SCRA as well as embed quality improvement. We are using the Scottish Government approach to QI and this is being led by our Business Integration Manager. We are also supporting SCRA managers to participate in the Scottish Improvement Leadership Programme over and above the baseline learning that our internal training will provide.
- 7.2 This is part of a wider programme of leadership and management learning which is recommencing this year and includes the reintroduction of access to our Professional Managers Award

Appendix A

Updates from the Scottish Government – CHIP August 2022

The National Care Service (Scotland) Bill

The Scottish Government introduced the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill on 20 June 2022. [The Bill and accompanying documents](#) can be found online. Other [supporting documentation](#) regarding the National Care Service (NCS) was also published at introduction, including evidence papers and a statement of benefit.

The NCS will be responsible for social work and social care support, including support for carers. It will also be responsible for planning and commissioning primary care and community health services.

Call for Evidence

Committees in the Scottish Parliament have launched a Call for Views and a Your Priorities digital consultation on the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill. More information about the Bill and links to the Call for Views and the Your Priorities digital consultation can be accessed here: <https://yourviews.parliament.scot/health/ncs>

Both the Call for Views and the Your Priorities digital consultation closes on Friday 2 September.

If you have any questions or queries about the Call for Views or the Your Priorities digital consultation, please contact the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee clerking team by emailing: HSCS.committee@parliament.scot.

Update on Children's Services

A decision has not yet been made on whether children's services or justice social work services should be included in the NCS.

The establishment of the NCS will result in a change to the current services landscape and local partnership structures will require adaptation irrespective of the potential inclusion of children's services.

Independent Research

A systematic review has not been carried out on children's services as it has for adult social care. Further work is needed to allow an informed decision to be made on whether children's social work and social care should transfer to the NCS. A formal review, like the Feeley Review, is not planned for children's services – instead we intend to gather evidence to understand the best delivery model for children's services. This model will be one which achieves improved outcomes for children and young people, and will help deliver our commitment to Keep The Promise.

The Scottish Government is commissioning independent research to ensure the decision made on children's services is one which best meets the needs of children, young people and families. It is vital we understand whether transferring children's services into the NCS is an improvement on existing models, or whether needs are best met by children's services which remain outside the NCS.

To ensure the independent research is a truly authentic endeavour, an Independent Steering Group for Children's Services Research has been established to oversee and direct the research project. Professor Brigid Daniel, Professor Emerita at Queen Margaret University, has been appointed by the Minister for Children and Young People as the Chair of the steering group. Wider membership of the steering group is currently being considered by Professor Daniel.

The steering group will provide regular reports at each stage of the work identifying key interim findings. The final report, which will bring together all findings and provide a robust analysis of the evidence, will be presented to Scottish Ministers and Parliament to inform a final decision on the potential inclusion of children's services within the NCS.

The Scottish Government has committed that the NCS will be established by the end of this parliamentary session in 2026. The timeline for this research project has been developed to ensure decisions on the inclusion of children's services can be taken prior to the operation of the NCS. The research will take place in three stages over the next two years, concluding in Spring 2024.

Engagement and Co-design

In parallel with the research, we are committed to ensuring that the design and delivery of the NCS has human rights embedded throughout. We will continue to engage with the real experts – people with lived experience of delivering, receiving or accessing services – to improve future services and better meet needs. The detail of the NCS will be co-designed through our continued engagement with people with experience of using or delivering services to develop the final scope and design of the NCS. Work is underway to develop a timeline for co-design activity and engagement with key partners, children and young people, families, and organisations which represent children and young people.

If you wish to contact us please email childrensservicesreform@gov.scot and we would be happy to discuss the position regarding children's services and the planned next steps.

Children's Hearings Advocacy

Grant Funding for the Children's Hearings Advocacy scheme – spending to date and commitment beyond 2022

Up to end March 2022, the investment from the Scottish Government directly to the children's advocacy in children's hearings scheme totalled £1,411,806.56. The funding commitment for 2021-22 was £1.8 million, which supported all aspects of delivering the scheme, primary and alternate work, and including mandatory training

of advocacy workers, provided by Clan Childlaw and potential spot purchase arrangements.

Commitment and actual spend

Funding year	Committed Funds	Actual Spend
2019-20	203,000	£112,489.83
2020-21	£1.5 million	£906,416.18
2020-21 Winter Plan	£63,000	£53,378.90
2021-22	£1.8 million	£1,411,806.56

In 2021-22 the budget increased to £1.8 million from July 2021, when the provision was expanded to support the right of siblings to participate in Children's Hearings, where they are invited to give their views on when, or how they want to see their brothers or sisters.

The Scottish Parliament concluded Stage 3 Proceedings of the Budget (Scotland) Bill on 10 February 2022. We secured budget of up to £2 million for the delivery of the children's advocacy in children's hearings national scheme for this current financial year 2022-23. This allowed an increase in grant offers to all providers to increase capacity. In addition, expansion of the provision to take on work relating to children and young people in Scotland on Deprivation of Liberty Orders (DoLS) was factored into grant offers.

Youth Justice

We are continuing to work towards delivery of our Youth Justice Strategy published in June last year with the two implementation groups (Children's Rights and Advancing the Whole system approach) next meeting this month in September. The Community alternatives group which sits under the WSA group is gathering examples of good practice for the development of a framework for practitioners. We are looking to hold a series of workshops to progress discussions on the future of secure care and to understand any changes required to accommodate more under 18s from Polmont. Discussions regarding funding requirements for secure care are continuing. The Youth Justice Improvement Board (YJIB) last met on Tuesday, 7 June to discuss the Care and Justice Bill. The next YJIB meeting will take place on Wednesday, 14 September.

UNCRC

The Scottish Government remains committed to the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to the maximum extent possible as soon as practicable.

While the Supreme Court judgment means that the Bill cannot receive Royal Assent in its current form, the Deputy First Minister set out in a statement to Parliament in May how we propose to amend the Bill to address the judgment and bring the Bill back to Parliament for reconsideration. A link to that statement is [here](#).

The statement triggered a short period of engagement with targeted stakeholders to ensure that those who have lobbied for UNCRC incorporation understand the changes that are being made and why to identify any concerns that need to be addressed before or during reconsideration stage. The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee was provided with an update on the response to that engagement on 30 June. That update can be found [here](#).

We are currently engaging with the Scottish Parliament to identify the process and timetable for Reconsideration Stage.

Implementation Programme

The majority of work in relation to implementation of the UNCRC can proceed and is continuing at pace.

We remain fully committed to our ambitious implementation programme as set out in our 3-year action plan which was published on World Children's Day on 20 November.

Between now and March 2024 we will invest £4m per year to support the delivery of a fundamental shift in how children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled in Scotland.

The strands of the three year implementation programme are:

Scottish Government Leadership in Children's Rights;
Empowered Children and Young People;
Embedding Children's Rights in Public Services; and
Children's Rights Resolution.

Children's Rights Resolution Strand

We are working with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to develop a child-friendly complaints process to ensure children and young people are able to access their rights. Josh Barnham has now been appointed to lead the SPSO project on child friendly complaints. A full project plan, including timeline is likely to be approved within the next few weeks.

We are working across Scottish Government and with stakeholders to review existing advocacy arrangements to support children and young people in accessing their rights, and to consider how we can strengthen the provision of advocacy to children and young people who need it. An internal mapping exercise of existing policy supporting advocacy for children and young people is currently underway and we are exploring options for an external exercise.

The Scottish Government continues to work in collaboration with public authorities, the third sector and children and young people to implement the UNCRC.

Age of Criminal Responsibility

The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 (“the Act”) increases the age at which a child is considered to have the capacity to commit a crime from age 8 to 12. This means that children younger than 12 cannot accrue convictions or criminal records.

The Act removes the ability to refer a child to a children’s hearing on offence grounds, and makes it possible to only refer a child under 12 to a children’s hearing on welfare and protection grounds. It provides specific investigatory powers for the police, to enable incidents of seriously harmful behaviour by under 12s to be investigated.

The first set of commencement regulations (which removed the offence ground for referring a child under to a hearing) came into force on 29 November 2019; disclosure provisions were commenced on 30 November 2020 (resulting in pre-12 behaviour no longer automatically following a person through to later life), and all remaining provisions (including for the police investigatory and other powers) came into force on 17 December 2021.

The Act requires the Scottish Ministers to carry out a review within 3 years of the commencement of section 1 of the Act (from 17 December 2021). The review aims to evaluate the operation of the Act, as well as to consider a future age of criminal responsibility. An Advisory Group, comprising a range of different stakeholders is supporting Ministers with the review.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION**Draft Financial Strategy**

Accountable Director: Chief Executive/Principal Reporter **Date:** 21 September 2022

Report Author: Head of Finance and Resources

Recommendations:

1. To approve the updated Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2027/28.
2. To note the updated assessment of revenue and capital funding needs (Appendices 1 and 2).

Reason for Report: For approval

Resource Implications: Outwith approved budgets

Strategy: Outwith approved plans

Consultation: Executive Management Team

Equalities Duties: An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

Document Classification: Not Protectively Marked

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 In September 2021 the Board approved an updated Financial Strategy 2022/23-2026/27. In addition to the Financial Strategy a series of Briefing Papers were produced to support SCRA's engagement with Sponsor Team and Scottish Government Finance with a view to influencing the outcome of the 2021 Scottish Government Budget process which set the funding allocation for 2022/23. In March 2022 the Board approved the 2022/23 Budget.

The purpose of this report is to present an updated Financial Strategy for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 following a review by the Head of Finance & Resources in conjunction with EMT. The Strategy is essentially a 5 year Financial Plan based on funding requirements and includes a number of funding scenarios with potential options to address funding gaps.

- 1.2 The updated Financial Strategy is set out from section 2. The Strategy will enable consideration to be given as to how resources should be allocated to supporting the activities in the next three year Corporate Plan.
- 1.3 As a result of the review no changes are proposed to the Financial Strategy Objectives and the other sections of the Strategy have been updated and refreshed.

Financial Strategy 2023 - 2028

1. Development of the Financial Strategy

- 1.1 In common with many public bodies SCRA faces challenges in developing a sustainable service delivery model in the face of funding constraints, year to year funding settlements and multiple emerging operational, legislative and policy related pressures. In addition there is significant pressure to deliver pay settlements significantly in excess of public sector pay policy in response to cost of living pressures for staff.

It was hoped that the Resource Spending Review (RSR) published in May 2022 would provide a framework for planning over a multi-year period however it did not deliver any forward figures for SCRA and has since been overtaken by major changes in the economic outlook.

Developing a Financial Strategy should contribute to SCRA's sustainability, help in quantifying future funding needs and be an enabler of the Corporate Plan.

2. Financial Strategy Objectives

- 2.1 Three financial strategy objectives identified last year remain appropriate:

Objective 1 – To achieve long term financial sustainability.

We will ensure Corporate Plan objectives and planned resources are appropriately aligned.

Objective 2 – To take a medium to long term view of investment in our key resources and capabilities and new developments.

Investment in key resources such as staff, digital and property will be with a view to building sustainability and resilience. The strategy should include scope for investment in new developments which will improve future performance and reduce annual running costs.

Objective 3 - To align the Financial Strategy with other strategies.

The Financial Strategy, delivery strategies (Corporate Parenting, Practice & Policy Strategy, Participation and Engagement Strategy) and resource strategies (People, Digital and Finance Strategies) are inter-dependent.

3. Strategic Environment

3.1 Post Covid-19

It may be too early to refer to a post Covid environment as there remains a continuing public health risk as a result of the pandemic. However, the steps taken over the last two years by the organisation provide a more resilient base to deal with any further Covid-19 variants and associated public health measures. SCRA now has an embedded agile working model, following investment in a more robust virtual hearings model and the new case management system (CSAS), that was introduced in 2020 and supports electronic case processing, is embedding with the support of the introduction of a Standard Operating Model (SOM)

The introduction of CSAS has allowed the removal of transaction heavy processes such as referral registration and has ensured all information is held in one place and is therefore much quicker to locate and retrieve.

However, the changes that have been introduced to manage service delivery also bring with them a significant increase in complexity. To arrange a hearing that has different modes of attendance (virtual/ face to face), different types of participants (Child/ Relevant Persons/ Representatives/ Participation Individuals and key professionals) requires a significantly greater resource and time commitment to arrange and manage.

Similarly SCRA introduced changes to our approach to Court work to support case management and processing in the pandemic that are significantly more labour intensive. The changes to the working models are unlikely to revert to pre-covid approaches, not least because they offer improved service levels to children, families, other agencies and Courts.

SCRA is committed to supporting the aims of The Promise in both its reform and improvement agenda. We have committed significant resource to support the service redesign work as well as undertaking a number of projects that will improve the experience of children in attending hearings. Undertaking tests of change and improvement activity comes with significant resourcing costs.

The changes to the way we work has also resulted in us reviewing some job roles to reflect the new ways of service delivery. Invariably this has led to some instability in the staff group and that will take time to embed.

An ongoing process of adaptation to the new technology, further digital skills development across the workforce, dynamic development across the system in order to reflect more efficient operational processes, via the SOM will, over the period of this strategy, deliver further reductions in transactional work. This will allow our skilled capacity to be increasingly directed to more qualitative aspects for children and young people.

SCRA faces legislative change that will result in more 16/17 year old children being referred. The involvement of this group of children is likely to come with increased, and potentially complex, Court activity. We are beginning to see the impact that the pandemic has had on children and families being reflected in referrals and children in the hearing system.

Our service is impacted by factors that have drawn significant operational and strategic resources from partners in the Children's Hearing System such as Ukrainian refugees and preparation for the National Care Service. These services were already under significant operational pressures and this set of circumstances is unlikely to be easily addressed.

There remains a significant level of ongoing adaptation to constant change in the organisation that currently limits our ability to progress with improvements. We are working to improve our change readiness and speed of adaptation and embedding improvement as an organisation this will take time and significant resources to fully embed.

We have yet to see the full impact of the global financial crisis but already it has caused increased disruption to services such as rail transport and post as a result of industrial action that will be a test of the organisation's resilience in the year ahead. The increased cost of living puts pressure on everyone in the organisation, particularly the lowest paid, and will be the significant factor in pay negotiations and the workforce's response to those as well as impacting on our attempts to lift staff morale and appetite for future change.

3.2 Legislative change

The following planned legislative changes will impact on SCRA over the period of this Financial Strategy:

- Children (Scotland) Act 2020 – this Act introduced new rights for siblings including a duty on children’s hearings to consider contact between siblings, and other provisions that will impact on hearings - the right to request attendance by remote means, the ability to require an individual to attend by remote means, and the requirement to provide the LA with all hearing papers. The right of some siblings to participate in hearings needs to be assessed and considered for every hearing, and notifications have to be sent to those who are recognised as a “participation individual” (PI). Information also has to be sent to the PI, which is a complex process requiring a selection of information that has to be shared. Although these provisions have been in operation since July 2021, their impact is cumulative and building as the legislation beds in, and they will continue to add significant complexity and additional work in the arrangement of hearings.
- UNCRC Incorporation – the Bill, which was passed by the Scottish Parliament but now needs to be reintroduced following a successful challenge in the Supreme Court, means all public services must act compatibly with the UNCRC articles. SCRA is conducting a full analysis of our practice, policies and procedures, to ensure they are compliant. This is likely to highlight some changes that may be required in SCRA’s practice and operational delivery to become fully rights based, including the need for more choice in hearings to improve participation. This in turn will create more complexity and labour intensity in the arrangement of hearings.
- Raising the age of referral to include all 16 and 17 year olds in the Hearing System – it is Scottish Government’s intention to raise the age of referral to 18 through the Children’s Care and Justice Bill (CCJB), and this will be for any ground of referral. It is anticipated that this will lead to a significant increase in referrals, children’s hearings and court proofs and appeals. There is also an expectation that we will be handling cases that have a different dynamic and complexity. In relation to offence grounds, there will be a rise in the number of more serious offences that will need to be proved by the Reporter – the kind of cases that may be prosecuted in a High Court and which would currently merit prosecution by an Advocate Depute. The CCJB will also potentially raise the requirements for providing information and support to victims of offending by children, and is also considering making changes that would see an increase in the use of Movement Restriction Conditions (MRC’s). MRC’s are very complex and would lead to an increase in the complexity of the arrangement and conducting of hearings, and an increase in the number of hearings.
- Age of Criminal Responsibility Act – this Act raised the age at which children in Scotland can be held responsible for committing a crime to 12 – previously it was 8. This has implications for the grounds that are available to children’s reporters, and also contains complex expectations in relation to how the police interview and interact with children under 12. The Act also requires the age of criminal responsibility to be reviewed, and the expectation is that this will rise to a higher age. This review must be completed after 3 years of the enactment of the Act (Dec 21), but this timescale may be shortened through the CCJB. There will be an impact in relation to the likely extending of the range and scope of services provide to victims of the harmful behaviour of children under the age of criminal responsibility.

- The Promise Bill – it is not known when this Bill will be introduced, other than that it will be in the current Parliamentary term (which runs to 2026). The Hearing System Working Group will produce proposals for legislative change, and these could potentially lead to transformational change in the children's hearing system. Although we do not yet know any detail, we can anticipate that there will be a significantly increased expectation on enabling better participation of children and families in their hearings. Provision of the anticipated step change in wraparound support will be resource intensive for all agencies, including SCRA.

It is anticipated that these developments will result in:

- an increase in referrals for 16 and 17 year olds;
- an increase in number of hearings as a result of the increase in referrals
- an increase in court activity – more referrals will translate into more proofs, but it is also likely that the older age group will be more likely to challenge both grounds and hearing decisions and therefore there will be more appeals and challenging court activity and leading evidence in proofs
- more complex and time consuming arrangement of hearings;
- more administrative support in relation to all of the above, but particularly around hearing arrangement as well as delivering on our support and quality aspirations for children and young people;
- court challenge in relation to alleged breach of UNCRC rights; and
- greater expectation in relation to victims of offences committed by young people.

3.3 The Promise

The Promise has made a number of recommendations for the Children's Hearings System, the most significant being that of redesign.

Working with key partners, the HSWG has determined a programme of work to explore future state of the hearings system using a collaborative design model led by the Scottish Approach to Service Design. This model is interrogating the stages of the system alongside the supporting structures and legislation. Early indication would suggest that there is interest in considering expanding the role of the Reporter – this, alongside the introduction of 16 and 17 year olds, and the improvement commitments around a more relational model suggest that there will be further requirement of the Reporter (and Assistant Reporters/Senior Practitioners) in early and more complex discussions, considerations and relational based work.

3.4 Workforce

The changes outlined in the previous paragraphs will have an impact on the role of the Reporter. In particular with an increase in referrals for 16 and 17 year olds, we can expect to see the nature of referrals and hearings changing. We will require to upskill our Reporter staff to meet the needs of these vulnerable young people. Reporters are likely to see more complex court proofs with an increasing number of Reporters facing Solicitor Advocates and Junior Counsel in defending the decisions made in a children's hearing.

The skills required have to be recognised through our recruitment, retention and reward strategies. SCRA is starting to feel the challenge of the national recruitment crisis – for the first time in many years we are seeing a decrease in good quality applications for Reporter, and other, vacancies. Whilst Reporters salaries compare reasonably well with staff from a social work background, SCRA is falling behind in benchmarking our core role against the COPFS and the wider legal profession. Over the next few years we need to invest in our Reporters skills and pay to ensure that we attract and retain good quality decision makers that have the rights of children and young people at the heart of what they do.

At the same time, to support the role of the Reporter and the reform work SCRA is progressing in Keeping the Promise, we will want to see an increase in our assistant reporter capacity across the organisation. This is a key role that bridges the gap between our support function and the role of the Reporter. Assistant Reporters schedule and attend Hearings, ensure early engagement with children and their families, as well as support Reporters in complex cases and witness/case management. We would seek to convert a number of support roles to increase this capacity but may also need to consider additional investment until we have reached the optimum number of assistant roles to support the Reporter.

Reshaping the organisation as part of this reform work may potentially require consideration of a voluntary exit scheme, to reduce capacity in one area of the business to reinvest in another. Whilst we would look at internal processes to enable reshaping in the first instance, investment in an exit scheme, aligned to the SG guidance, would enable a smoother and quicker transition to a remodelled service. We would be clearer on the need for any voluntary exit scheme in 2023/24 and would continue to discuss this need with our SG Sponsor and Finance colleagues.

The current challenging financial climate, which is reportedly expected to deepen over the next 12 – 18 months, is having an impact on the workforce expectations on pay awards. We anticipate difficult pay negotiations in both 2022/23 and 2023/24, the outcome of which will have a significant impact on the consolidated paybill and the need to reduce headcount reduction to demonstrate affordability to meet the unfunded paybill.

SCRA is keen to explore further by engaging with the SG pilot for the four day working week. This would significantly enhance our terms and conditions of service as well as improve the wellbeing offering to our workforce without detracting from our service delivery model and improvement work. There would be a number of areas to consider in depth before we fully commit to implementation such as impact on workload, cost of implementation and further research on the wellbeing aspects of such a commitment.

SCRA has relaunched its Learning and Development Strategy this year and wants to re-energise and point the workforce towards personal and professional development and growth, with clear career pathways and succession planning. Over and above those we need to invest in and develop the knowledge of the workforce to meet the future challenges described above. As the relaunched strategy takes hold, we could anticipate that the current, relatively modest, organisational training budget will need to expand to continue to meet individual, team and organisational development needs in line with our own ambitions and our commitments to Keeping the Promise.

4. Expenditure Profile and Financial Position

- 4.1 The 2021/22 revenue and capital outturns were under budget with some planned capital projects slipping into 2022/23. The revenue underspend is not carried forward because SCRA used cash reserves from prior years and drew down less Grant-in-Aid (GiA), in discussion with Scottish Government (SG). It is anticipated that the capital underspend will be available to fund those projects that will now be completed in 2022/23.

SCRA's funding comes largely from one source, Grant-in-Aid (GiA) received from Scottish Government which represents approximately 98% of total income. Income from property leases, secondments and shared services accounts for approximately 2% of total income.

- 4.2 The external auditors have highlighted that in recent years the balance on SCRA's general fund has reduced significantly, reaching a negative position of £15.4m in 2021/22. This position has arisen despite SCRA breaking even or underspending on operating expenditure against budget each year and is due mainly to significant non-cash pension adjustments. There are no immediate implications arising from the general fund deficit as the letter received in 2020 from Scottish Government addresses concerns in this area.

5. 2022/23 Budget

- 5.1 Initial planning for the 2022/23 budget was based on £28.0m: this comprises standstill cash (£25.16m), agreed organisational recovery funding of temporary contracts (£1.0m) and anticipated further pressures of £1.84m.
- 5.2 In the 2022/23 budget, net staff costs of £22.4m (after deducting the savings target) account for 80% of net revenue budget. Property costs of almost £3.0m account for a further 10.6% and IT costs of around £1.8m a further 6.5%. Other administrative costs amount to £1.3m offset by income of £0.5m.
- 5.3 Operational budgets at £17.2m represent 61% of SCRA's revenue budget. However this figure excludes around £4.6m for property costs, IT infrastructure/software and legal expenses which are not apportioned to operational teams and are instead included in Head Office budgets.

- 5.4 In relation to staffing establishment as at November 2021 the reporter posts (assistant reporters, reporters and senior practitioners) accounted for 42% of FTE posts with front line support posts (receptionists and support administrators) accounting for 32% of FTE posts. The 2022/23 budget also included around 40 FTE supernumerary (non-establishment) posts, including temporary teams supporting organisational recovery, virtual hearings and an operational helpdesk.
- 5.5 SCRA's reporters and front line support staff are supported in their statutory functions by two Senior Operational Managers, Locality Reporter and Locality Support Managers and a range of Head Office services which comprise key functions: Communications & Engagement, Practice, Research & Information and Data. All of these services provide benefits and savings to a wide range of partners in the hearings system and wider justice sector. In addition Head Office provides HR, Finance, IT, Property, Planning and Performance services to operational teams.
- 5.6 The budget includes a 1.3% savings target which is being met from delays filling vacant staff posts. Whilst efforts to identify efficiencies will continue, the scope for significant further savings in any area of SCRA's budget is limited and so it is not assumed in the Financial Strategy that efficiencies can bridge future funding gaps.

6. Forecast Budgets 2023/24 to 2027/28

- 6.1 The Financial Plan at Appendix 1 reflects SCRA's assessment of revenue needs over the five years from 2023/24. The figures below show required year on year unfunded budget pressures of 9% in 2023/24 and 6% in 2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 resulting in a cumulative deficit of £13m by year five.

Revenue funding	21/22 £m	22/23 £m	23/24 £m	24/25 £m	25/26 £m	26/27 £m	27/28 £m
Revenue GiA	25.16	25.16	25.16	25.16	25.16	25.16	25.16
Unfunded pressures	1.50	2.84	5.38	7.23	9.10	11.10	13.17
Carry forward	0.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	26.96	28.0	30.54	32.39	34.26	36.26	38.33
Annual increase		3.86%	9.09%	6.03%	5.78%	5.86%	5.69%

- 6.2 These figures do **not** include any potential impact of the CCJB and The Promise on the workload of SCRA and therefore make no allowance for additional staffing. As an example referrals for 16 and 17 year olds, base on current available data¹, could generate an extra 3,800 hearings in relation to offence referrals and reporters currently deal with three times as many children and young people on care and protection referrals compared to offence referrals. This could result in up to a 20% increase in workload.

¹ Youth Justice Improvement Board (2021) Cross System Working Group on Raising Age of Referral Closure Report

- 6.3 The pay bill remains the predominant financial commitment in SCRA. The updated Financial Plan assumes pay uplifts of 5% plus annual progression and any non-consolidated awards. Scottish Government pay policy at the start of 2022/23 was around 2.7%, but the flexibilities assumption of 0.5% can be exceeded by public bodies subject to demonstrating affordability. The biggest concern is the impact on future years budgets of a significantly higher consolidated award this year.
- 6.4 Employer's pension contribution rates are set until 2023/24 following the most recent triennial valuation. The next triennial valuation will take place in 2023 and set rates for 2024/25 to 2026/27. The forward budgets assume pension costs increase by around 0.5% of staff costs year on year. No significant changes in employer national insurance rates or apprenticeship levy are assumed.
- 6.5 Managing the cost of the workforce is balanced by managing the workforce profile including overall numbers and types of roles. In terms of staff numbers the Financial Plan assumes SCRA's requirement for additional staff recruited in 2020/21 will continue beyond 2022/23 as a result of the forthcoming legislative and policy changes, although there will continue to be minor adjustments to the staffing profile.
- 6.6 The last (small) round of voluntary severance took place in March 2020. The 2022/23 Budget Plans do not include any voluntary severance proposals however pay awards of 5% plus progression will only be affordable if extra funding is provided by Scottish Government and/or SCRA reduces staff numbers. Efforts will continue over the period of the Strategy to shape the workforce to meet ever-changing operational needs and financial challenges.
- 6.7 The Financial Plan reflects a few changes in the property portfolio over the next five years, including reducing one floor of rented office space in Glasgow and Hamilton. Opportunities for rationalisation have largely been exploited and the focus in the next few years will be on improving hearings facilities including the embedding of new technology to improve quality, engagement and efficiency. It is expected that the referral of 16 and 17 year olds to the reporter may in due course place more pressure on SCRA's estate leading to a need to increase the space for hearing facilities or at least reconfigure space allocated to hearings. Anticipated rises in Facilities Management (FM) costs and non-domestic rates, relating to inflation, account for the £100k p.a. increases.

Travel and Subsistence costs are not expected to return to pre-pandemic levels.

- 6.8 The Digital Programme Director expects IT support costs to increase year on year by around 0.5% of gross operating expenditure to reflect continued investment in Digital and will remain at a higher level over the long term as SCRA has moved away from ownership of IT hardware to a rental based model. SCRA is now more exposed to price fluctuation in IT running costs and this has been visible recently in the significant increase in charges from iTECS.
- 6.9 It is expected that current income levels of around £477k from shared services, secondments and rental income, will be difficult to maintain and a more prudent set of assumptions has income falling to around £236k by the end of the Plan as secondments come to an end and private and public sector tenants reduce their property footprints and exit leases of SCRA.

7. Savings and Efficiencies

- 7.1 SCRA has delivered significant revenue savings since the high point of revenue funding in 2009/10. Staffing reduced by 18% over 5 rounds of voluntary severance delivering over £3m of recurring savings. This is over and above significant reductions in property (12%) and IT costs (56%) since 2008/09.
- 7.2 The Financial Plan includes a 1.5% per annum savings target over the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 delivering around £0.4m of cost savings each year. In recent years 2% seems to have been largely achievable, although it is not without pain. Anything above that level would be unlikely to be achieved across the board. The Business Managers, along with members of the Budget Efficiencies Group (BEG), are continuously looking for efficiencies, recent examples include postage, printing, and MFD costs. One of the biggest challenges for 2022/23 is the ability to release staff to new priorities – such as Keeping the Promise, without having to backfill the posts and roles they come from (particularly Locality roles). This reflects the highly stressed and pressurised operational environment we are currently in, workforce fatigue and the consequential impacts of a febrile period of change (pandemic crisis response and CSAS implementation) and the prolongation of the impact of the pandemic much longer than anyone could have anticipated.
- 7.3 As around 80% of SCRA's revenue budget is committed to staff costs it is clear that if significant savings are required to offset any future funding reductions the impact will fall largely on SCRA's establishment. Workforce Planning will continue to be focused on the mix and deployment of skills across SCRA.
- 7.4 It is not assumed that the Digital Strategy will deliver significant cash savings although it will, over time enable decreases in some administration costs in SCRA (due to electronic transfer of Panel Papers) allowing capacity to be released to higher value activities, such as direct pre-hearing support to young people and other quality corporate parenting initiatives. This is in line with our original digital investment strategy.
- 7.5 During the course of the last two years a Standard Operating Model (SOM) has been developed to support the best and consistent use of CSAS across the organisation. This includes clear instructions on case processing, CSAS user guides, FAQs and hints for its best use. However the concept of a Standard Operating Model is one that requires additional ongoing development to remain dynamic and encompass more than case processing in CSAS. The next phase focuses on service delivery and effective office management. Additionally, with the developments expected around implementing the Promise there is a need to support operational change as new ways of working will be introduced to meet the organisations policy objectives.
- 7.6 SCRA has already realised substantial savings from reducing the size of the estate. The process continues with a drive to reduce vacant space, become more energy efficient, reduce travel costs and develop space in a way that supports a more agile workforce.

- 7.7 SCRA's Procurement Officers and Contracts Review Group continue to scrutinise contracts with a view to challenging demand for services, delivering better value for money from key contracts and reducing costs. Where possible SCRA seeks to utilise Scottish Government Frameworks or collaborate with other public bodies to secure the benefits of economies of scale.
- 7.8 By working closely with partners SCRA can secure better use of resources by removing unnecessary processes, by using more efficient methods to transfer accurate information and by minimising delay in the system. SCRA and partners are supported in this type of activity by the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) which brings a multi-agency perspective to the work of the hearing system.
- 7.9 The COVID-19 emergency resulted in the rapid introduction of virtual hearings. An evaluation of the current virtual hearing model is informing how this service offering develops over the coming years delivering greater choice for children young people, families and all partners.
- 7.10 SCRA provides shared services (Finance, HR, IT) to CHS and collaborates with CHS on internal audit tender exercises. SCRA leases vacant space to a range of public and commercial bodies.

8. Scenario Planning

- 8.1 Changing some of the key assumptions in the forward budget figures has a significant impact on the future budget deficits. A standstill scenario has been included which is in line with the Resource Spending Review which assumed 0% across most budgets as the most likely scenario.

GiA

Changing the GiA assumption by + or – 1% or 3% from 2023/24 onwards has the following impact on the forecast deficits:

Deficit	2022/23 £k	2023/24 £k	2024/25 £k	2025/26 £k	2026/27 £k	2027/28 £k
Standstill*	0	5,384	7,226	9,098	11,104	13,167
-1%	0	5,636	7,727	9,845	12,095	14,400
-3%	0	6,139	8,713	11,295	13,990	16,721
+1%	0	5,132	6,720	8,336	10,082	11,884
+3%	0	4,629	5,694	6,765	7,946	9,160

* assuming standstill funding at 2022/23 level of GiA (£25.16m)

Each 1% increase in the pay award to all staff costs over £200k per annum (based on 2021/22 scales). A 0.5% increase in the employer pension contribution rate will mean an increase in staff costs of over £100k per annum.

- 8.2 The May 2022 Resource Spending Review showed flat cash for the Portfolio. This would create a gap against assessed revenue need in 2023/23 of £5.384m. If this was all to be met from staffing reductions it would require compulsory redundancies, complete re-shaping of the organisation and in the very short term would increase delays in decision-making and damage SCRA's reputation as it withdraws from development work on legislative and policy change.

9. Capital

- 9.1 The September 2021 Financial Strategy included an assessment of capital requirements from 2022/23 to 2026/27. The figures shown at Appendix 2 have been updated and extended for a further year. The figures reflect two main programmes: Property and Digital. The Property programme is focused on investment in the current, diverse estate and includes funds for new developments, particularly in Inverness in 2024/25 when SCRA expects to fit out new premises due to redevelopment of the area around the castle.
- 9.2 In relation to Digital and in particular ongoing investment in CSAS beyond Minimum Viable Product (MVP) the Head of Digital has confirmed the model used last year still holds, namely 3% of gross expenditure to ensure continued investment in the new digital infrastructure and services and regular technology refreshes and 0.5% of gross expenditure to reflect annual revenue cost increases.
- 9.3 Continued investment in SCRA's estate is critical as it is increasingly viewed as the medium through which SCRA can improve customer care and deliver digital services. The Head of Property is developing an outline five year property programme, informed by likely policy and operational changes and projected staffing profiles. Two significant projects will be delivered in 2022/23, Stirling and Hamilton, which will deliver bigger, future proofed hearing rooms as well as significant smarter working benefits at both locations. Smarter working, agile working, digital delivery and environmental policy are likely to be key drivers in the five year property programme.

10 Service change and resilience

- 10.1 The Financial Plan assumes the likelihood of significant change in SCRA's operating environment over the next three years. The policy and operational developments outlined in section 3.1 above all have the potential to impact on referrals with an expectation that complexity will increase. The potential addition of 16 and 17 year olds into the Hearing system is likely to be towards the middle part of the five year period. Stability in staffing complement and performance over the next few years would provide an essential backdrop against which to respond to these policy, legislative and operational challenges, implement the next phase of the Digital Strategy and focus on driving up service quality.
- 10.2 However, that stability is being challenged with the current cost of living crises being faced by workforces across the UK and the subsequent expectations on higher pay offers for staff which has been described in para 3.4. To implement a pay offer in 2022/23 at the levels now expected across the public sector means that SCRA has to take action now to ensure the affordability in 2022/23 and beyond into 2023/24. SCRA intends to implement a vacancy freeze from 1st October 2022 until the end of the 2022/23 financial year, at which point it will be reviewed. All vacancies that have not been forecast to be filled will be subject to the freeze and the savings from revenue budgets diverted to SCRA's paybill.

- 10.3 The core reporter role will sit within a structure that ensures maximum support to postholders from senior practitioners and assistant reporters. There has been an increase in the number of these roles and consideration is being given to where these roles can deliver the maximum contribution and how capacity can be increased. The core support role is also changing and work is continuing with the group of support staff and Locality Support Managers, in partnership with Unison, to implement the newly reshaped role which will meet the new demands of delivering a rights based service to children and young people post CSAS and the pandemic.

11 Links to other strategies

- 11.1 The link between the financial strategy and other key strategies is critical in that the financial strategy is concerned with delivering the resources for the organisation's strategic plans. As the medium to long term strategies are inter-dependent it will not be possible to successfully deliver the strategies if they are not properly resourced. Equally it will not be possible to deliver a successful financial strategy without an effective people strategy.
- 11.2 The SCRA Corporate Plan 2020/23 introduced three key organisational outcomes – Care, Connect and Protect with all strategies sitting below and playing into the delivery of these. The strategies include Practice & Policy, Finance, People, Communications & Engagement, Operational and Digital. Four themes of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (also now a strategy), Corporate Parenting, Environmental Impact and Quality underpin the Corporate Plan.
- 11.3 Corporate Parenting will continue to be an organisational driver in how we deliver our service and is interwoven through all of the strategies with more detail set out in the Corporate Parenting Plan 202-/23.

12 Financial Risks

- 12.1 The financial risk routinely captured in the SCRA Strategic Risk Register concern the affordability of a pay offer in line with SG pay policy. This will be particularly acute in 2022/23 and 2023/24 but is likely to be a feature across the whole planning period.
- 12.2 The external auditors previously identified a financial sustainability risk relating to the negative position of the general fund. This was mitigated in discussion with the external auditors, Sponsor Team and Scottish Government Finance. The auditors focus part of their review work on financial planning arrangements and reviewing financial monitoring reports to confirm the expected final outturn positions at year end. As part of the 2021/22 audit they did not identify any changes to Financial Planning but did highlight the challenge will be to balance the requirements of the service with an ever tightening budget envelope as outlined in the Scottish Government recent resource spending review.
- 12.3 Regular reporting to the Board has confirmed that SCRA continues to operate within the resources allocated by Scottish Government. The general fund position is mainly impacted by the volatility of pension scheme costs.

- 12.4 One year budget settlements are likely to continue making medium term planning more challenging and limiting our ability to reshape and refocus the organisation in a planned way to respond to the changing operational, legislative and policy environment. The rapidity and intensity of change will continue as SCRA prepares for implementation of The Promise and the Children's Care and Justice Bill with a workforce that has absorbed significant change in the last 24 months.

13 Conclusions

- 13.1 Financial sustainability over the term of the Financial Strategy will require continued in year support from Scottish Government for new and unforeseen budget pressures, around 6% increases in annual revenue funding (9% in 2023/24), delivery of savings and efficiencies, continuing capital investment in infrastructure and very close budget management from budget holders, supported by Head Office business partners.
- 13.2 The next 18 months will see a transition from continuing to bed in new ways of working, through planning for major policy, operational and legislative change and into implementation of further transformational changes to service delivery. This will take place against a backdrop of significant pressures on public sector funding.
- 13.3 Discussions are underway with Sponsor Team to ensure a good, shared understanding of SCRA's corporate and financial objectives for 2023/24 and the period to 2027/28. It is hoped this will result in a different outcome to the standstill revenue funding in 2022/23.

14 Recommendations

- 14.1 To approve the updated Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2027/28.
- 14.2 To note the updated assessment of revenue and capital funding needs (Appendices 1 and 2).

Previous Papers:

Draft Financial Strategy, SCRA(SEP21)10

Draft Budget 2022/23, SCRA(MAR22)6

Appendix 1

SCRA FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2027/28

		year 1	year 2	year 3	year 4	year 5
NARRATIVE	Actual Budget 2022/23	Forecast Budget 2023/24	Forecast Budget 2024/25	Forecast Budget 2025/26	Forecast Budget 2026/27	Forecast Budget 2027/28
Staff numbers average in year	450	450	450	450	450	450
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
Staff Costs	22,739	22,739	24,995	26,548	28,178	29,890
Pay Remit (SG current Pay Policy)	0	2,124	1,450	1,527	1,609	1,695
Employers pension rate increases (0.5%)	0	103	103	103	103	103
New pressures		29				
Staff Costs	22,739	24,995	26,548	28,178	29,890	31,688
Property Costs	2,968	2,968	2,978	3,080	3,127	3,229
Property changes		10	102	47	102	102
Property Costs	2,968	2,978	3,080	3,127	3,229	3,331
Travel & Subsistence	115	150	150	150	150	150
Supplies and Services						
Equipment & Maint Contracts	37	37	37	37	37	37
Printing, Stationery & Photocopying	102	102	102	102	102	102
Postages	228	228	228	228	228	228
SCOTS	939	939	939	939	939	939
Software	886	1,036	1,196	1,366	1,546	1,736
Legal fees	140	140	140	140	140	140
Hearing costs	179	179	179	179	179	179
Other supplies and services	348	348	348	348	348	348
Revenue implications of digital projects	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supplies and Services	2,859	3,009	3,169	3,339	3,519	3,709
Unfunded Pensions	160	160	160	160	160	160
Savings Target	(364)	(375)	(398)	(423)	(448)	(475)
Income	(477)	(373)	(323)	(273)	(236)	(236)
TOTAL	28,000	30,544	32,386	34,258	36,264	38,327

Annual increase in revenue funding
required

0 2,544 1,842 1,872 2,006 2,063

GiA increase

0.0% 9% 6% 6% 6% 6%

FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2027/28

CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

Programme	2022/23 Budget £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
Property	1.160	0.950	1.100	0.950	0.800	0.750
Corporate	0.025	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050
Digital*	0.765	0.900	0.950	1.000	1.050	1.100
Total	1.900	1.900	2.100	2.000	1.900	1.900

* based on 3% of gross expenditure for SCRA from 2022/23.

The digital capital profile does not cater for one off, large development investments which would be the subject of separate business cases for funding.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

**DRAFT 2021/22 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
AND
MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER**

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive **Date:** 21 September 2022

Report prepared by: Head of Finance and Resources

Recommendations:

1. To approve the 2021/22 accounts for signature by the Accountable Officer.
2. To approve the Management Representation Letter for signature by the Accountable Officer.

Reason for Report: Board approval

Resource Implications: Not applicable

Strategy: Not applicable

Consultation: Executive Management Team, External Auditors

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

**Equalities and Human Rights
Impact Assessment:** Not required

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Audit Scotland has completed the audit of the SCRA's 2021/22 accounts attached at Appendix 1 and has submitted a draft independent auditor's report to the Accountable Officer. The draft report expresses an unqualified opinion on the financial statements and on the regularity of the financial transactions.
- 1.2 The Accounts were submitted to the Audit & Risk Committee on 18th August 2022 and were approved on that date.

2. Issues Arising from the Accounts

2.1 Revenue Grant in Aid and Reserves

Statutory Accounts

In the year to 31 March 2022, the Accounts reported net expenditure before GIA of £34,198,000 (2021: £28,996,000). SCRA had revenue Grant in Aid (GiA) including Digital of £26,260,000 (2021: £25,908,000). The net excess of expenditure over income after accounting for GiA was therefore £7,938,000 (2021: £3,088,000).

The General Fund has a deficit of £15,398,000 as at 31 March 2022 (2021: £9,577,000). The Pension Reserve has a deficit of £16,131,000 as at 31 March 2022 (2021: £44,299,000). Detailed figures and assumptions underlying the pensions position can be found in notes 1 (sections n. and q.) and 11 to the Annual Accounts.

The Revaluation Reserve has a surplus of £2,478,000 as at 31 March 2022 (2021: £2,478,000).

Management Accounts

Financial performance against annual operating budget is reported at each Board meeting. The 2021/22 performance is set out on pages 7, 8 and 9 of the Accounts and operating expenditure was £190k less than budget mainly as a consequence of property and travel savings.

2.2 Pensions

The present value of funded and unfunded liabilities has increased by £4.2m which coupled with an increase in the fair value of assets of £17.7m results in an overall decrease in the pension liability of £21.9m to £39.0m.

2.3 General Fund

The General Fund has reduced from a deficit of £9.6m at 31 March 2021 to one of £15.4m at 31 March 2022. This was due to three main factors: an excess of total pension service cost over employer's contributions of £5.1m; a pension net interest cost of £1.3m; offset by an excess of capital grant over depreciation of £0.7m. The £5.7m costs associated with the pension fund could not be predicted and without the pension charges the General Fund would still be in surplus.

Due to the pension deficit SCRA's reserves have been in deficit since 2009 and in May 2020 SCRA received a letter from Scottish Government to address concerns in this area which is referenced in note 19.

3. Audit Scotland's Annual Audit Report (AAR)

- 3.1 International Standards on Auditing require auditors to report certain matters arising from the audit of the financial statements to 'those charged with governance'.
- 3.2 Audit Scotland has expressed unqualified opinions on the financial statements and on the regularity of the financial transactions reflected in the financial statements.
- 3.3 Audit Scotland have made three recommendations for 2021/22 concerning formal agreement for the operation of the CSAS system, internal control improvements (eFinancials user log, new eFinancials user forms, payroll validation, payroll reconciliations) and reviewing the content and presentation of the Performance Report. Management responses are reflected in Audit Scotland's Annual Audit Report and accepted by the Audit & Risk Committee. The three recommendations made in 2020/21 are complete.

4. Management Representation Letter

- 4.1 The standard Management Representation Letter, attached as Appendix 2, sets out the Board Members position on the key areas for consideration by the external auditor in arriving at their opinion.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 To approve the 2021/22 accounts for signature by the Accountable Officer.
- 5.2 To approve the Management Representation Letter for signature by the Accountable Officer.

Appendix 2: Letter of Representation (ISA 580)

Mrs Helen Russell, Senior Audit Manager
Audit Scotland
4th Floor
102 West Port
Edinburgh
EH3 9DN

Dear Helen

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration Annual report and accounts 2021/22

1. This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the annual report and accounts of Scottish Children's Reporter Administration for the year ended 31 March 2022 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with the financial reporting framework, and for expressing other opinions on the regularity of income and expenditure, remuneration and staff report, performance report and statement of governance.
2. I confirm to the best of my knowledge and belief, and having made such enquiries as I considered necessary, the following representations given to you in connection with your audit of Scottish Children's Reporter Administration's annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022.

General

3. I have fulfilled my responsibilities for the preparation of the 2021/22 annual report and accounts. All the accounting records, documentation and other matters which I am aware are relevant to the preparation of the annual report and accounts have been made available to you for the purposes of your audit. All transactions undertaken by Scottish Children's Reporter Administration have been recorded in the accounting records and are properly reflected in the financial statements.
4. I confirm that the effects of uncorrected misstatements are immaterial, individually and in aggregate, to the financial statements as a whole. I am not aware of any uncorrected misstatements other than those reported by you.

Regularity of Expenditure and Income

5. I confirm that, in all material respects, expenditure was incurred, and income applied in accordance with applicable enactments and guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers.

Financial Reporting Framework

6. The annual report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers.
7. I have ensured that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration at 31 March 2022 and the transactions for 2021/22.

Accounting Policies & Estimates

8. All significant accounting policies applied are as shown in the note included in the financial statements. The accounting policies are determined by the 2021/22 Government Financial Reporting Manual (the FReM), where applicable. Where the FReM does not specifically apply, I have used judgement in developing and applying an accounting policy that results in information that is relevant and reliable. All accounting policies applied are appropriate to Scottish Children's Reporter Administration's circumstances and have been consistently applied.

9. The significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates are reasonable and properly reflected in the financial statements. Judgements used in making estimates have been based on the latest available, reliable information. Estimates have been revised where there are changes in the circumstances on which the original estimate was based or because of new information or experience.

Going Concern Basis of Accounting

10. I have assessed Scottish Children's Reporter Administration's ability to continue to use the going concern basis of accounting and have concluded that it is appropriate. I am not aware of any material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt on Scottish Children's Reporter Administration's ability to continue as a going concern.

Assets

11. Where a rolling programme of asset valuations has been used, I have satisfied myself that the carrying amount of assets at 31 March 2022 does not differ materially from that which would be determined if a revaluation had been carried out at that date.

12. I carried out an assessment at 31 March 2022 as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired and have recognised any impairment losses identified.

13. I have provided you with all information of which I am aware regarding any valuation exercises carried out after 31 March 2022.

14. There are no plans or intentions that are likely to affect the carrying value or classification of the assets recognised within the financial statements.

15. Owned assets are free from any lien, encumbrance or charge except as disclosed in the financial statements.

16. I have provided you with all information regarding bank balances held at 31 March 2022. Bank balances have been fully and properly reflected in the 2021/22 Statement of Financial Position.

Liabilities

17. All liabilities at 31 March 2022 of which I am aware have been recognised in the financial statements.

18. Provisions have been recognised in the financial statements for all liabilities of uncertain timing or amount at 31 March 2022 of which I am aware where the conditions specified in IAS 37 have been met. The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate of the expenditure likely to be required to settle the obligation at 31 March 2022. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the amount of the provision has been discounted to the present value of the expected payments.

19. Provisions recognised in previous years have been reviewed and adjusted, where appropriate, to reflect the best estimate at 31 March 2022 or to reflect material changes in the assumptions underlying the calculations of the cash flows.

20. The accrual recognised in the financial statements for holiday untaken by 31 March 2022 has been estimated on a reasonable basis.

21. There are no plans or intentions that are likely to affect the carrying value or classification of the liabilities recognised in the financial statements.

Fraud

22. I have provided you with all information in relation to:

- my assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud
- any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the financial statements
- fraud or suspected fraud that I am aware of involving management, employees who have a significant role in internal control, or others that could have a material effect on the financial statements.

Laws and Regulations

23. I have disclosed to you all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements.

Related Party Transactions

24. All material transactions with related parties have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements in accordance with IAS 24 as interpreted by the FReM. I have made available to you the identity of all the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration's related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which I am aware.

Remuneration and Staff Report

25. The Remuneration and Staff Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the FReM to the extent they apply in Scotland and all required information of which I am aware has been provided to you.

Performance report

26. I confirm that the Performance Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the FReM to the extent they apply in Scotland and the information is consistent with the financial statements.

Corporate Governance

27. I have fulfilled my responsibilities for Scottish Children's Reporter Administration's corporate governance arrangements. I have disclosed to you all deficiencies in internal control identified from this review or of which I am otherwise aware.

28. I confirm that the Statement of Governance has been prepared in accordance with the Scottish Public Finance Manual and the information is consistent with the financial statements. There have been no changes in the corporate governance arrangements or issues identified since 31 March 2022 which require to be reflected.

Events Subsequent to the Date of the Statement of Financial Position

29. All events subsequent to 31 March 2022 for which IAS 10 as interpreted by the FReM requires adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.

Yours sincerely

Accountable Officer

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2021/22



ENSURING POSITIVE FUTURES FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND.



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

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1. Performance Report

1.1 Introduction

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

The Children's Hearings System provides the operational setting in which SCRA and our partner agencies work. The aim is to provide a safety net for vulnerable children and young people, and deliver tailored solutions which meet the needs and rights of the individuals involved, while helping to build stronger families and safer communities. You can find out more about our work on our website, www.scra.gov.uk.

Our main responsibilities as set out in the Act are:

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



Strategic Aims

SCRA’s 2020-24 Corporate Plan sets out three strategic aims; Care, Connect, Protect.

CARE	CONNECT	PROTECT
Delivering a service that feels right for each child, young person and family that experiences it.	Working together to receive the right referrals, for the right children, at the right time.	Making high-quality and timely decisions for children and young people, using the right information that is relevant, clear and secure.

The Corporate Plan’s aims and objectives are aligned with the supporting strategies, which forms the Business Plan.

Performance Framework

Everything we do is linked to the organisation’s vision through to our values; leading to a common understanding of how the vision, mission and values of the organisation relate to everyday tasks.

The Corporate Plan’s aims and objectives are delivered in the Business Plan by the supporting strategies; Practice and Policy, Finance and Resources, People, Operational, Digital, Rights, Inclusion, Corporate Parenting, Communications and Engagement.

We review our strategies and action plans on a regular basis to ensure they are fit for purpose. We report to SCRA’s Executive Management Team on a quarterly basis, and the Board on our performance against these plans on a six-monthly basis.



1.2 Chief Executive's Foreword

Welcome to SCRA's 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts, which reflects the second year of our 2020-24 Corporate Plan. We extended our 2020-2023 Corporate Plan to 2024 to enable the organisation an extra year to meet all of the aims for Care, Connect and Protect – and their respective objectives, but also to further align our work with "The 2021-24 Scotland Promise Plans". The extension was endorsed by the Scottish Government, our Executive Management Team and the Board.

We set ourselves an ambitious Business Plan for 2021-22, which incorporated 712 actions across the following 7 strategies; Digital, People, Finance, Operational, Communications and Engagement, Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting, Practice and Policy. We delivered on 96% (Green: 683) of the total actions. The remaining 1% (Amber: 7) actions were partly complete, and these will be finalised during 2022, and 3% (Red: 22) were not achieved due to a lack of capacity, and these have been carried across to 2022-23 plans.

The Performance Report provides some key milestones in our work throughout the year. In amongst these, the following are key achievements across the organisation.

Business Plan 2021-22: We worked diligently through our 2021-22 strategic and locality plans, which were aligned with the aims and objectives of our Corporate Plan; Care, Connect, Protect – focusing on recovery, staff wellbeing, learning and development, enabling technology, hearing room improvements, and partnership working.

Health and Wellbeing: The past year posed significant challenges, but also created opportunities across the organisation. The effects of the pandemic on our workforce and service delivery tested our capacity and resilience to extraordinary lengths, which further impacted on the health and wellbeing of our staff. Our staff survey during November 2021 indicated the level of impact from the pandemic and the pressures on the organisation from an ever-changing landscape, as we adapted the way we worked and delivered our services. Through open and honest engagement with our staff, we are in a better position to understand the priorities for the organisation over the next few years – taking into account the need for a period of stability, consolidation and managing the pace of change.

Core Systems Application: We stabilised, optimised and improved our Core Systems Applications (CSAS) and provided staff with training to up-skill them in the use of the system to promote the most effective and efficient operational processes. Continuous development of CSAS will enable qualitative improvements as we move forward.

Standard Operating Model: Our Standard Operating Model (SOM) was developed to optimise, streamline and make operational practice more effective to provide a consistent and high quality service across the Country, with quality at the core of our practice.

Virtual Hearing: We established a Virtual Hearings Portal to enable a better and more stable experience of remote Hearings, whilst aligning virtual and remote access to hearings with CSAS. Quality checks on data management and case sampling enabled us to monitor and progress our practice, ensuring consistency in our delivery approach.

Keeping The Promise: We developed an internal Keep The Promise Team with a robust governance structure that is aligned with the Hearings System Working Group. We created the 'Keeping The Promise

Plan for 2021-24' through internal and external consultation, which will drive improvement and reform [Our Route Map - SCRA](#).

Investment in Technology: We invested in technology, upgrading Hearings room hardware, and Hearing centre Wi-Fi connectivity to allow guest access for Children and Families, Panel Members, partner agencies to sit alongside our secure network, "onSCOTS".

Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV): We continue to make progress in delivering on OHOV - 40 Calls to Action and are committed to being accountable to OHOV on our future progress and pace. We are both contributing to it and learning from it in terms of our own service and practice at national and local level. Putting children and young people's real life experience at the core of how SCRA develops, has always been important to us – but at this key time for the future shape of the Hearings System it is absolutely critical. OHOV can, and will, be a powerful force for change informed by their collective experience and we will do everything we can to support their contribution.

We have taken wide-ranging consultation with the full staff group, with partners and with children and young people through linked work and research, to develop the new Business Plan for 2022-23.

Principal Reporter
Neil Hunter

1.3 Overview

SCRA comprises operational teams across the country, divided into nine geographic localities, plus a Head Office function. The nine localities are overseen by two Senior Operational Managers on SCRA's Executive Management Team. For more information on SCRA's structure and governance, please refer to the Accountability Report below.

SCRA's 2020-24 Corporate Plan sets out the strategic direction for the organisation, and its aims and objectives are delivered through annual Business Plans. These plans are monitored, reviewed and reported on to show the progress throughout the course of our four-year Corporate Plan.

The following sections highlight our key performance outcomes during 2021-22, showing how the Business Plan has delivered on the Corporate Plan's Care, Connect and Protect aims.

For the first half of the year we were operating under emergency legislation designed to reduce pressures on the system in a number of ways, but organisational performance continued to be impacted across the whole year by a number of factors arising from the pandemic. SCRA has eight key performance indicators which are reported to the Board on a quarterly basis: of those, four targets were met, two were missed and two measures are currently for monitoring purposes only. More detail on these and SCRA's environmental performance can be found in the Performance Analysis section below.

The principal risks faced by SCRA in 2021/22 were that organisational pandemic recovery plans may have failed to deliver operational stability, and that not maintaining a skilled, motivated and flexible workforce may have resulted in a failure to meet the service needs. These risks, and the management of them, are covered in more detail in the Key Issues and Risks section below.

A substantial review of progress against our strategic objectives will be detailed in SCRA's Annual Report 2021-22.

Financial Performance

In 2021/22, SCRA received core funding of £25.16m for resource expenditure and £1.9m for capital expenditure. In addition, SCRA received the following allocations:

- Autumn Budget Review – HMT Resource £1.0m
- Spring Budget Review – HMT Resource £0.1m
- Spring Budget Review – HMT Direct Capital £0.217m

The following section provides a summary of our financial performance for the year against our annual operating budget. Our operating expenditure for the year was £190k less than budget mainly as a consequence of property and travel savings.

Expense Head	Budget 2021/22 £000	Outturn 2021/22 £000	Variance £000
Staff Costs	21,198	21,262	64
Property Costs	3,097	2,899	-198
Travel Costs	163	72	-91
Other Operating Charges	2,769	2,821	52
Capital Financing	3	3	0
Other Income	-449	-466	-17
Total expenditure	26,781	26,591	-190
Revenue Grant In Aid	-26,660	-26,260	400
Net Expenditure	121	331	210

The operating budget and outturn above do not include the annual pension adjustments shown in note 11 of the financial statements.

Net capital expenditure, including the Digital programme, in the period to March 2022 was £1,819k against Capital budget of £2,142k. The capital investments we made in 2021/22 were:

Capital Investments	Cost
Property alterations (Aberdeen, Glasgow, Paisley, Stirling)	£235k
Hearing room improvements	£144k
Minor property works and LED lighting retrofits	£173k
Capital element of finance lease (Livingston)	£46k
Condition survey works	£136k
Aim One - CSAS – SCRA and CHS	£513k
Aim Two - Digitally enabled services	£197k
Aim Three - Digital governance and ownership	£375k
Total	£1,819k

The Digital Programme Director developed three Digital Aims and Objectives for 2021/22. Aim One comprises CSAS development, Aim Two comprises external reporting development costs, virtual hearing development, improved hearing room connectivity and user research/strategy consultancy. Finally Aim Three comprises refresh of laptops and mobile devices and programme consolidation activity (environments and technology refresh).

More detail regarding SCRA's income and expenditure can be found in the financial statements section starting on page 59. The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure shows net expenditure for the year of £34.2m (2020/21: £29.0m), including pensions and depreciation costs of £6.54m comprising IAS 19 adjustment of £5.12m and depreciation & amortisation £1.42m (2020/21: £3.4m, comprising IAS19 adjustment £2.05m, depreciation & amortisation £1.35m). These are excluded from the table above. The table also excludes total Grant in Aid income of £28.4m (2020/21: £27.1m) which under international accounting standards is taken directly to the general fund reserve.

The Statement of Financial Position (page 60) shows SCRA liabilities exceed assets by £29.1m (2020/21: £51.4m). This is due to the pension liability but the Board believes that SCRA will be able to pay its pension contributions in years to come from future Government grants. Assurance has been provided by the Scottish Government that there is a statutory obligation to provide the services that SCRA deliver and there are no plans to change the existing arrangement. It has accordingly been considered appropriate to prepare these financial statements on a 'going concern' basis.

The three yearly formal valuation of the pension's scheme deficit was completed in 2020 and set the employer's contribution rate for 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24.

In addition to resource and direct capital funding, SCRA receives budget cover for depreciation (Ring Fenced DEL Non-Cash) and IAS 19 pension adjustments (Annually Managed Expenditure – AME). The original depreciation budget for 2021/22 was £2,400k, the updated forecast was £1,800k and the final outturn was £1,422k. In relation to AME, a budget of £5,637k was allocated at the Spring Budget Review and the outturn was £6,389k, with the difference of £752k being mainly attributable to a higher Total Service Cost than estimate (£619k) and lower employer contributions than forecast (£131k).

Performance Review

The Performance Review provides a summary of the key activities undertaken under each strategy in support of the Corporate Plan's three aims; Care, Connect and Protect, which were delivered through the 2021-22 Business Plan.

Digital Strategy

The Digital Strategy drives improvement across our services to be the best organisation it can be by continually seeking the views of children and our partners in our pursuit of continuous improvement. This enables our services to adapt and become more flexible and agile.

2021-22 Key Activities

With the continued need for remote working and supporting children's hearings within a virtual context, 2021/22 proved to be as challenging as 2020/21. SCRA needed to consolidate and move from ad-hoc digital solutions to support business operations in the early stages of the pandemic to more robust and longer term reliable digital architectures and solutions, with much of the original concepts and solutions now considered main stream propositions to support operations. The detail below represents a sample of the high level undertakings in terms of digital development within the period 2021/22.

Virtual Hearings Platform and CSAS architectures: Given the need for virtual hearings within a main stream context, we moved to automate the sharing of relevant data and information between CSAS and virtual hearing platform. This removed the manual need to rekey data from one platform into the other. This was a first step in the longer term plan of consolidating the virtual hearings requirements within CSAS during the period 2022/23. The first stage activity was completed towards the end of the planning year 2021/22, with the second stage removal of the virtual hearing platform in design and planning in the early part of the planning year 2022/23.

In addition during March to April 2022, activity was undertaken to move the sharing of electronic panel papers from the virtual hearing platform into CSAS and was completed end of April 2022.

Optimisation of CSAS Minimum Viable Product (MVP): (Minimum Viable Product is the first or early version of a product with just enough features to meet identified needs and to allow for feedback to develop further.) Ongoing investment was made in the period to develop and optimise the original CSAS, MVP after engagement with operational staff, in order to address better usability, optimisation and data quality.. There is a significant backlog of newly developed functionality as yet to be deployed to the CSAS live environment. There has been an agreed delay in the planning period for the deployment of this new functionality due to operational pressures and to allow users time for consolidation of cumulative changes already experienced. Plans for the deployment of the product backlog are underway with an estimated completion date of the end of May 2022.

Technology Refresh: Over four hundred new laptops were purchased and deployed to staff within the planning period, this completes the estate as having devices of less than two years old. The deployment of

the laptops has also improved and supported the organisations development of more flexible working practices.

Across the SCRA hearing room estate we now have 35 cloud based video conference and collaboration units deployed to support children and panel member choices in terms of how they wish to participate in their hearings. This means that all core SCRA buildings and hearing rooms are kitted out with the technology.

All 33 core SCRA buildings have been kitted out with guest Wi-Fi provision creating a much more digitally friendly and flexible working space for external visitors to the hearing facilities. This provision opens up significant opportunities to create further efficiencies and flexibility for panel members and other stakeholders.

Future Planning: While there has been an incredible amount achieved in terms of digital delivery during the period of the pandemic, there is still a great deal to do in the following years to maintain the digital transformation underway within SCRA and across the Children's Hearings System. Consolidation and optimisation of the new ways of working digitally will be a significant focus in the period 2022/23, as will development of the revised SCRA digital strategy with a horizon planned of the next three years. Researching new digital opportunities such as a child and family portal as well as partner automated data transfers will figure highly in the new digital strategy.

Communications and Engagement Strategy

The Communications and Engagement strategy sets out our approach to connecting with others – children and young people, our partners, our staff. It describes our methods of engagement and communication tools, and focuses on the work that we do through participation.

2021-22 Key Activities

SCRA website: With traffic to our external website continuing to increase, we are constantly looking to improve the layout and content. On Global Accessibility Awareness Day (Thursday 20 May 2021) we launched a revamped Accessibility section on the website. The information was split into different sections with information for visitors to our site with different needs. In addition, we created a new section which provides information for people applying to work with SCRA, who may require some adjustments at interview or once appointed.

The changes are in addition to the website's accessibility tool which we have had on the site for several years. The ReciteMe tool provides additional functionality to visitors with different needs. It includes text to speech functionality, dyslexia software, an interactive dictionary, a translation tool with over 100 languages and it works across all devices. It also has features which can help visitors with autism, ADHD and epilepsy.

Following on from this, in June 2021, we launched new wellbeing sections on our website for children and young people. The new sections include recorded meditation sessions and mindfulness colouring in sheets which can be printed off. Children and young people can also try the emoji generated juke box

FeelsFm produced by See Me. There are also links to lots more ideas from Hearings-experienced young people.

In August 2021, we launched the first of our new monthly web series 'Spotlight on...'. The aim is to shine the spotlight areas of our work that visitors to our website might not have heard of. The first piece focused on Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments. The second one posted on 13 September, featured our work to protect personal information.

Communications and accessibility: A number of new information materials were launched during 2021/22. In June 2021, a BSL version of SCRA's British Sign Language Action Plan was published which included sub titles and audio. We also created a short video about the role of SCRA with BSL, audio and sub titles. Further work is planned including a short BSL clip on referral to the Reporter and how to make a complaint.

In June 2021, two visual story guides for children were launched. The first was for children and young people participating in a virtual Hearing. The second was a pilot visual information guide for children and young people attending a face to face Children's Hearing in Glasgow.

The guide takes children step by step through their Hearing, right from arriving outside the Hearings centre in Bell Street. The guide is being rolled out across all Hearing centres in 2022/2023.

Siblings rights: In July 2021, to mark the introduction of new participation rights for siblings in Children's Hearings, we developed a communications plan. This included a latest news item on our website, new pages in the children and young people section of our website, a cartoon animation aimed at young children explaining the changes and a social media pack. In addition, we led on the communications for the Stand Up For Siblings partnership which included a number of news items and blogs published on the Stand Up For Siblings website which SCRA's Press and Communications Team continues to host and manage. We also joined an online session with the Minister and young people to mark the changes. We continue to be an active member of Stand Up For Siblings and arranged a series of webinars during October 2021.

The Promise: In August 2021, the Promise Scotland announced a new working group to oversee the redesign process for The Children's Hearings System. The Promise Scotland led on the external communication with support from SCRA and CHS. They gave an exclusive to the Sunday Post. An in-depth and positive article was published on Sunday 15 August. In addition, we showed our support by posting a news item on our website and on social media. Internally, we issued a coming soon news item on Connect on the Friday prior to the article appearing (13 August) and we followed this up with more information on the Sunday on Connect.

Keeping The Promise communications: On Care Day (18 February 2022) 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.

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.

Hearings System Working Group Issues List: On Friday 11 March 2022, 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.

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 Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership website.

Communications and inclusion: SCRA has developed an information guide for staff which outlines how to use inclusive language to avoid biases, slang or expressions that excludes certain groups based on gender or sexual orientation. The guide is aimed at all staff and was launched during National Inclusion Week from Monday 27 September.

Marking Pride 2021 – with COVID-19 restrictions ongoing, LGBT Youth Scotland encouraged people and organisations to hold Pride Picnics during June 2021, which is traditionally Pride Month. SCRA held four picnics in Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling. We promoted these on social media and included a special feature with photographs in the summer National Reporter.

International Non Binary People's Day took place on Wednesday 15 July 2021. To mark the day, SCRA issued a video recording on Connect to highlight the importance of language in particular when communicating with non-binary people. In the clip, SCRA's Inclusion and Diversity Manager talked to one trans/non-binary young person about their journey and experiences. The feedback from staff was extremely positive.

Connect – internal communications: 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. During 2021/2022, we have revamped two sections that have grown in recent times – Health and Wellbeing and Disability. We have also created new themed pages for topics including 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. We are currently working with colleagues in HR to build a new Learning and Development site.

COP26: The UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) came to Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November 2021. As our Hearings Centre is based in the Merchant City, right in the heart of Glasgow, we put extensive plans in place to minimise any disruption to children and families, as well as our staff and partners. We implemented a detailed internal and external communications plan. This involved information on our website and on social media, information for partners and our staff with a standalone section on Connect. A Teams channel and WhatsApp group were also created for managers to share information. An internal feedback survey was carried out after COP26 ended to measure how staff felt we responded.

Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV): SCRA's Press and Communications Team provided support to Our Hearings, Our Voice board member recruitment in January 2022. This included a 30 day planned campaign with website news items, social media posts and visuals, animations and film clips. In addition, we continue to provide ongoing communications support to OHOV including website maintenance and social media.

Youth Justice Improvement Board: SCRA's Press and Communications Team liaised with colleagues at the Scottish Government to design and build a website for the Youth Justice Improvement Board. The website was launched in spring 2022.

Operational Strategy

The Operational Strategy sets out our aims, approaches and priorities for planning and delivering front line services, and provides a framework within which Locality Plans can translate this into local delivery. It will dovetail with our Performance Management Framework which sets out the annual cycle by which plans and objectives at national, locality, team and individual levels are developed and aligned, performance appraised, reviewed and reported, and quality embedded into everything that we do.

2021-22 Key Activities

Operationally the work of the organisation has continued to be dominated and informed by the ongoing response to the pandemic.

In terms of the recovery metrics which we have reported against, we are now able to say that we have reached a broadly recovered position. However, this is caveated by the continuing need 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.

Notwithstanding Covid restrictions which continued throughout 2021-22, and an operating environment which continues to be challenging, significant progress was made against the Locality Plans which deliver on the Operational Plan and Strategy.

The key outcomes achieved across the nine localities during 2021-22 included:

- Working with CHS, Local Authorities and other key partners to ensure effective continuing response for hearings throughout the pandemic restrictions.
- Aligning office procedures with the Standard Operating Model.
- Ensuring regular workforce planning, including promotion of vacancies.
- Regular engagement with the Recovery Team to ensure full use of reporters and assistant reporter resources in support of locality recovery.
- Establishing Health and Wellbeing Groups to promote and support staff wellbeing.
- Incorporating wellbeing in supervisions and promoting wellness plans.
- Engagement with National Networks, initiatives and events to promote staff wellbeing
- Engagement with Local Promise Teams as part of existing Better Hearings structures.
- Improvements to staff working environment, promoting flexible and agile working.

Resourcing has been challenging, but well managed. Good workforce planning is embedded across localities and the proactive management of vacancies has helped morale. There have been many new starts within the organisation and further flux as a result of locality staff providing support for the central Virtual Hearings and Organisational Helpdesk teams. The Recovery Team continued to provide additional resource to support recovery work.

Operational teams are still adapting to the changes to systems and increased complexity in court and hearings which have resulted from the pandemic and the introduction of CSAS. Systems are still being optimised across the organisation. The position with CSAS is much better than it was 12 months ago and there is increased confidence across teams.

In the last 12 months, we have developed and introduced the Standard Operating Model (SOM). There has been good engagement with future developments and systems improvement and there is further work required to optimise our use of the system.

All Virtual Hearings now take place on a Teams based Virtual Hearings platform and work has begun to transition Virtual Hearings functions to local teams. Good progress has been made improving infrastructure and digital kit within hearing centres.

There remained a strong sense within some locality teams of being in “survival mode” and focusing on the core elements of roles and responsibilities. Addressing productivity and optimising the efficiency of our processes and the way we are working post pandemic is a key focus for work in 2022-23, to return to a point where people feel that their work can fit into the working week.

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 has been underlined. Those localities with better embedded health and wellbeing structures have demonstrated greater resilience.

Significant progress has been made to embed agile working although some of the progress which was made in 2021 was impacted by restrictions caused by Omicron. The impact on team cohesion, knowledge sharing, health and wellbeing and connections between people were identified as key challenges of home working. Further support is being provided for managers to help them to help their teams to optimise this way of working which remains new for the organisation as we develop our understanding of agile working without Covid restrictions.

The challenge of being a Locality Manager and the high level of support that they provide to their teams 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 the pandemic.

Inevitably, the continuing cycle of change has had an impact on people and there is an understandable nervousness about further change. Our organisational approach to change, management of the pace and extent of change, avoiding change priorities colliding and ensuring that our people are fully skilled to deliver change requires further development.

SCRA was audited during February and March 2022 on Locality Strategic Planning. The audit reviewed the design and operating effectiveness of the controls in place surrounding strategic planning arrangements in place at localities. The evidence provided to the auditors resulted in substantial assurance over the design and operational effectiveness of controls in place relating to the locality strategic planning process.

People Strategy

The People Strategy sets out how we will work to achieve the required balance of roles, skills and experience across all parts of the organisation, how we will work with staff to ensure they are skilled, confident and cared for, that they feel valued and respected, and are supported in their health and wellbeing. It incorporates the elements that have featured in workforce plans in recent years, but is wider in its coverage and addresses all of our aspirations and values from a people perspective, including plans to target improvement opportunities identified through staff engagement.

2021-22 Key Activities

2021-22 continued to be a challenging year for our workforce. COVID-19 restrictions were in place throughout the year, with the advice from the Scottish Government changing regularly as the transmission rates and variants of the pandemic changed. This meant that staff were restricted in how they could meet, use our premises to deliver face to face hearings as well as have team meetings, and how they managed daily life. Our staff have worked tirelessly to keep SCRA's children's hearing service operating effectively and efficiently, adapting to new ways of working and using new and different technologies in doing so. Whilst staff wellbeing was high in our agenda, with regular advice and guidance on working within the pandemic, we recognise that we have a workforce that requires to recover from the pandemic as we return to some sense of normality. In recognition of this we offered staff wellbeing days to be used throughout the year in addition to normal annual leave, developed an on-line wellbeing brochure, continued our programme of mindfulness and mental health initiatives as well as provided refresher training to our cohort of mental health first aiders.

We developed a Learning Strategy and aligned learning plan to refresh our approach to staff learning, development and progression. A new Learning Network has been implemented to ensure that our learning plans, which vary across a number of organisational work strands, are coordinated and impact on the development of the organisation as well as the individual in a positive way. We recognise that good and relevant learning opportunities are important to staff and their sense of wellbeing and we want to ensure that learning becomes natural and organic over the next few years.

We developed an Inclusive Behaviours Framework that describes how we can all contribute to upholding SCRA's values. We will consult on this during 2022/23, and the framework is an integral part of our approach to:-

- Our Learning plan and our management development programme.
- Our line management, supervision and appraisal.
- Our approach to recruitment and selection.
- Our approach to succession planning and talent management.

We reviewed our Whistleblowing, Discipline, Grievance and Investigation policies, amongst other developments, throughout the year ensuring that they reflected best practice, fairness, transparency and inclusion in the developments. Our most significant policy development was the introduction and implementation of our Agile Work Policy. This policy changes the way we work as an organisation, enabling staff to work flexibly from our offices or their homes. Managers have been trained on how to lead teams that work remotely in a hybrid way and we have developed a supporting set of frequently asked questions to support all staff transitioning to this way of working.

In response to a number of organisational developments such as the embedding of our virtual hearings service, the piloting of an organisational helpdesk and the maintenance of our Recovery Team, we were able to second staff from across the organisation into these teams. Losing skilled and experienced staff from localities into these central teams was a challenge for localities, however, recruitment exercises were undertaken to fill the resultant secondment vacancies which saw around an additional 25 full-time equivalent staff join SCRA. A review will be undertaken into the ongoing size of the central resources required as these services mainstream within localities.

The Health and Wellbeing Group reviewed the staff survey to ensure that it reflected the shape and progression of our organisation, but also to ensure that we could continue to compare results from previous years. The outcomes of the staff survey provide a rich vein of data and information which help inform our future organisational development as well as enabling us to respond directly to the issues staff have raised. The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive held specific staff sessions on the outcomes of the staff survey, which enhanced the feedback further.

Following the launch of our revised recruitment and selection policy, we implemented mandatory training for all recruiting staff to ensure that they have the appropriate skills, information and guidance to successfully recruit to internal and external vacancies. We also benchmarked SCRA against the Scottish Government (SG)'s Ethnic Minority Recruitment Toolkit and developed actions that aim to increase workforce diversity.

We delivered a pay offer to staff that went beyond the SG expectations of basic award for all staff.

Practice and Policy Strategy

The Policy and Practice Strategy sets out the key policy and legislative areas in which we aim to exert influence, how we will respond to those with implications for how we plan and deliver services, and other changes and improvements to our professional practice that we see as priorities.

2021-22 Key Activities

The Practice and Policy plans and actions were, like everything else, severely impacted again by the pandemic in 2021-22. Largely we were able to maintain our core services, providing Practice support and training and fully engaging in the policy world. These were like the previous year, to some extent, harder to achieve due to movement restrictions, e.g. delivery of training had to largely be provided remotely. However, engagement with partners was fully maintained and actually enhanced by the use of remote connections – the ability to facilitate large groups for meetings, and lack of travel to meetings meant that attendance and participation was greatly improved.

The changing issues related to the pandemic required us to constantly change and review our services, which required significant support from Practice. The continued use of virtual hearings and virtual court meant that bespoke guidance had to be created or reviewed, sometimes within tight timescales. Often this guidance required consultation with partners, in particular CHS. There was also a considerable Practice and Policy requirement to respond to legal challenges related to the Coronavirus Act 2020. Our use of the provisions required to constantly be reviewed, and the direction and guidance updated, and there was also a considerable reporting requirement on our use of the provisions. Preparation for the end of most of these provisions required careful planning, and guidance from the Practice Team.

The introduction of provisions under the Children (Scotland) Act 2020 placed a huge requirement on the Practice Team. These provisions were significant, providing participation rights to certain individuals in certain circumstances. This required detailed consideration and interpretation, and the drafting of Practice Direction. There was also a need for briefing materials for partners, and templates for use. These provisions came into force on 26 July 2021.

Policy activity has been higher than ever, despite the pandemic. There has been a huge amount of engagement on many policy agendas – incorporation of UNCRC, implementation and review of the Age of Criminal Responsibility Act, development of the advocacy service for Children’s Hearings, Youth Justice Strategy, and the Children’s Care and Justice Bill, which seeks to raise the age of referral to the Reporter. Engagement on The Promise has dominated the policy work. We are full participants in the Hearing System Working Group, and have developed a full programme of work in relation to the Promise.

During the whole of 2021-22, we have again engaged with key partners in discussions around the impact of the pandemic on the Hearing system, and then on recovery out of the pandemic. There have been many levels and forums of engagement, with a key group emerging as the Children’s Hearings COVID Recovery Group which has met weekly or fortnightly depending on the need. This group continues to monitor and implement the system wide recovery plan which has been reported to and endorsed by the Children’s Hearings Improvement Partnership.

Finance Strategy

The Finance Strategy sets out how we plan and manage our budgets, procurement and our property estate.

2021-22 Key Activities

An updated Financial Strategy for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27 was presented to the SCRA Board in September 2021.

It included 3 objectives to:

- Achieve long term financial sustainability.
- Take a medium to long term view of investment in our key resources and capabilities and new developments.
- Align the Financial Strategy with other strategies.

The Strategy recognised that the environment in which SCRA operates constantly evolves. The continuing impact of recovery from the pandemic is recognised and beyond this the Strategy highlighted the planned legislative changes which will impact on SCRA over the period of the Financial Strategy, including the Children (Scotland) Act, UNCRC incorporation, raising the age of referral to include all 16 and 17 year olds in the Hearing system, the Age of Criminal Responsibility Act and the very significant developments that will flow from The Promise recommendations. In addition, the Standard Operating Model (SOM) was implemented, bringing a greater degree of consistency in case processing.

The Strategy reflects required revenue grant in aid increases of 6% in 2022/23 and 4% in 2023/24, 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27.

In relation to Digital, the Digital Programme Director expects IT support costs to increase by around 0.5% per annum to reflect continued investment in Digital. The Strategy also reflects the need for capital investment in CSAS beyond Minimum Viable Product (MVP) in the new digital infrastructure, and services and regular technology refreshes. Further progress was made on digitizing hearing room capability, improving connectivity, development of new virtual hearings service models and the Hearings Information Pack.

The Strategy also recognises that continued investment in SCRA's estate is critical as it is increasingly viewed as the medium through which SCRA can improve customer care and deliver digital services.

Core funding, excluding additional in year funding, allocated by Scottish Government for 2021/22 was:

- Resource – £25.16m (standstill).
- Capital – Property £0.75m.
- Capital – Digital £1.15m.

Additional resource funding of £1.1m was drawn down to fund recovery activity and other known pressures.

Regular reporting to the Board throughout the year confirmed that SCRA operated within the resources allocated by the Scottish Government, plus some 2020/21 resource carry forward. Whilst the pandemic did not impact on staffing costs in 2021/22, savings have been generated on property costs and similar to 2020/21 on staff travel, postage and stationery.

Looking to 2022/23, funding allocated by the Scottish Government is:

- Resource – £25.16m (second year of standstill).
- Capital – Property £1.185m.
- Capital – Digital £0.765m.

In addition, funding of £1m is available for extension of temporary contracts and up to £2.1m for remaining pressures.

Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting

The Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting (RICP) Strategy aims to ensure a Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting approach to children and families is rooted in the findings of Scotland's Independent Care Review and 'The Promise' Scotland made to our care experienced young people and future recipients of care.

2021-22 Key Activities

SCRA's Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting 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.

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.

The following key outcomes were achieved across the three strands of the RICP strategy:

Inclusion

- The new Race & Ethnicity Group is chaired by SCRA's Principal Reporter/CEO to ensure 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 and the collection and use of equality monitoring data of children referred to SCRA by the Scottish Government¹.
- 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

¹ <https://enei.org.uk/resources/news/scottish-childrens-reporter-administration-collection-and-use-of-equality-data-case-study/>

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.

Rights

- We developed an internal plan to focus on rights and children's rights – SCRA's Rights Respecting Approach.
- We established a Right Direction Group 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 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.
- We developed and promoted the Scottish Government introductory training on children's rights across SCRA's staff group.
- We 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 really consider what Article 12 means for us all in SCRA and the wider Children's Hearings System.
- We finalised and implemented a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and provided locality training in respect of the policy for all staff.
- We developed a new practice direction for Reporters, 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.

Corporate Parenting

- We 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 was 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 promoted an animation about our approach to this journey.
- Working with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) we 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 our 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.
- Another 6 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.
- A care experienced Modern Apprentice was recruited and appointed to the Dumbarton office.
- 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 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.

1.4 Performance Analysis

This section details SCRA's achievements in the year in terms of its key performance Indicators (summarised in figure 1) and further information is provided below around the operational context that these have been achieved in.

Operational information and the Key Performance Indicators derived from them has again been significantly impacted by the pandemic across 2021/22 in terms of impacts on partners and our ability to deliver services. For the first half of the year we were operating under emergency legislation which was designed to reduce pressures on the system in a number of ways including:

- Removing the requirement for 2nd working day Hearings for CPOs;
- Extending CSOs for an additional 6 months (over and above the standard 12 month limit); and
- Extending interim orders from 22 to 44 days.

These specific provisions ended on 30th September 2021. More detail can be found here:

www.scra.gov.uk/2020/05/coronavirus-legislation-changes-to-the-law/.

Summary of Key Performance Indicators

Performance Measures

SCRA has eight key performance indicators which are reported to the Board on a quarterly basis. Targets were not applied to the operational indicators (a) decisions within 50 working days and b) Hearings within 20 working days) due to the impact of the pandemic. These are instead monitored for trends currently with targets to be applied in due course when the situation returns to normal. The annual outcomes are summarised below.

Figure 1.

Performance measures	Target	Outcome	Prior Year
a) The percentage of decisions on referrals made within 50 working days of receipt	n/a	69%	71%
b) The percentage of Hearings scheduled to take place within 20 working days	n/a	50%	54%
c) The percentage of working days lost to short term absence	2%	1.6%	1.0%
d) The percentage of working days lost to long term absence	2%	3.4%	3.7%
e) Variance in annual revenue spends as a percentage of the available revenue budget	1%	0.7%	3.1%
f) Percentage of revenue savings achieved in the year	1.5%	2.5%	3.4%
g) Variance in annual capital spends as a percentage of the available capital budget	5%	15.1%	27.1%
h) The Scottish Government efficiency savings target will be met	0.5%	Met	Met

Key:- Green: Target met or exceeded; Red: Target missed

- a) Decision making by Reporters within 50 working days was down 2 percentage points (pp) against the prior year though this was against an increased number of decisions compared to 2020/21.
- b) Hearing scheduling was down 4pp in the year to 50%. There had to be a strict prioritisation approach to allow the core business of Children's Hearings to continue through the pandemic with reduced availability of Hearing spaces due to social distancing and other constraints. This obviously has an impact on the ability to schedule grounds Hearings within the 20 working day target.
- c) Short term absence at 1.6% was within the 2% target and was 0.6pp higher than the prior year. Agile working has in part contributed to the achievement of this target as home working enables staff to maintain attendance on days when, due to illness, they would have been unable to travel to an office. As we have increased office based working, this rate has increased.
- d) Long term absence at 3.4% was down 0.3pp from the prior year but was still well above the 2% target. There were eight long term absences due to Covid compared to six the year before. There was a higher percentage of absences due to psychological reasons compared to 2020/21, although the proportion of these attributed to work reduced. This increase is likely a result of the challenges staff have faced throughout the year due to personal, work and Covid related issues.
- e) & f) Significant Head Office vacancy savings alongside savings on estates costs and staff travel were being partly offset by spend on temporary operational supernumerary staffing to support RAVHI and other areas of operations, plus meeting the revenue spend elements of the Digital Programme.
- g) Property programme underspent by £91k (11%) due to delays on Aberdeen, Elgin and Minor Works projects partly offset by planned overspends on Hearing Room improvements and condition survey works. Work underway to secure this resource to allow these to complete in 2022/23. Digital programme underspent by £182k (14%) due to global supply chain issues and refocusing of organisational priorities. In addition the underspend of £182k excludes £118k of expenditure which was classified as revenue spend. This results in a small overall Digital programme underspend of £64k.
- h) Head Office staff vacancy savings (excluding those directly focused on Organisational Recovery and frontline support).

There is no longer a property KPI but there are instead two quality measures. SCRA's hearing centres are our main public facing facilities and these are the main focus of our attention. The first quality measure therefore considers the operational suitability of our hearing centres. Alongside this, there is a quality measure now included to measure the efficiency of how we use property and the cost effectiveness of our estate.

Quality Measures – 2021/22

- 1 Percentage of hearing centres that comply with our requirements 60.6%
- 2 The average percentage quality score achieved across the estate 89.1%

Operational Performance

This section provides the operational context for the report, focussing on key aspects of the Children's Hearings System and the changes from the prior year.

Organisational performance continued to be impacted in 2021/22 by a number of factors that have occurred across the pandemic. This includes:

- Lack of resources due to absence and annual leave to deliver the objectives and complete the actions;
- Lack of productivity due to affected health and wellbeing;
- Timescales for the recruitment, training and deployment of new staff affected the time frame for delivering objectives/actions;
- Performance is also affected and impacted by external influences and differing priorities with partner organisations (for instance, availability for hearings); and
- The delivery of the hearing service is now more complicated by virtue of different 'types' of attendees, including siblings and different modes of attendance (face to face, virtual, or a combination of both).

In addition to these general factors, all localities had to focus significant time and effort on the following activities throughout 2021/22:

- Business Continuity/ Pandemic Recovery (staff issues, property, equipment, recovery planning, partnerships);
- CSAS embedding;
- developing a Standard Operating Model; and
- Staff support and wellbeing.

The Senior Operational Managers and localities ensured that a continuous service was provided and the most vulnerable children were protected and safeguarded, notwithstanding the significant challenges presented by Covid. Work continued throughout the pandemic across all areas of activity, focus during 2021/22 on ensuring recovery across decision making, hearings and court activity.

Children referred

The reasons (grounds) on which children are referred to the Reporter are those set out in section 67(2) of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, and are summarised below.

Section 67 ground	
(a)	Lack of parental care
(b)	Victim of a Schedule 1 offence
(c)	Close connection with a Schedule 1 offender
(d)	Same household as a child victim of Schedule 1 offender
(e)	Exposure to persons whose conduct likely to be harmful to child
(f)	Close connection with a person who has carried out domestic abuse
(g)	Close connection with Sexual Offences Act offender - Parts 1, 4 & 5
(h)	Accommodated and special measures needed
(i)	Permanence order and special measures needed
(j)	Offence
(k)	Misuse of alcohol

(l)	Misuse of a drug
(m)	Child's conduct harmful to self or others
(n)	Beyond control of a relevant person
(o)	Failure to attend school without reasonable excuse
(p)	Pressure to enter into civil partnership (or same household as such a child)
(q)	Force to marry (or same household as such a child)

For ease of reference, referrals on (j) Offence grounds are classed as offence referrals with the others being classed as non-offence.

In 2021/22, 8,691 children were referred on non-offence grounds this is up 8.5% from the previous year. Likewise, the number of children referred on offence grounds in the year at 2,398 was up 8.7%.

There are certain types of referrals that indicate greater or immediate concern about the child person's safety. These include Child Protection Orders (CPOs). At 479, 91 fewer children had CPOs (16.0%) granted in the year.

Reporter Decisions

Reporters investigate where necessary, when a referral is received, to assist them in considering the likely need for compulsory measures. They do so by obtaining information on the child and their circumstances from relevant agencies. Some of this information may now be provided at the point of referral rather than requiring to be requested. In the year, 23.2% of children with a referral decided, had a decision to arrange a Hearing. This was a 1pp increase on the prior year.

Pre-Hearing Panels and Hearings

Pre-Hearing Panels (PHPs) are convened before some Children's Hearings to consider any special arrangements needed for the Children's Hearing. These are:

- whether to deem/undeem an individual as a relevant person;
- whether to excuse a child or relevant person from the obligation to attend the Children's Hearing;
- whether an individual has participation rights; and
- whether an individual should be allowed to attend only by electronic means.

The last two in the list above were new purposes for PHPs which only started at the end of July 2021. PHPs increased by 11.9% to 328 against 293 last year. Numbers remain low as there is still no requirement for a child to attend a Hearing as part of the emergency Covid legislation.

Children's Hearings decide whether compulsory measures of intervention are necessary (in respect of the child) to protect the child and/or address their behaviour. Hearings increased by 34.8% to 21,909 against 16,248 in the prior year, an increase of 5,661.

Applications to the Sheriff for proof

If the child and/or their relevant persons do not accept some or all of the statement of grounds for referral which form the basis of the Children's Hearing, or the child does not or cannot understand the grounds, the Children's Hearing may direct the Reporter to apply to the Sheriff to establish the statement

of grounds for referral (sections 93 and 94 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011). Overall, 2,072 applications were determined in 2021/22 and 90.1% were held to be established by the Sheriff. This was 373 more applications determined in the year (22.0%).

Compulsory measures of supervision

Compulsory Supervision Orders (CSOs) are the most common form of compulsory intervention made by Children's Hearings. They are also the only longer-term option available to Children's Hearings. It is the statutory responsibility of local authorities to implement CSOs. At the year-end, 7,265 children and young people were subject to CSOs. This is 694 fewer than the prior year end, a decrease of 8.7%.

Appeals

Children and/or their relevant persons can appeal to the Sheriff against decisions made by Children's Hearings and Pre-Hearing Panels. In 2021/22, 435 children had appeals concluded, a 9.6% increase from the prior year. A child may have multiple appeals within the year. Of the 568 appeals concluded, 55.5% of appeals were refused by the Sheriff or abandoned by the appellant. This is largely unchanged from the prior year.

Consultation with employees

SCRA is committed to involving staff throughout the organisation in its decision-making process. SCRA works in partnership with staff and has a partnership agreement with UNISON as the recognised Trade Union. Working in partnership mainstreams consultation and engagement with staff in all aspects of SCRA's working environment through employment issues to service delivery issues. We assessed SCRA's Partnership Approach against the Scottish Government's Fair Work in Public Bodies principles, noting that we are performing well in these areas.

There is an embedded structure of consultation and engagement through the National Partnership Forum which has a number of sub groups like the HR Sub Group, Health/Wellbeing and Staff Survey Group, Equalities Network and more standalone networks such as the Joint Negotiating and Consultation Committee, Health and Safety Committee, Participation Group, etc. Staff from across the organisation are represented on each of these groups to ensure that we engage fully.

SCRA's People Strategy seeks to develop local organisational conversations to engage with staff on all aspects of organisational development, and 2021/22 saw a large increase in the number of staff engagement and consultation sessions. There have been significant exercises undertaken in relation to the development of the Agile Working Policy, review of our support roles, Keeping the Promise, Team Brief Sessions with the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive, etc. UNISON have also held a number of engagement sessions with their members to inform partnership working.

As part of the Partnership Agreement with UNISON, SCRA has an established Recognition and Procedure Agreement, which governs the negotiations of pay and national conditions of service for all staff. It formally acknowledges the importance of establishing and maintaining confidence in the negotiating arrangements

Payment Performance

In line with Scottish Government guidance, SCRA's policy is to pay all invoices that are not in dispute within the lesser of 10 working days and the agreed contractual terms. During the year ended 31 March 2022, SCRA paid 76% (31 March 2021: 68%) of invoices within the terms of its payment policy. SCRA will continue to reduce its volume of invoices and work to improve the processing time of invoices in order to improve performance in 2022/23.

Anti-bribery

SCRA's Executive Management Team and Board have taken steps to ensure SCRA has policies in place to guard against corruption and bribery, including SCRA's procurement policy, financial regulations and Fraud and Corruption policy.

Environmental Performance

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);
- Act sustainably (sustainable development as a core value).

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

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.

Environmental Performance

Over the course of 2021/22, five key areas were identified for action:

- **Environmental Objectives:** 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 Government's climate change targets and Net Zero. Locality sustainability planning will be extended to 2024 in line with other organisational plans.
- **Emissions Targets:** An interim 3 year target of achieving a 10-20% reduction in Emissions was set following consideration by the Board.

- **Consumption Data Capture:** Greater analysis and monitoring of consumption data is being undertaken and our Business Managers regularly engage with utility suppliers on monitoring the consumption data we receive across the country.
- **Sustainability Training:** Climate change awareness training has been included within our induction programme for new staff.
- **Environmental Champions:** Whilst intended to be implemented in 21/22, the need to focus on covid recovery has delayed implementation of building a team of Environmental Ambassadors to provide support in localities in the delivery of their plans. This is now planned in 22/23.

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 a figure for 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.

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 2022, a statement is required setting out how we will use our resources to reduce emissions and to provide a date for reaching Net Zero.

Annual reporting supports compliance with the public bodies' duties and consolidates climate change information from the public sector. The Public Bodies Climate Change Duties report for 2020/21 was submitted at the end of November 2021, and then reviewed by the Scottish Sustainability Network. Reports submitted for last year and previous years can be found at <https://sustainablesotlandnetwork.org/reports>

<u>Emission Source</u>			<u>2020/21</u>		<u>2019/20</u>	
	<u>Scope</u>	<u>Unit</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
Heating - Oil	1	litres			4,869	12.37
Electricity (generation)	2	kWh	688,999	160.63	951,993	221.95
Electricity (transmission losses)	3	kWh	688,999	13.81	951,993	19.09
Business Travel - miles	3	miles	42,018	11.79	294,848	82.71
Water - Supply	3	m ³	2,081	0.23	4,390	1.51
Water - Treatment	3	m ³	2,081	0.48	4,171	2.95
Waste - mixed recycling	3	tonnes	21	0.46	46	0.99
Waste - paper recycling	3	tonnes	12	0.25	13	0.29
Waste - Landfill	3	tonnes	37	17.09	63	29.00
Homeworking emissions	3	% home-based	75.00%	98.23		
		Total		567.56		641.57

C – Consumption in units

E – Emissions (tCO₂e) calculated

Our climate change and sustainability duties require every part of the organisation to be involved. Key areas have previously been identified 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

Key Issues and Risks

The key strategic risks tracked throughout 2021/22 included:

- IT Security measures are insufficient to prevent a successful cyber-attack on SCRA case information which results in loss of data which cannot be recovered;
- SCRA do not maintain a skilled, motivated and flexible workforce which can meet current demands and future needs;
- Significant policy, legislative and reform/transformation change agenda impacts on SCRA's ability to deliver core services or necessary change programmes;
- 2022/23 Scottish Government budget does not deliver required level of revenue and capital resources with impact on ability to influence and respond to new legislative and policy pressures;
- Failure to progress Board approved Environmental plan and inability to accelerate plans to meet new targets;
- The optimum model for CSAS ownership and accountability and a joint future partnership between SCRA and CHS is not adequately defined and agreed; and
- Organisational recovery plan fails to deliver operational stability within an acceptable timeframe.

There is a significant action plan in place to mitigate the risk of a successful cyber-attack and this risk will continue to be tracked in 2022/23. In relation to the 2022/23 Scottish Government Budget risk, this did crystallise and SCRA will work with Scottish Government to minimise unfunded resource pressures while preparing for further policy and legislative change and meeting the challenges of The Promise, the subject of a separate strategic risk. The 2021/22 Operational and Locality Plans and risk registers focused on actions to deliver organisational recovery and operational stability. The focus of operational and locality risk is now moving onto supporting staff to deal with the demands of change and improving casework efficiency through continuing to improve the use of CSAS and the Standard Operating Model.

The Executive Management Team have identified two new strategic risks:

- Inability to engage with digital developments inhibits realisation of full potential of new technologies resulting in significant operational disruption.
- Inability to meet staff expectations on pay/reward resulting in operational disruption/staff engagement in change

Details of the risk management arrangements are set out in section 2.3.12 on page 41.

2022/23 Planning

The Business Plan objectives for 2022-23 set out how all parts of the organisation will contribute to improvement in our service delivery as we address the commitments in our 2021-24 Keeping The Promise Route Plan and prepare for future legislative changes. The actions in the Business Plan will build on the good progress made in 2020-21 in implementing CSAS and rolling out the Standard Operating Model.

The 2022-23 Business Plan and all other related strategy and locality plans are reviewed on a regular basis, and modified if required, should there be any significant changes that would impede delivering the objectives.

The continued funding for additional operational staff during 2021-22 for recovery work and delivery of virtual has been crucial in enabling localities to respond flexibly to changes in service delivery. The benefits of agile working are evident particularly in terms of delivering a flexible working environment that aids staff's health and wellbeing.

The continuation of funding for temporary staff into 2022-23 is helping the organisation to complete the process of recovery and to dedicate resources to delivery of SCRA's Keeping The Promise Plans.

Neil Hunter
Accountable Officer

2. Accountability Report

2.1 Director's Report

The table below shows the date of appointment for Board members in 2021/22.

Board Member	Appointment Date
Michelle Miller (Chair)	01 May 18
Catherine Robertson	01 Nov 13 – 31 Oct 21
Anela Anwar	01 Dec 14
Tam Baillie	01 Sep 18
James Edgar	01 Oct 17
Martin Toye	01 Jun 16
Suzanne Vestri	01 Oct 16
Kay Barton	01 Nov 21
Lorraine Moore	01 Nov 21

All current Board members have fixed term contracts and of the above five are female and three are male.

The Board members have been appointed by the Scottish Ministers. They are appointed on the basis of having knowledge or experience relevant to the general purpose of SCRA or to the functions of the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive.

The table below shows the date of appointment for Executive Management Team members in 2021/22.

EMT Member	Job Title	Appointment Date
Neil Hunter	Principal Reporter/Chief Executive	04 Apr 11
Edward Morrison	Head of Finance and Resources	01 Dec 10
Alistair Hogg	Head of Practice and Policy	01 Jun 19
Susan Deery	Head of Human Resources	01 Oct 14
Lisa Bennett	Head of Strategy and Organisational Development	14 Sep 15
Helen Etchells	Senior Operational Manager	12 Aug 19
Paul Mulvanny	Senior Operational Manager	12 Aug 19
Lawrie McDonald	Head of Information Technology (SCRA/CHS)	01 Sep 15

All EMT members have permanent UK contracts and of the above three are female and five are male. The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive has specific responsibility for the discharge of Reporters' statutory functions.

Audit

The Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 places personal responsibility on the Auditor General for Scotland to decide who is to undertake the audit of each central government body in Scotland. For the financial years 2016/17 to 2020/21 the Auditor General appointed Audit Scotland to undertake the audit of SCRA. The appointment was extended to cover the 2021/22 financial year as a result of the COVID 19 public health crisis. The general duties of the auditors of central government bodies, including their statutory duties, are set out in the Code of Audit Practice issued by Audit Scotland and approved by the Auditor General.

Register of Interests

A Register of Interests for Board members and senior staff is maintained by SCRA and may be accessed by contacting the Governance Officer at Ochil House, Springkerse Business Park, Stirling, FK7 7XE, or on SCRA's website, <https://www.scra.gov.uk/about-scra/our-board/> and <https://www.scra.gov.uk/about-scra/senior-management/>.

Report of personal data incidents

The SCRA reports all reportable breaches to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in compliance with data protection legislation. A risk assessment is completed for each data breach to determine whether it is likely to result in a risk for the rights and freedoms of any individual. There was a total of six breaches reported to the ICO in 2021-22. The ICO has not taken any formal action against SCRA in relation to any of the reported breaches, but has made some recommendations for improvement, which we have accepted and implemented where appropriate.

Non-Disclosure Orders

A Non-Disclosure Order is a special provision attached to a child's case in instances when it is considered necessary to protect the whereabouts of a child, or person(s) with whom the child is residing, due to significant concerns about their safety.

There was a total of 56 incidents in 2021-22 where Non-Disclosure Orders were breached. The SCRA was responsible for 32 Non-Disclosure breaches, and five of these were reported to the ICO. The main cause of the breaches that were reported to the ICO, was a failure to redact documents correctly.

In comparison, there was a total of 29 Non-Disclosure breaches in 2020-21 and 44 in 2019-20.

Case Information

The SCRA holds information on children and their families, who are involved in the Children's Hearings System. Much of this information is special category data as defined by the UK GDPR and by the Data Protection Act 2018. In 2021-22, the SCRA reported one case of an information breach to the ICO. This breach occurred due to a page from child A's Record of Proceedings (ROP) being accidentally attached to correspondence that was posted to the mother of child B. The families were not directly connected, but were aware of each other.

The SCRA continues to monitor breaches of personal data as part of its activities to improve information security and data protection compliance. Each locality has an Information Governance (IG) Lead and the IG Leads Group meets regularly to monitor activity, including lessons learnt from breaches. The lessons learned from the breaches is posted on Connect monthly for staff to read. All staff have been trained on GDPR; they are also required to do annual GDPR refresher training. The Board's Audit and Risk Committee receives six monthly reports on Information Governance.

2.2 Statement of Accountable Officer's Responsibilities

Under Schedule 3 of the Children's Hearing Scotland Act (2011), the Scottish Parliament has directed the SCRA to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of SCRA and of its net resource outturn, application of resources, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accountable Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Scottish Parliament, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis

Under section 15 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000, the Accountable Officer of the Scottish Government Directorate with responsibility for sponsorship of SCRA designated the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive of SCRA as the Accountable Officer for the Administration. The Head of Finance and Resources is designated as Depute Accountable Officer. The responsibilities of an Accountable Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accountable Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the Administration's assets, are set out in the Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM).

As Accountable Officer, I confirm that:

- as far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware, and I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.
- the annual report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and that I take personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgments required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

2.3 Statement of Governance

2.3.1 Scope of responsibility

As Accountable Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of SCRA's policies, aims and objectives, as set by Scottish Ministers, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in the Memorandum to Accountable Officers for Other Public Bodies.

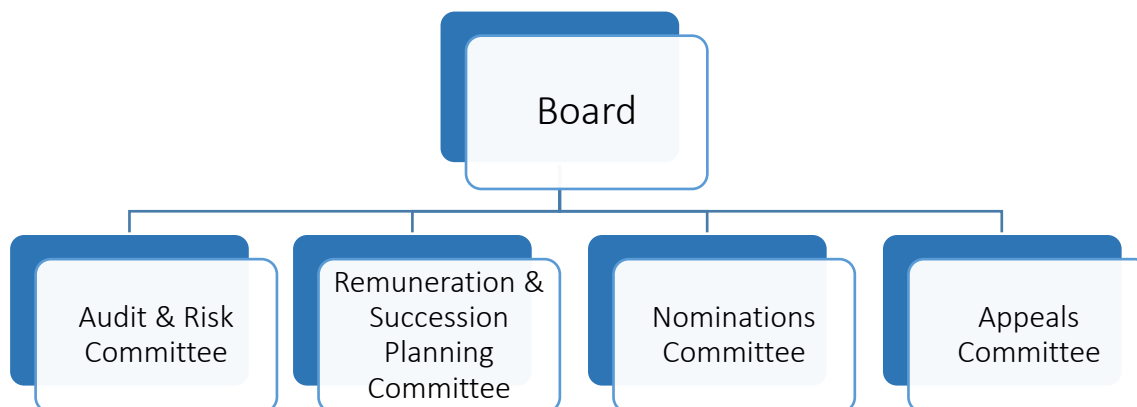
2.3.2 Governance framework

SCRA's governance framework accords with generally accepted best practice principles and guidance from Scottish Ministers in the SPFM and has been in place for the year ended 31 March 2022 and up to the date of the approval of the financial statements. The SPFM provides guidance to the Scottish Government, and other relevant bodies, on the proper handling of public funds. It is designed to ensure compliance with statutory and parliamentary requirements, promote value for money, high standards of propriety, effective accountability and robust systems of internal control.

The impact of COVID-19 throughout 2021/22 did not lead to any relaxation of key aspects of the governance framework and statutory duties continued to be fulfilled albeit in the context of applying the full range of options in SCRA's Business Continuity Plan and the Scottish Government's COVID-19 guidance for public bodies.

2.3.3 Board and committee structure

The Board Committee structure encompasses an Audit and Risk Committee, a Remuneration and Succession Planning Committee, a Nominations Committee and an Appeals Committee. The Committees report into the Board, on a routine basis, on the business conducted at their meetings.



Operation of the board

SCRA's Board comprises the Chair and seven non-executive members. The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive attends ex-officio. Members of the Board are appointed by Ministers and the normal term of office for a non-Executive member is four years. Board members may serve for a maximum of eight years. The Board has responsibility for ensuring that SCRA fulfils the aims and objectives set by Scottish Ministers.

The role of the Board is to:

- Establish the overall strategic direction within the policy and resources framework agreed with the Scottish Government;
- Ensure that the organisation meets its objectives;
- Demonstrate high standards of corporate governance at all times;
- Ensure that any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds are complied with.

The Board met five times during 2021/22 (June 2021, September 2021, December 2021, January 2022 and March 2022) on regular business. Two Board Development days were held in April 2021 and November 2021. One joint Board meeting with Children's Hearings Scotland's Board was held in February 2022.

The Board regularly review the organisation's key policies which include the Human Resources Policies, Health & Safety Policies, Information Security Policies, Data Protection Policies, Risk Management Policy, Fraud Policy, Location Policy (part of Property Strategy), Procurement Policy, Media Handling Policy, Environmental Policy and Complaints Policy.

Board programme of business:

Standing Items	Specific Items for 2021/22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Minutes • Chief Executive's Report • Budget Monitoring • Organisational Performance (Modified while in business continuity and recovery mode, now fully restored). • New Risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Strategy Review, Digital Update • The Promise – Reporting and Governance Structure, Promise Progress Updates • Board Governance Review • Sustainability Review • Agile Working Policy • Framework Document • Whistleblowing Policy • Staff Survey • Draft Budget 2022/23 • Draft Business Plan 2022/23 • Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy • Communications and Engagement Strategy
Annual	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Annual Accounts and Management Representation Letter • Annual Report • Corporate and Business Plans • Senior Operational Managers Review • Complaints • Environmental Report • Property Strategy • Financial Strategy • Committee Annual Reports • Health & Safety • Workforce Report • Overview of Policies • Research Programme • Equalities Network Annual Report • Annual Procurement Report • Board and Committee Terms of Reference Review 	<p>COVID 19 Specific Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Performance Report
Bi-annual	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing Report • Strategic and Operational Risk Registers 	

2.3.4 Board Development Meetings

Business conducted at the Board Development Days (April and November 2021) included:

- CSAS update and demonstration
- Board Member recruitment
- GDPR
- Data Workshop
- The Promise
- Committee membership and review of lead responsibilities
- Board Members Performance Review Framework
 - Setting and reviewing Board Objectives
 - Board Training Plan
- Joint Board
 - OHOV
 - Hearing System Working Group and Hearing Redesign
 - Workshop – priorities for reporting and priorities for Hearing System Working Group

2.3.5 Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee comprises the Chair and three non-executive members. The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive attends ex-officio. It meets quarterly and reviews the adequacy of the arrangements for ensuring sound internal control and in particular scrutinises all audit reports and the actions taken by managers in response to audit recommendations.

Audit and Risk Committee Programme of Business (meetings held May 2021, August 2021, November 2021 and February 2022):

Standing Items	Other Business Items
Information Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Protection and Information Governance Six-monthly Report 	Annually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to the Board on the Audit and Risk Committee's business Meeting with Internal/External Auditors Fraud Report External Audit Report to those charged with Governance on the Audit Management Representation Letter Internal Audit Annual Report Annual Accounts, Governance Statement, Accounting Policies Internal and External Audit Plans Quality Assurance Programme Joint Inspection of Children's Services – Overview
Quality Assurance and Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Sampling Reports (On hold for part of the year as agreed by the Committee) 	
External Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on Topical/Regulatory Issues 	
Internal Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports on fieldwork Annual Plan Progress 	

Digital Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update from Digital Oversight Committee (ended September 2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARC self-evaluation
Risk Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Risks 	Bi-annual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Strategic and Operational Risk Registers Internal Audit Recommendations Follow-up Pensions Update
Topical/Regulatory/Governance Issues	
Specific Items during 2021/22 (in addition to above) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Quality Report CSAS MVP Project Closure Report Risk Management Policy Review 	

The Audit and Risk Committee carries out an annual self-assessment and reports annually on its activities to the Board. The Audit and Risk Committee received regular updates from the Digital Strategy Oversight Committee which met quarterly until September 2021 and comprised the Chairs of Audit of SCRA and CHS and an independent member.

2.3.6 Remuneration and Succession Planning Committee

The Remuneration and Succession Planning Committee comprises the Chair and two non-executive members. It is responsible for governance of the pay and remuneration policy for the organisation and the approval of Principal Reporter/Chief Executive appraisal and pay. It also monitors progress on the organisation's succession planning arrangements.

Although one member of the Committee left in May 2020 the Committee was able to operate as required during 2021/22. The Board Chair attended all committee meetings during 2021/22 to ensure appropriate board membership.

Business dealt with during 2021/22 (meeting held June 2021):

- Pay Award Proposals 2021/22
- Performance and Objective Setting for PR/CE 2020/21 and 2021/22
- Pay Award Proposal PR/CE
- Succession Planning Update – Women into Leadership

The meeting held in March 2022 was not quorate, but no decisions were required to be made.

2.3.7 Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee comprises the Chair, two non-executive members and one Sponsor Team official and meets as required. The role of the Committee is to:

- Lead the process for Board appointments and make recommendations to the Board;
- Offer advice to the Board on future Board appointments;
- Review and evaluate skills, knowledge, expertise of current Board Members.

Business dealt with during 2021/22 (meeting held April 2021):

- SCRA Board Recruitment

2.3.8 Remuneration & Succession Planning/Nominations Committee

The Remuneration & Succession Planning and Nominations Committee met together in March 2022 to consider the following business:

- Pay Award Proposals 2022/23
- PR/CE Performance Appraisal 2021/22
- Board Member Recruitment

2.3.9 Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee comprises a Chair and two non-executive members and meets as required. Its remit is to:

- hear appeals from SCRA staff in respect of any of the matters set out in SCRA's Manual of Personnel Policies & Procedures and in accordance with the arrangements set out therein;
- come to a substantive decision on any appeal; and
- report the outcome to the Board at its next meeting following any appeal.

The Committee did not meet in 2021/22.

2.3.10 Executive management

The Executive Management Team (EMT) comprises the senior managers in the organisation who are responsible for establishing and maintaining a sound internal control system. The EMT meets monthly and is supported by a Health and Safety Committee, Equalities Group, an Information Governance Leads Group and a Digital Delivery Board (now Digital Change Advisory Board). The EMT receives regular reports on budget management, organisational performance and changes in strategic/operational risks, whereas the Board focuses on strategy, performance and behaviour. The Principal Reporter advises the Board on all matters and is solely responsible for operational issues. Board members have no authority to instruct the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive or any member of staff on operational matters.

2.3.11 Internal controls

The internal control framework comprises a network of systems designed to provide assurance that organisational objectives will be achieved, with particular reference to:

- risk management;
- the effectiveness of operations;
- the economical and efficient use of resources;
- compliance with applicable policies, procedures, laws and regulations;
- safeguards against losses, including those arising from fraud, irregularity or corruption; and
- the integrity and reliability of information and data.

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. It is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks, evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised. The system of internal control has been in place in SCRA for the year to 31 March 2022, and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts.

The following internal control systems are assessed annually as part of the Scottish Government Certificates of Assurance process which must be completed by the Chief Executive. This process was completed in May 2022 and no major control gaps have been identified.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Risk Management | • Procurement |
| • Business Planning | • Human Resources |
| • Major Investment | • Equality and Diversity |
| • Project Management | • Information |
| • Financial Management | • Health & Safety |
| • Fraud | • Compliance |

2.3.12 Risk management arrangements

A framework for measuring, controlling and monitoring strategic risks has been in place throughout the financial year. A regular review of the Strategic Risk Register is undertaken by the Executive Management Team and the Strategic Risk Register is reported to the Audit and Risk Committee and Board every six months. Strategic risk management is fully established in the corporate planning and decision making processes of SCRA. The Operational Risk Register is overseen by the Senior Operational Managers. Localities maintain their own Risk Registers and these were comprehensively reviewed and updated in line with development of 2022/23 Locality Plans. Digital Strategy risks are monitored by the Digital Delivery Board. EMT is supported in discharging its risk management responsibilities by the Planning and Performance Network.

The key strategic risks tracked throughout 2021/22 included:

- IT Security measures are insufficient to prevent a successful cyber-attack on SCRA case information which results in loss of data which cannot be recovered;
- SCRA do not maintain a skilled, motivated and flexible workforce which can meet current demands and future needs;

- Significant policy, legislative and reform/transformation change agenda impacts on SCRA's ability to deliver core services or necessary change programmes;
- 2022/23 Scottish Government budget does not deliver required level of revenue and capital resources with impact on ability to influence and respond to new legislative and policy pressures;
- Failure to progress Board approved Environmental plan and inability to accelerate plans to meet new targets;
- The optimum model for CSAS ownership and accountability and a joint future partnership between SCRA and CHS is not adequately defined and agreed; and
- Organisational recovery plan fails to deliver operational stability within an acceptable timeframe.

Details of the changes to the risk profile in 2021/22 and risk mitigations are set out in the Performance Review on page 10.

SCRA's internal auditors are BDO, appointed for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2020 with an option to extend to 30 June 2021 which was exercised. Under the terms of a Framework Agreement a further two year contract was agreed which will end in June 2023. The Internal Auditor delivered risk management training in 2021/22 which was attended by risk leads in the organisation.

2.3.13 Digital programme

In November 2017 a joint meeting of Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) and SCRA Boards approved a joint digital delivery plan and the award of contract to an identified supplier, following a competitive tender exercise. The main focus of activity throughout 2020/21 has been on the implementation phases of the services that comprise the new Core Systems and Applications (CSAS). A vanguard phase comprising three localities was followed by a second deployment phase comprising the remaining six localities, all concluded by December 2020. A daily integrated team comprising product owner, in-house technical team, business readiness staff and operational manager and the supplier supported the implementation. Additional activity was focused on supporting virtual hearings, creating wireless connectivity with guest/public access in all SCRA core hearing centres and establishing infrastructure and hardware to increase digital capability in hearing rooms.

2.3.14 Information governance

All Information Governance duties are carried out by Information Governance (IG) Leads who meet frequently as a Group with the SCRA Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) as Chair. The day to day work of the Information Governance Team includes General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance.

2.3.15 Data security

A total of six data breaches, including breaches of non-disclosure orders, have been reported to me by SCRA's SIRO who also ensures appropriate reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office. Further details are on page 33. The main cause of non-disclosure breaches is failing to redact documents correctly and the main cause of case information breaches is information being sent to an incorrect address because relevant parties failed to inform SCRA of the change. Controls are in place to mitigate the risk of information loss. SCRA works proactively with partners to highlight information security and

assist them in managing their information more securely in their own locations/settings. Additional details are provided on page 34.

2.3.16 Quality and performance

SCRA's Quality Assurance and Performance Team is responsible for providing assurance on the effectiveness of the arrangements within SCRA for discharging the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive's statutory responsibilities towards children referred to the Reporter and meeting agreed quality standards. Having been on hold due to the impact of the pandemic and the roll out of the internal case management system, the case sampling programme re-commenced in 2021/22 as planned, with three case sampling exercises conducted. The first, a slightly different exercise to normal – a focus on Data Quality, this allowed for initial interrogation of the use of data and recording case information on the new case management system. This exercise was carried out centrally by the Quality and Performance Team to allow a resumption of the programme but without the additional draw on operational resource. The November '21 committee considered a Case Sampling exercise on the Reporter's selection of the appropriate section 67 ground at the point of final decision. And finally, the February committee received and considered a report on the cases of children jointly reported to the Children's Reporter and Procurator Fiscal.

The Practice and Quality networks meet throughout the year with a purpose to share best practice and to help improve the quality of the service provided to children and young people. The networks were able to resume again, albeit remotely, during this period to take forward this agenda.

2.3.17 Internal audit

In addition to the Quality Assurance and Performance Team, SCRA has an internal audit service provided under contract, which operates to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. They submit regular reports to the Audit and Risk Committee which include an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of SCRA's system of internal control together with recommendations for improvement.

No high risk recommendations were identified by the auditors in 2021/22. In the auditors' opinion, the risk management activities and controls in the areas which they examined were found to be suitably designed to achieve the specific risk management, control and governance arrangements. Based on their verification reviews and sample testing the risk management, control and governance arrangements were operating with sufficient effectiveness to provide reasonable, but not absolute assurance that the related risk management, control and governance objectives were achieved for the period under review.

2.3.18 Assessment of corporate governance arrangements

As Accountable Officer, I have reviewed the effectiveness of corporate governance arrangements. My review is informed by:

- the executive managers within SCRA who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, including the organisation's Senior Information Risk Officer;
- the work of the internal auditors and the Quality Assurance and Performance Team who submit to the Audit and Risk Committee regular reports which include the Head of Internal Audit's independent and objective opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of SCRA's system of internal control together with any recommendations for improvement;
- comments made by the external auditors in their management letters and other reports;
- assurances from senior staff in SCRA's 2021/22 Internal Control Checklist which will be submitted to the Sponsor Division as part of the Scottish Government's Certificates of Assurance process;
- a range of other accountability mechanisms including quarterly organisational performance reviews, end to end process reviews, regular assessment of management of key risks, regular review of organisational policies and potentially, information from whistle-blowers in line with the Whistleblowing Policy.

During the financial year 2021/22, no significant control weaknesses or issues have arisen, and no significant failures have arisen in the expected standards for good governance, risk management and control.

2.4 Remuneration and Staff Report

2.4.1 Remuneration and Succession Planning Committee

The Remuneration and Succession Planning Committee, a sub-committee of the full SCRA Board, oversees the remuneration and succession planning arrangements of all staff.

For the financial year under review, the Remuneration and Succession Planning Committee consisted of:

- Catherine Robertson (chair)
- Suzanne Vestri

Michelle Miller attended Remuneration and Succession Planning Committee meetings in her capacity as chair of the Board.

Policy on remuneration

SCRA's overall remuneration policy aims to:

- attract, retain and motivate competent and skilled staff at all levels of the organisation
- reward staff for their contribution to SCRA by arrangements which are simple, fair and transparent.

Performance assessment methods

Performance is measured in accordance with a performance appraisal scheme that includes annual objective setting and performance review. For senior managers these objectives relate to both individual performance and corporate performance.

Where performance is satisfactory, staff not at the maximum of their salary scale will progress to the next step in the scale.

Policy on duration of contracts, notice periods and termination payments

It is SCRA's policy normally to offer open-ended appointments, subject to Probationary Policy criteria, operational and resource considerations. The notice period for senior managers is three months. Any payment in relation to termination of employment through retirement or redundancy is governed by SCRA's relevant policies and procedures. Any discretionary payment made to any member of staff on termination is subject to approval by the Board and the Scottish Government.

2.4.2 Senior managers' service contracts

In the event of early termination of a senior manager service contract and subject to Scottish Government advice and necessary approvals, a payment in lieu of notice up to a maximum of 3 months' salary may be made.

	Date of contract	Unexpired term	Notice period
Neil Hunter	04 April 2011	Open-ended contract	3 months
<i>Principal Reporter/Chief Executive</i>			
Edward Morrison	01 December 2010	Open-ended contract	3 months
<i>Head of Finance and Resources</i>			
Susan Deery	01 May 2016	Open-ended contract	3 months
<i>Head of Human Resources</i>			
Helen Etchells	12 August 2019	Open-ended contract	3 months
<i>Senior Operational Manager</i>			
Paul Mulvanny	12 August 2019	Open-ended contract	3 months
<i>Senior Operational Manager</i>			
Alistair Hogg	01 June 2019	Open-ended contract	3 months
<i>Head of Practice and Policy</i>			
Lisa Bennett	14 September 2015	Open-ended contract	3 months
<i>Head of Strategy and Organisational Development</i>			
Lawrie McDonald	01 April 2020	Open-ended contract	3 months
<i>Head of Digital Delivery</i>			

2.4.3 Board members' and Senior Managers' remuneration (audited)

Non-executive Board Members	Salary and allowances 2021-22 £000	Salary and allowances 2020-21 £000
Michelle Miller (Chair)	20-25	20-25
Sam Anderson	n/a	0-5
Anela Anwar	0-5	0-5
Tam Baillie	0-5	0-5
Kay Barton	0-5	n/a
James Edgar	0-5	0-5
Lorraine Moore	0-5	n/a
Catherine Robertson	0-5	0-5
Martin Toye	0-5	0-5
Suzanne Vestri	0-5	0-5

SCRA does not make any contribution to the Local Government Pension Scheme, nor provide any other form of pension benefit, in respect of any Non-Executive Board Member.

	Salary and allowances 2021-22 £000	Pension benefits 2021-22 £000	Single total figure of remuneration 2021-22 £000	Salary and allowances 2020-21 (restated) £000	Pension benefits 2020-21 £000	Single total figure of remuneration 2020-21 (restated) £000
Executive Management Team Members						
Neil Hunter	100-105	15	115-120	100-105	36	135-140
<i>Principal Reporter/Chief Executive</i>						
Edward Morrison	70-75	(14)	55-60	70-75	37	105-110
<i>Head of Finance and Resources</i>						
Susan Deery	70-75	(13)	55-60	70-75	36	105-110
<i>Head of Human Resources</i>						
Helen Etchells	65-70	11	75-80	60-65	46	110-115
<i>Senior Operational Manager</i>						
Paul Mulvanny	65-70	9	75-80	60-65	58	120-125
<i>Senior Operational Manager</i>						
Thomas Philliben ¹	n/a	n/a	n/a	30-35	5	35-40
<i>Senior Operational Manager</i>						
Alistair Hogg	70-75	0	70-75	70-75	32	100-105
<i>Head of Practice and Policy</i>						
Lisa Bennett	70-75	6	75-80	70-75	29	95-100
<i>Head of Strategy and Organisational Development</i>						
Lawrie McDonald	75-80	24	95-100	70-75	24	95-100
<i>Head of Digital Delivery</i>						

¹ Left office on 30 June 2020

In previous years, salaries and allowances have been reported inclusive of employer's pension contributions. The 2020-21 salary and allowances, and single total figure of remuneration, have been restated above to exclude employer's pension contributions.

	2021-22 Salary	2021-22 Allowances	2021-22 Total remuneration	2020-21 Salary	2020-21 Allowances	2020-21 Total remuneration
Highest paid Executive Management Team member	£101,059	£0	£101,059	£100,259	£0	£100,259
25 th percentile	£24,949	£0	£24,949	£24,149	£0	£24,149
Median	£32,245	£0	£32,245	£31,459	£0	£31,459
75 th percentile	£44,470	£0	£44,470	£43,598	£0	£43,598

Remuneration figures exclude cash equivalent transfer values and employer pension contributions.

The highest paid Executive Management Team member's salary and overall remuneration increased by 0.8% between 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2022.

The 25th percentile pay ratio has decreased from 4.15:1 to 4.05:1 due to both salaries increasing by the same cash value.

The median pay ratio has decreased from 3.19:1 to 3.13:1 due to both salaries increasing by approximately the same cash value. SCRA believes the median pay ratio for 2021/22 is consistent with its pay, reward and progression policies for SCRA employees taken as a whole.

The 75th percentile pay ratio has decreased from 2.30:1 to 2.27:1 due to both salaries increasing by approximately the same cash value.

The full-time equivalent remuneration paid to SCRA staff ranged from £17,356 to £101,059 (2020-21: £16,991 to £100,259).

No senior manager received any benefits in kind or non-cash remuneration in 2021-22 (2020-21: £nil).

Senior managers' pension entitlements

	Real increase in pension in year to 31 March 2022	Real increase in lump sum in year to 31 March 2022	Total accrued pension at 31 March 2022	Total accrued lump sum at 31 March 2022	CETV* at 31 March 2021	CETV* at 31 March 2022	Real increase in CETV* during year
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Executive Management Team Members							
Neil Hunter	0-2.5	0	20-25	0	301	342	13
<i>Principal Reporter/Chief Executive</i>							
Edward Morrison	(2.5)-0	(5)-(2.5)	35-40	60-65	693	739	(3)
<i>Head of Finance and Resources</i>							
Susan Deery	(2.5)-0	(5)-(2.5)	35-40	60-65	651	694	(3)
<i>Head of Human Resources</i>							
Helen Etchells	0-2.5	0	25-30	0	297	332	11
<i>Senior Operational Manager</i>							
Paul Mulvanny	0-2.5	(2.5)-0	25-30	40-45	465	513	13
<i>Senior Operational Manager</i>							
Alistair Hogg	0-2.5	(2.5)-0	25-30	25-30	429	466	4
<i>Head of Practice and Policy</i>							
Lisa Bennett	0-2.5	(2.5)-0	20-25	10-15	229	252	3
<i>Head of Strategy and Organisational Development</i>							
Lawrie McDonald	0-2.5	0	0-5	0	23	49	18
<i>Head of Digital Delivery</i>							

* Cash Equivalent Transfer Value

Senior managers' pension entitlements: prior year comparatives

	Real increase in pension in year to 31 March 2021	Real increase in lump sum in year to 31 March 2021	Total accrued pension at 31 March 2021	Total accrued lump sum at 31 March 2021	CETV* at 31 March 2020	CETV* at 31 March 2021	Real increase in CETV* during year
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Executive Management Team Members							
Neil Hunter	0-2.5	0	20-25	0	256	301	32
<i>Principal Reporter/Chief Executive</i>							
Edward Morrison	0-2.5	0-2.5	35-40	60-65	640	693	41
<i>Head of Finance and Resources</i>							
Susan Deery	0-2.5	0-2.5	35-40	60-65	601	651	38
<i>Head of Human Resources</i>							
Helen Etchells	2.5-5	0	20-25	0	257	297	32
<i>Senior Operational Manager</i>							
Paul Mulvanny	2.5-5	0-2.5	25-30	35-40	405	465	50
<i>Senior Operational Manager</i>							
Thomas Philliben	(7.5)-(5)	125-127.5	30-35	200-205	874	900	16
<i>Senior Operational Manager</i>							
Alistair Hogg	0-2.5	0-2.5	25-30	25-30	389	429	29
<i>Head of Practice and Policy</i>							
Lisa Bennett	0-2.5	0-2.5	15-20	10-15	205	229	16
<i>Head of Strategy and Organisational Development</i>							
Lawrie McDonald	0-2.5	0	0-5	0	n/a	23	17
<i>Head of Digital Delivery</i>							

* Cash Equivalent Transfer Value

Significant awards made and compensation payable to former senior managers

No significant awards were made or compensation paid to former senior managers in 2021/22 (2020/21: Tom Philliben, Senior Operational Manager, left SCRA as part of a Voluntary Efficiency Retiral with Redundancy exercise on 30 June 2020, and SCRA made a redundancy payment of £66,604 in this case).

2.4.4 Amounts payable to and from third parties for the services of a senior manager (audited)

Children's Hearings Scotland paid SCRA £5,165, £2,583 and £nil in 2021/22 in respect of senior management services from Edward Morrison, Susan Deery and Lawrie McDonald respectively (2020/21: £18,751, £8,492 and £25,032 respectively).

2.4.5 Staff breakdown by gender and permanent/non-permanent contracts

	2021-22	2020-21
Staff with permanent contract - Male	48	46
Staff with permanent contract - Female	315	309
Agency staff/staff with short-term contract - Male	9	8
Agency staff/staff with short-term contract - Female	72	52
Total	444	415

Average numbers are calculated using actual whole-time person equivalents at 1 April 2021, 30 June 2021, 30 September 2021, 31 December 2021 and 31 March 2022. The increase across all categories is attributable to the Organisational Recovery Plan.

Included in these numbers above are five male directors and three female directors. SCRA does not employ any senior civil servants.

2.4.6 Staff numbers and related costs (audited)

(i) Staff costs – staff with a permanent (UK) employment contract

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Salaries and wages	13,313	13,157
Social security costs	1,368	1,275
Contributions to pension scheme	2,799	2,223
Cost of early retirement	(126)	(82)
IAS 19 adjustment to pension scheme contributions	5,121	2,049
	22,475	18,622

(ii) Staff costs – other staff

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Salaries and wages	2,725	2,022
Social security costs	249	205
Contributions to pension scheme	493	391
	3,467	2,618

The increase from 2020-21 is attributable to the Organisational Recovery Plan.

(iii) Staff costs – all staff

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Salaries and wages	16,038	15,179
Social security costs	1,617	1,480
Contributions to pension scheme	3,292	2,614
Cost of early retirement	(126)	(82)
IAS 19 adjustment to pension scheme contributions	5,121	2,049
	25,942	21,240

The average pay per FTE employee increased by 2.61% between 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2022, reflecting SCRA's implementation of its 2021/22 pay policy.

(iv) Exit packages

SCRA agreed no exit packages during 2021/22 (2020/21: none).

(v) Consultancy

In 2021/22, SCRA spent £54,092 on consultancy (2020/21: £3,660). The increase is due to the retention of an external Project Lead for Our Hearings, Our Voice.

2.4.7 Staff Sickness Absence

In the year to 31 March 2022 average staff sickness absence was 5.0% (31 March 2021: 4.7%). The target for the year to 31 March 2022 was 4% (31 March 2021: 4%). Further detail can be found in the Performance Report.

2.4.8 Disability

SCRA are a Disability Confident Employer. We are working with ENEI on our portfolio for assessment to become a Disability Confident Leader. Being a Disability Confident Leader means that we will support aspiring Disability Confident Employers to progress their journey. Currently, as a disability confident employer means we are committed to and can demonstrate the following:

- We provide a fully inclusive and accessible recruitment process
- We offer an interview to disabled people who meet the essential criteria for the role
- We are flexible when assessing people so disabled job applicants have the best opportunity to demonstrate that they can do the job
- We plan for, and make reasonable adjustments to, the assessment and interview process
- We make sure people involved in the interviewing process understand the Disability Confident commitment and know how to offer and make reasonable adjustments
- During employment, we proactively offer and make reasonable adjustments as required

- We have appointed Disability Inclusion Ambassadors and have provided them with the appropriate awareness raising/training
- We provide paid employment both on a permanent and fixed term basis, including Modern Apprenticeships, to employees with a wide range of disabilities
- We engage with Jobcentre Plus, Work and Health Programme providers to provide training and/or access support as required
- We provide an environment that is inclusive and accessible for staff and children, young people and their families
- We support employees to manage their disabilities or health concerns
- We ensure there are no barriers to development and progression for disabled staff
- We ensure managers are aware of how they can support staff who are sick or absent from work
- We promote information and advice on mental health conditions
- We have signed up to the Mental Health at Work Standards and Commitments and have developed an action plan of activity to improve mental health supports to all staff
- We provide occupational health services and an employee assistance programme
- We have a Disability Leave Policy which supports staff with a disability in managing their time off related to their disability

2.4.9 Facility time

Under the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations SCRA is required to publish the following information.

Relevant union officials

What was the total number of your employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period?

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	Full-time equivalent employee number
6	5.71

Percentage of time spent on facility time

How many of your employees who were relevant union officials employed during the relevant period spent a) 0%, b) 1%-50%, c) 51%-99% or d) 100% of their working hours on facility time?

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	0
1%-50%	5
51%-99%	0
100%	1

Percentage of paybill spent on facility time

Provide the figures requested in the first column of the table below to determine the percentage of your total pay bill spent on paying employees who were relevant union officials for facility time during the relevant period.

Provide the total cost of facility time	£81,680
Provide the total paybill	£20,947k
Provide the percentage of the total paybill spent on facility time, calculated as: (total cost of facility time ÷ total paybill x 100)	0.39%

Paid trade union activities

As a percentage of total paid facility time hours, how many hours were spent by employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period on paid trade union activities?

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours calculated as: (total hours spent on paid trade union activities by relevant union officials during the relevant period ÷ total paid facility time hours) x 100	100%
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2.5 Parliamentary Accountability Report

SCRA is required to report on any high-value losses and special payments incurred in the financial year, any fees and charges receivable in the financial year and any remote contingent liabilities as at the date the accounts were signed by the Accountable Officer.

- No reportable losses were incurred in the financial year to 31 March 2022.
- No reportable special payments were made in the financial year to 31 March 2022.
- No reportable fees or charges were received in the financial year to 31 March 2022.
- There are no remote contingent liabilities as at the date the accounts were signed.

Neil Hunter
Accountable Officer

3. Independent Auditor's Report

Independent auditor's report to the members of Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, the Auditor General for Scotland and the Scottish Parliament

Reporting on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements in the annual report and accounts of Scottish Children's Reporter Administration for the year ended 31 March 2022 under the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. The financial statements comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash Flows, the Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards, as interpreted and adapted by the 2021/22 Government Financial Reporting Manual (the 2021/22 FReM).

In my opinion the accompanying financial statements:

- give a true and fair view in accordance with the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers of the state of the body's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of its net expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with UK adopted international accounting standards, as interpreted and adapted by the 2021/22 FReM; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)), as required by the Code of Audit Practice approved by the Auditor General for Scotland. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I was appointed by the Auditor General on 18 March 2022. The period of total uninterrupted appointment is six months. I am independent of the body in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. Non-audit services prohibited by the Ethical Standard were not provided to the body. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern basis of accounting

I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

These conclusions are not intended to, nor do they, provide assurance on the body's current or future financial sustainability. However, I report on the body's arrangements for financial sustainability in a separate Annual Audit Report available from the [Audit Scotland website](#).

Risks of material misstatement

I report in my separate Annual Audit Report the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement that I identified and my judgements thereon.

Responsibilities of the Accountable Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accountable Officer's Responsibilities, the Accountable Officer is responsible for the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with the financial reporting framework, and for such internal control as the Accountable Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Accountable Officer is responsible for assessing the body's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless there is an intention to discontinue the body's operations.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities outlined above to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Procedures include:

- obtaining an understanding of the applicable legal and regulatory framework and how the body is complying with that framework;
- identifying which laws and regulations are significant in the context of the body;
- assessing the susceptibility of the financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur; and
- considering whether the audit team collectively has the appropriate competence and capabilities to identify or recognise non-compliance with laws and regulations.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the body's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

Irregularities that result from fraud are inherently more difficult to detect than irregularities that result from error as fraud may involve collusion, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. The capability of the audit to detect fraud and other irregularities depends on factors such as the skilfulness of the perpetrator, the frequency and extent of manipulation, the degree of collusion involved, the relative size of individual amounts manipulated, and the seniority of those individuals involved.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Reporting on regularity of expenditure and income

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion in all material respects the expenditure and income in the financial statements were incurred or applied in accordance with any applicable enactments and guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers.

Responsibilities for regularity

The Accountable Officer is responsible for ensuring the regularity of expenditure and income. In addition to my responsibilities in respect of irregularities explained in the audit of the financial statements section of my report, I am responsible for expressing an opinion on the regularity of expenditure and income in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000.

Reporting on other requirements

Opinion prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland on audited part of the Remuneration and Staff Report

I have audited the parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report described as audited. In my opinion, the audited part of the Remuneration and Staff Report has been properly prepared in accordance with the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers.

Other information

The Accountable Officer is responsible for the other information in the annual report and accounts. The other information comprises the Performance Report and the Accountability Report excluding the audited part of the Remuneration and Staff Report.

My responsibility is to read all the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I

conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon except on the Performance Report and Statement of Governance to the extent explicitly stated in the following opinions prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland.

Opinions prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland on Performance Report and Statement of Governance

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Performance Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers; and
- the information given in the Statement of Governance for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers.

Matters on which I am required to report by exception

I am required by the Auditor General for Scotland to report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the audited part of the Remuneration and Staff Report are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

I have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

Conclusions on wider scope responsibilities

In addition to my responsibilities for the annual report and accounts, my conclusions on the wider scope responsibilities specified in the Code of Audit Practice are set out in my Annual Audit Report.

Use of my report

This report is made solely to the parties to whom it is addressed in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and for no other purpose. In accordance with paragraph 120 of the Code of Audit Practice, I do not undertake to have responsibilities to members or officers, in their individual capacities, or to third parties.

Helen Russell FCPFA
Senior Audit Manager
Audit Scotland
4th Floor
102 West Port
Edinburgh
EH3 9DN

4 Financial Statements

4.1 Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for year ending 31 March 2022

	Note	2021-2022	2020-2021
		£000	£000
Expenditure			
Staff costs	3	25,942	21,240
Other expenditure	4	6,029	6,035
Depreciation and amortisation	5, 7	1,422	1,350
		<u>33,393</u>	<u>28,625</u>
Income	2	<u>(466)</u>	<u>(481)</u>
Net expenditure		32,927	28,144
Interest payable		3	3
Interest receivable		-	-
Pension scheme finance cost	11	1,268	849
Net expenditure before Scottish Government funding		<u>34,198</u>	<u>28,996</u>
Other comprehensive net expenditure			
Items which will not be reclassified to net expenditure:			
Actuarial loss/(gain) on pensions	11	(28,166)	22,278
Revaluation loss/(surplus) on property	5	-	(273)
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		<u>6,032</u>	<u>51,001</u>

The notes following the financial statements form part of these accounts.

4.2 Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2022

	Note	31 March 2022	31 March 2021
		£000	£000
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	5	7,869	7,408
Intangible assets	7	4,568	4,679
<i>Total non-current assets</i>		<u>12,437</u>	<u>12,087</u>
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	8(i)	875	607
Cash and cash equivalents	9	673	1,008
Assets held for sale	6	-	-
<i>Total current assets</i>		<u>1,548</u>	<u>1,615</u>
Total assets		13,985	13,702
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10(i)	2,099	2,344
Other provisions	14	218	156
Finance lease	13(ii)	48	46
<i>Total current liabilities</i>		<u>2,365</u>	<u>2,546</u>
Non-current assets less net current liabilities		11,620	11,156
Non-current liabilities			
Payables	10(ii)	347	98
Pension liability	11	39,039	60,981
Provision for unfunded pensions	12	182	325
Finance lease	13(ii)	1,103	1,150
<i>Total non-current liabilities</i>		<u>40,671</u>	<u>62,554</u>
Assets less liabilities		<u>(29,051)</u>	<u>(51,398)</u>
Taxpayers' equity			
General fund	19	(15,398)	(9,577)
Pension reserve		(16,131)	(44,299)
Revaluation reserve		2,478	2,478
Total taxpayers' deficit		<u>(29,051)</u>	<u>(51,398)</u>

The Accountable Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 21 September 2022.

Neil Hunter
Accountable Officer

4.3 Statement of Cash Flows for year ending 31 March 2022

	Notes	2021-2022 £000	2020-2021 £000
Cash flows from operating activity			
Net expenditure		(32,927)	(28,144)
Adjustments for non-cash items			
Increase/(Decrease) in pension fund liability		(21,942)	24,683
Increase/(Decrease) in pension reserve		28,168	(22,278)
Depreciation and amortisation charges	5, 7	1,422	1,350
Permanent diminution	4	0	52
Loss on disposal of tangible non-current assets	4, 5	1	11
<i>Movements in working capital</i>			
Decrease/(Increase) in trade and other receivables	8(i)	(268)	110
Decrease/(Increase) in trade and other payables	10, 13(ii), 14	21	(50)
<i>Movements in provisions</i>			
Provision for unfunded pension contribution	12	(143)	(109)
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(25,668)	(24,375)
Cash flow from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	(1,114)	(669)
Purchase of intangible assets	7	(641)	(333)
Purchase of assets under construction	5, 7	(18)	(205)
Proceeds of disposals of property, plant and equipment		0	0
Interest received		0	0
Cash flow from financing activities			
Scottish Government funding for year		28,377	27,148
Interest paid		(3)	(3)
Net interest expense on pension asset	11	(1,268)	(849)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(335)	714
Opening Cash Balance		1,008	294
Closing Cash Balance		673	1,008

4.4 Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

	General Fund £000	Pension Reserve £000	Revaluation Reserve £000	Total Reserves £000
Balance at 31 March 2020	(7,729)	(22,021)	2,205	(27,545)
Changes in taxpayers' deficit for 2020-21				
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of property			273	273
Actuarial gain/(loss) on pension reserve		(22,278)		(22,278)
Net expenditure for the year	(28,996)			(28,996)
Total recognised income and expense for 2020-21	(36,725)	(44,299)	2,478	(78,546)
Funding from Scottish Government	27,148			27,148
Balance at 31 March 2021	(9,577)	(44,299)	2,478	(51,398)
Changes in taxpayers' deficit for 2021-22				
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of property			0	0
Actuarial gain/(loss) on pension reserve		28,168		28,168
Net expenditure for the year	(34,198)			(34,198)
Total recognised income and expense for 2021-22	(43,775)	(16,131)	2,478	(57,428)
Funding from Scottish Government	28,377			28,377
Balance at 31 March 2022	(15,398)	(16,131)	2,478	(29,051)

4.5 Notes of the financial statements

1. Statement of accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2021-22 *Government Financial Reporting Manual* (FReM) issued by HM Treasury.

The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of SCRA for the purposes of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by SCRA are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

a. Accounting convention

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention modified to account for the revaluation of property, investment properties, plant and equipment and intangible assets to fair value as determined by the relevant accounting standard. The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. This is in line with the underlying assumption in the FReM that Government accounts are prepared on a going concern basis.

b. Employee benefits

SCRA has an agreement with Falkirk Council under which all staff are eligible to enter the Local Government Pension Scheme managed by the Council in accordance with the rules thereof. It is a defined benefit scheme providing pension benefits and life assurance for all staff members.

The defined benefits pension scheme's assets are included at market value and this is compared to the present value of the scheme liabilities using a projected unit method and discounted at a rate in accordance with the FReM and consistent with IAS 19. The increase in the present value of the liabilities of the scheme expected to arise from employee service in the period is charged to net expenditure. The expected return on the scheme's assets and the increase during the period in the present value of the scheme's liabilities arising from the passage of time are included in pension scheme finance cost. Actuarial gains and losses arising from experience adjustments and changes in actuarial assumptions are charged or credited to reserves and are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

The contributions are determined by a qualified actuary on the basis of triennial valuations using the projected accrued benefit method. The valuation used was at 31 March 2020. Details of this valuation are included in a report published by Falkirk Council.

The contribution rates for 2021-22 were an average of 6.5% by employee and 20.7% by employer.

c. Property, plant and equipment

SCRA's policy is to carry out a full external valuation of land and buildings every five years supplemented by annual desktop valuations. The full estate of Land and Buildings was valued on an open market basis as at 31 March 2020 and re-valued on 31 March 2021 due to the uncertainties

in 2020 arising from the pandemic. A further desktop valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2022 of SCRA's three highest valued properties which account for approximately 50% of the estate. These resulted in no movement of 31 March 2021 valuations which has given confidence that the carrying value of land and buildings is appropriate.

Other property, plant and equipment are stated at depreciated historical cost as a proxy for fair value as the assets in this category have a low value and short useful life. It is SCRA's policy to capitalise assets which have an expected useful life in excess of one year and cost more than £1,000 including VAT. Purchases as part of a project are considered together when applying the £1,000 minimum limit.

Subsequent costs are included in the asset's carrying amount or recognised as a separate asset, as appropriate, only when it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to SCRA, and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. The carrying amount of the replaced part is derecognised. All other repairs and maintenance are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure during the financial year in which they are incurred.

Increases in the carrying amount arising on revaluation of land and buildings are credited to revaluation reserve. Decreases that offset previous increases of the same asset are charged against revaluation reserve; all other decreases are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

d. Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on property, plant and equipment on a straight-line basis at rates sufficient to write down their cost or revalued amounts to their residual values over their estimated useful lives. The depreciation rates for the principal categories of assets are as follows:

• Land	Not depreciated
• Assets under construction	Not depreciated
• Buildings	5 – 50 years
• Fixtures & Fittings	4 years
• Plant & Machinery	10 years
• Computer Equipment	2 – 4 years
• Software (including Developed Software)	2 – 10 years
• Other Equipment	4 years
• Leasehold Improvements	over lesser of 10 years or the remaining term of the lease

e. Impairment

Assets which are subject to amortisation or depreciation are reviewed for impairment whenever events or circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised by the amount by which the carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount.

f. Assets held for sale

A property is derecognised and held for sale under IFRS 5 when all the following requirements are met:

- A management decision has been made to dispose of the property;
- The property is being actively marketed for sale;
- The sale is highly probable within 12 months of classification as held for sale

g. Government grants

It is SCRA's policy to credit all government grants and grant-in-aid to the General Reserve in line with the FReM.

h. Liabilities

All material amounts outstanding as at 31 March 2022 have been included in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure irrespective of when actual payment was made.

i. Provisions

Provision is recognised in the Statement of Financial Position when there is a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event, and it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation.

j. Other income

SCRA recognises other income in the year to which it relates.

k. Leases

Where substantially all the risks and rewards of a leased property are borne by SCRA it is recorded as a non-current asset and a corresponding creditor recorded in respect of debt due to the lessor, with the interest element of the finance lease payment charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. Payments made under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

As noted in note 1(r) below, IFRS 16 is not in effect until 1 April 2022. The impact of IFRS 16 taking effect will be in relation to recording of assets and liabilities in the Statement of Financial Position: SCRA anticipates that properties currently accounted for as operating leases will then be accounted for as non-current assets.

l. Intangible assets

Intangible assets are stated at historic purchase cost less accumulated amortisation. Acquired computer software licences and developed software are capitalised on the basis of the costs incurred to acquire and bring to use the specific software. These costs are amortised using the straight-line method over the asset's useful life.

m. Other administration and programme costs

The costs reported in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure include other administration costs but there is no specific expenditure on programme costs.

n. Pensions

The accounts have been prepared incorporating the requirements of *International Accounting Standard 19 – Employee Benefits* (IAS 19) and include an actuarial valuation of the pension scheme liability as explained in note 11 to the accounts. This reflects the inclusion of liabilities falling due in future years in respect of pension liabilities arising from the application of IAS 19 to SCRA. Hymans Robertson, the actuary to the pension scheme who has collated the information from the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) fund in which SCRA participates, has calculated the liability arising under IAS 19. The actuary to the LGPS fund in which SCRA participates conducts a triennial review of the funding basis of the pension scheme, along with yearly reviews when appropriate. The last formal valuation of the funds was conducted as at 31 March 2020. In preparing the projected pension expense for the year to 31 March 2022, the actuary has assumed employees continue to earn new benefits in line with the regulations as they currently stand and that the pensionable payroll remains stable with new entrants replacing leavers. The other main financial assumptions are set out in note 11.

To the extent that the pension deficit is not met from SCRA's sources of income it may only be met by future grant in aid from SCRA's sponsoring department, the Scottish Government Education Department. This is because, under the normal conventions applying to parliamentary control over income and expenditure, such grants may not be paid in advance of need.

SCRA is required to meet the additional costs of benefits beyond the normal pension scheme benefits in respect of employees who retire early. SCRA provides in full for these costs when the early retirement has been agreed. SCRA, rather than the pension scheme, is liable for that portion of pensions relating to early retirement.

o. Trade payables

Trade payables are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less (or in the normal operating cycle of the business if longer). If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Currently SCRA has no trade payables classified as non-current liabilities.

p. Value Added Tax

SCRA is not registered for VAT and all costs are shown inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

q. Review of accounting policies and estimation techniques

These financial statements have been prepared under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

Areas of judgement in how SCRA's accounting policies are applied include:

- the fair values of properties; and

- pension estimation technique.

SCRA obtains independent open market valuations for its entire estate of land and buildings estate every 5 years. The last full valuation was as at 31 March 2021: the next is due in 2026.

Sensitivity Analysis

The most significant financial impact arising by assumptions are those used to calculate the pension's deficit. The sensitivities regarding the principal assumptions used to measure the scheme obligations are set out below:

Change in assumptions at 31 March 2022	Approximate % increase to Defined Benefit Obligation	Approximate monetary amount £000
0.1% decrease in Real discount Rate	2%	3,690
1 year increase in member life expectancy	4%	7,330
0.1% increase in the Salary Increase Rate	0%	509
0.1% increase in the Pension Increase Rate (CPI)	2%	3,149

The principal demographic assumption is the longevity assumption (i.e. member life expectancy). For sensitivity purposes, it is estimated that a one year increase in life expectancy would approximately increase SCRA's Defined Benefit Obligation by around 3-5%. In practice the actual cost of a one year increase in life expectancy will depend on the structure of the revised assumption (i.e. if improvements to survival rates predominantly apply at younger or older ages).

In order to quantify the impact of a change in the financial assumptions used, the value of the scheme liabilities as at 31 March 2022 have been calculated and compared on varying bases. The approach taken is consistent with that adopted to derive the IAS19 figures provided in these financial statements.

The above figures have been derived based on the membership profile of SCRA as at the date of the most recent actuarial valuation.

The approach taken in preparing the sensitivity analysis shown is consistent with that adopted in the previous year.

r. Accounting standards not yet adopted

As at the date of authorisation of these financial statements, the following key standards were not yet adopted:

- IFRS 16 – Leases

The FReM, issued by HM Treasury, interprets and adapts IFRSs for the public sector. IFRS 16, as adapted and interpreted by the FReM, was to be effective from 1 April 2020, however, in light of Covid-19 pressures, HM Treasury and the Financial Reporting Advisory Board initially decided that IFRS 16 implementation was to be deferred until 1 April 2021, before deferring implementation by one further year to 1 April 2022. While the impact on the financial statements has yet to be fully

determined, lease obligations (£3,218k, without discounting at 31 March 2022, and as disclosed in note 13) will be recognised as right of use assets at 1 April 2022.

2. Income

Income of £466k (2020-21: £481k) is comprised mainly of shared services income, including rents.

3. Staff Costs

A detailed breakdown of Staff Costs and Numbers is contained within the Remuneration and Staff Report section of the Accountability Report.

4. Other expenditure

	2021-22	2020-21
	£000	£000
Other property costs	1,932	1,887
Running costs	2,427	2,579
Rentals under operating leases	969	1,013
Hearing and legal costs	338	235
Training, recruitment and other staff costs	253	151
Board Fees and Expenses	46	45
Auditor remuneration	34	34
Internal auditors' remuneration	29	28
Loss on disposal of non-current assets	1	11
Loss on revaluation	0	52
	6,029	6,035

5. Property, plant and equipment

	Land	Buildings	Assets under Construction	Leasehold Improvements	Fixtures and Fittings	Computer Equipment	Other Equipment	Plant and Machinery	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost/Valuation									
At 1 April 2021	1,473	5,432	7	4,423	1,396	988	2,378	145	16,242
Additions	0	(2)	22	168	360	442	142	0	1,132
Transfers	0	0	(4)	0	4	0	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0	0	(115)	0	(8)	0	(123)
Transferred from asset group classified as Held for Sale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transferred from asset group classified as Investment Assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Impairment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indexation / Revaluation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2022	1,473	5,430	25	4,591	1,645	1,430	2,512	145	17,251
Accumulated depreciation									
At 1 April 2021	0	756	0	3,862	1,180	690	2,204	142	8,834
Provided in year	0	171	0	181	80	165	70	3	670
Withdrawn on disposal	0	0	0	0	(114)	0	(8)	0	(122)
Withdrawn on revaluation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2022	0	927	0	4,043	1,146	855	2,266	145	9,382
Net Book Value									
At 31 March 2022	1,473	4,503	25	548	499	575	246	0	7,869
At 31 March 2021	1,473	4,676	7	561	216	298	174	3	7,408

The net book amount of property, plant and equipment at 31 March 2022 includes £988k (2021: £1,031k) in respect of a building held under a finance lease. All other assets noted above are owned.

Land and buildings were valued on an open market basis as at 31 March 2021 by independent RICS registered valuers from Ryden LLP. SCRA's three highest value land and buildings were independently valued as at 31 March 2022, identifying no significant changes to their total market value.

	Land	Buildings	Assets under Construction	Leasehold Improvements	Fixtures and Fittings	Computer Equipment	Other Equipment	Plant and Machinery	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost/Valuation									
At 1 April 2020	1,465	5,410	15	4,335	1,299	833	2,279	145	15,781
Additions	0	156	4	92	98	206	117	0	673
Transfers	0	4	(12)	0	0	0	0	0	(8)
Disposals	0	0	0	(4)	(1)	(51)	(18)	0	(74)
Transferred from asset group classified as Held for Sale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transferred from asset group classified as Investment Assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Impairment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indexation / Revaluation	8	(138)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(130)
At 31 March 2021	1,473	5,432	7	4,423	1,396	988	2,378	145	16,242
Accumulated depreciation									
At 1 April 2020	0	707	0	3,631	1,111	575	2,169	121	8,314
Provided in year	0	401	0	232	69	162	50	21	935
Withdrawn on disposal	0	0	0	(1)	0	(47)	(15)	0	(63)
Withdrawn on revaluation	0	(352)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(352)
At 31 March 2021	0	756	0	3,862	1,180	690	2,204	142	8,834
Net Book Value									
At 31 March 2021	1,473	4,676	7	561	216	298	174	3	7,408
At 31 March 2020	1,465	4,703	15	704	188	258	110	24	7,467

6. Assets held for sale

SCRA has no assets held for sale as at 31 March 2022 (31 March 2021: £nil).

7. Intangible assets

	Intangible assets under construction £000	Software licences £000	Information Technology £000	Total £000
Cost/Valuation				
As at 1 April 2021	0	267	9,609	9,876
Additions	0	0	641	641
Transfers	0	13	(13)	0
Disposals	0	0	(4,237)	(4,237)
At 31 March 2022	0	280	6,000	6,280
Accumulated amortisation				
At 1 April 2021	0	262	4,935	5,197
Provided in year	0	7	745	752
Withdrawn on disposal	0	0	(4,237)	(4,237)
At 31 March 2022	0	269	1,443	1,712
Net Book Value				
At 31 March 2022	0	11	4,557	4,568
At 31 March 2021	0	5	4,674	4,679

	Intangible assets under construction £000	Software licences £000	Information Technology £000	Total £000
Cost/Valuation				
As at 1 April 2020	4,538	265	4,532	9,335
Additions	201	2	331	534
Transfers	(4,739)	0	4,746	7
Disposals	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2021	0	267	9,609	9,876
Accumulated amortisation				
At 1 April 2020	0	250	4,532	4,782
Provided in year	0	12	403	415
Withdrawn on disposal	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2021	0	262	4,935	5,197
Net Book Value				
At 31 March 2021	0	5	4,674	4,679
At 31 March 2020	4,538	15	0	4,553

8. Trade and other receivables

(i) Current assets:

	2021-22	2020-21
	£000	£000
Other receivables	434	135
Prepayments	441	472
At 31 March	875	607

(ii) Intra governmental balances

	2021-22	2020-21
	£000	£000
Balances with other central government bodies	430	114
Balances with local authorities	33	20
Balances with bodies external to government	412	473
At 31 March	875	607

9. Cash and cash equivalents

	2021-22	2020-21
	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	1,008	294
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	(335)	714
Balance at 31 March	673	1,008
Bank accounts	661	1,002
Petty cash balance	12	6
	673	1,008

All bank balances at 31 March 2022 are held in commercial banks.

10. Trade and other payables

(i) Current liabilities

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Trade payables	209	589
Tax and social security	401	403
Other payables	41	59
Accruals	1,448	1,293
	<u>2,099</u>	<u>2,344</u>

(ii) Non-current liabilities

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans	37	37
Other payables, accruals and deferred income	310	61
	<u>347</u>	<u>98</u>

(iii) Intra governmental balances

	Payables: current 2021-22 £000	Payables: non- current 2021-22 £000	Payables: current 2020-21 £000	Payables: non- current 2020-21 £000
Balances with other central government bodies	427	38	474	38
Balances with local authorities	7	10	457	(1)
Balances with bodies external to government	1,665	299	1,413	61
At 31 March	<u>2,099</u>	<u>347</u>	<u>2,344</u>	<u>98</u>

11. Pensions

Information about the assumptions underlying the figures in this note are as follows.

Financial assumptions

The assumptions the actuary has been instructed to use by SCRA are summarised below:

Period Ended	31 March 2022 % p.a.	31 March 2021 % p.a.
Pension Increase Rate (CPI)	3.20%	2.85%
Salary Increase Rate	3.80%	3.45%
Discount Rate	2.70%	2.00%

As at the date of the most recent valuation, the duration of the Employer's funded liabilities is 20 years.

Demographic assumptions

Life expectancy is based on the Fund's VitaCurves with improvements in line with the CMI 2021 model, with a 0% weighting of 2021 (and 2020) data, standard smoothing (Sk7), initial adjustment of 0.25% and a long term rate of improvement of 1.5% p.a. Based on these assumptions, the average future life expectancies at age 65 are summarised below:

	Males	Females
Current Pensioners	20.4 years	23.0 years
Future Pensioners*	21.6 years	25.0 years

* Figures assume members aged 45 as at the last formal valuation date.

Life expectancies for the prior period end are based on the Fund's VitaCurves. The allowances for future improvements are shown below.

Current Pensioners: CMI 2020 model with a 0% weighting of 2020 data, standard smoothing (Sk7), initial adjustment of 0.5% and a long term rate of improvement of 1.5% p.a.

Future Pensioners: CMI 2020 model with a 0% weighting of 2020 data, standard smoothing (Sk7), initial adjustment of 0.5% and a long term rate of improvement of 1.5% p.a.

Please note that the mortality assumptions used to value the Obligations in the Employer's Closing Position are different to those used to value the Obligations in the Employer's Opening Position.

A commutation allowance is included for future retirements to elect to take 50% of the maximum additional tax-free cash up to HMRC limits for pre-April 2009 service and 75% of the maximum tax-free cash for post-April 2009 service.

Retirement benefits

Change in the fair value of plan assets, defined benefit obligation and net liability for the year end 31 March 2022

	Assets	Obligations	Net (liability) /asset
	£000	£000	£000
Fair value of plan assets	126,484	0	126,484
Present value of funded liabilities	0	183,910	(183,910)
Present value of unfunded liabilities	0	3,555	(3,555)
Opening position as at 31 March 2021	126,484	187,465	(60,981)
Service cost			
- Current service cost	0	8,408	(8,408)
- Past service cost (including curtailments)	0	0	0
- Effect of settlements	0	0	0
Total service cost	0	8,408	(8,408)
Net interest			
- Net income on plan assets	2,539	0	2,539
- Net cost on defined benefit obligation	0	3,807	(3,807)
Total net interest	2,539	3,807	(1,268)
Total defined benefit cost recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	2,539	12,215	(9,676)
Cash flows			
- Participants' contributions	1,011	1,011	0
- Employer contributions	3,287	0	3,287
- Estimated benefits paid	(3,179)	(3,179)	0
- Estimated unfunded benefits paid	(165)	(165)	0
- Estimated contributions in respect of unfunded benefits paid	165	0	165
- Effect of business combinations and disposals	0	0	0
Expected closing position	130,142	197,347	(67,205)
Remeasurements			
- Change in financial assumptions	0	(13,507)	13,507
- Change in demographic assumptions	0	(1,011)	1,011
- Other experience	0	412	(412)
- Return on assets excluding amounts included in net interest	14,060	0	14,060
Total remeasurements recognised in Statement of Taxpayers' Deficit	14,060	(14,106)	28,166
Fair value of employer assets	144,202	0	144,202
Present value of funded liabilities	0	179,801	(179,801)
Present value of unfunded liabilities	0	3,440	(3,440)
Closing position as at 31 March 2022	144,202	183,241	(39,039)

**Change in the fair value of plan assets, defined benefit obligation and net liability
for the year end 31 March 2021**

	Assets	Obligations	Net (liability) /asset
	£000	£000	£000
Fair value of plan assets	105,573	0	105,573
Present value of funded liabilities	0	138,265	(138,265)
Present value of unfunded liabilities	0	3,273	(3,273)
Opening position as at 31 March 2020	105,573	141,538	(35,965)
Service cost			
- Current service cost	0	5,111	(5,111)
- Past service cost (including curtailments)	0	32	(32)
- Effect of settlements	0	0	0
Total service cost	0	5,143	(5,143)
Net interest			
- Net income on plan assets	2,438	0	2,438
- Net cost on defined benefit obligation	0	3,287	(3,287)
Total net interest	2,438	3,287	(849)
Total defined benefit cost recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	2,438	8,430	(5,992)
Cash flows			
- Participants' contributions	943	943	0
- Employer contributions	3,094	0	3,094
- Estimated benefits paid	(2,997)	(2,997)	0
- Estimated unfunded benefits paid	(160)	(160)	0
- Estimated contributions in respect of unfunded benefits paid	160	0	160
- Effect of business combinations and disposals	0	0	0
Expected closing position	109,051	147,754	(38,703)
Remeasurements			
- Change in financial assumptions	0	41,049	(41,049)
- Change in demographic assumptions	0	(1,493)	1,493
- Other experience	(3,839)	155	(3,994)
- Return on assets excluding amounts included in net interest	21,272	0	21,272
Total remeasurements recognised in Statement of Taxpayers' Deficit	17,433	39,711	(22,278)
Fair value of employer assets	126,484	0	126,484
Present value of funded liabilities	0	183,910	(183,910)
Present value of unfunded liabilities	0	3,555	(3,555)
Closing position as at 31 March 2021	126,484	187,465	(60,981)

Fair value of employer assets at 31 March 2022

Asset Category	Quoted prices in active markets £000	Quoted prices not in active markets £000	Total £000	%
Equity securities:				
Consumer	8,805.4	0.0	8,805.4	6%
Manufacturing	7,723.5	0.0	7,723.5	5%
Energy and utilities	5,022.3	0.0	5,022.3	3%
Financial institutions	10,488.0	0.0	10,448.0	7%
Health and care	4,718.9	0.0	4,718.9	3%
Information technology	11,684.9	0.0	11,684.9	8%
Other	1,409.0	0.0	1,409.0	1%
Debt securities:				
Corporate bonds (investment grade)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Corporate bonds (non-investment grade)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
UK Government	5,903.2	0.0	5,903.2	4%
Other	2,690.6	0.0	2,690.6	2%
Private equity:				
All	0.0	1,737.0	1,737.0	1%
Real estate:				
UK property	0.0	8,931.8	8,931.8	6%
Overseas property	0.0	12.0	12.0	0%
Investment funds and unit trusts:				
Equities	37,229.9	0.0	37,229.9	26%
Bonds	7,663.6	0.0	7,663.6	5%
Hedge funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Commodities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Infrastructure	0.0	15,681.2	15,681.2	11%
Other	5,587.2	2,970.7	8,557.9	6%
Derivatives:				
Inflation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Interest rate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Foreign exchange	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Cash and cash equivalents:				
All	5,942.8	0.0	5,942.8	4%
Totals	114,869	29,333	144,202	100%

Fair value of employer assets at 31 March 2021

Asset Category	Quoted prices in active markets £000	Quoted prices not in active markets £000	Total £000	%
Equity securities:				
Consumer	9,445.0	0.0	9,445.0	7%
Manufacturing	6,798.1	0.0	6,798.1	5%
Energy and utilities	4,479.3	0.0	4,479.3	4%
Financial institutions	10,507.8	0.0	10,507.8	8%
Health and care	3,475.1	0.0	3,475.1	3%
Information technology	11,600.7	0.0	11,600.7	9%
Other	667.2	0.0	667.2	1%
Debt securities:				
Corporate bonds (investment grade)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Corporate bonds (non-investment grade)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
UK Government	1,777.6	0.0	1,777.6	1%
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Private equity:				
All	0.0	1,844.0	1,844.0	1%
Real estate:				
UK property	0.0	7,001.0	7,001.0	6%
Overseas property	0.0	10.9	10.9	0%
Investment funds and unit trusts:				
Equities	31,174.9	0.0	31,174.9	25%
Bonds	7,932.5	0.0	7,932.5	6%
Hedge funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Commodities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Infrastructure	0.0	12,346.5	12,346.5	10%
Other	11,648.9	2,842.6	14,491.5	11%
Derivatives:				
Inflation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Interest rate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Foreign exchange	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Cash and cash equivalents:				
All	2,931.9	0.0	2,931.9	2%
Totals	102,439	24,045	126,484	100%

12. Provision for unfunded pensions

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Balance at 1 April	325	434
Provisions utilised during the year	(23)	(37)
Actuarial valuation adjustment	(120)	(72)
Balance at 31 March	182	325

13. Commitments under leases

(i) Operating leases

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Buildings		
Not later than one year	709	899
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,558	2,043
Later than five years	951	1,252
	3,218	4,194

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Other		
Not later than one year	0	12
Later than one year and not later than five years	0	0
Later than five years	0	0
	0	12

(ii) Finance leases

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Gross lease liabilities		
Within one year	92	92
Between 2 and 5 years	366	366
After 5 years	1,138	1,230
	1,596	1,688
Future interest	(446)	(491)
Net lease liabilities	1,150	1,197

Net lease liabilities are repayable as follows:

Within one year (current liability)	48	46
Between 2 and 5 years	210	203
After 5 years	892	948
Total over one year (non-current liability)	1,103	1,150

There is no provision within the lease for early termination. In the event of this finance lease being terminated prior to its expiry, the outstanding gross lease liability would be payable in full. The present value of minimum lease payments amounts to £1,168k (31 March 2021: £1,215k).

14. Other provisions

Other provisions comprise property dilapidations, in respect of lease obligations.

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Balance at 1 April	156	50
Released in year	0	(50)
	<hr/> 156	<hr/> 0
Provided in year	62	156
Balance at 31 March	<hr/> 218	<hr/> 156

15. Events after the reporting date

No events occurred between the reporting date and the authorisation date that materially affect any of the information contained in these financial statements.

16. Financial instruments

As the cash requirements of SCRA are met through grant-in-aid, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply in a non public sector body of a similar size.

The majority of financial instruments relate to cash or cash equivalents and to contracts for non-financial items in line with SCRA's expected purchase and usage requirements. SCRA is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

17. Related party transactions

SCRA is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by Scottish Government Education Department. SCRA receives funding from SGED which is regarded as a related party. During the year SCRA had a number of transactions with other government departments and agencies. No Board Member, key manager or other related party has undertaken any material transactions with SCRA during the year (2020/21: £nil).

18. Capital commitments

SCRA has no capital commitments as at 31 March 2022 (31 March 2021: £nil).

19. Reserves

SCRA's General Fund balance as at 31 March 2022 is a deficit of £15.4m (31 March 2021: £9.6m). The deficit has arisen due to an excess of total pension service costs over employer's contributions, and pension net interest costs. SCRA received written assurance from the Scottish Government in May 2020 that Ministers have an ongoing commitment to SCRA as a going concern, and that there are no plans to change the existing arrangements whereby the Scottish Government funds SCRA, including pensions, through grant-in-aid and non-cash budgets.

5 Appendix

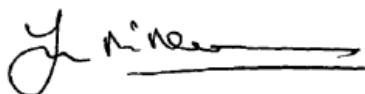
5.1 Direction by the Scottish Ministers



SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

DIRECTION BY THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS

1. The Scottish Ministers, in pursuance of Schedule 3 of the Children's Hearing Scotland Act (2011), hereby give the following direction.
2. The statement of accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2022, and subsequent years, shall comply with the accounting principles and disclosure requirements of the edition of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) which is in force for the year for which the statement of accounts are prepared.
3. The accounts shall be prepared so as to give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year, and of the state of affairs as at the end of the financial year.
4. This direction shall be reproduced as an appendix to the statement of accounts. The direction given on 12 May 2021 is hereby revoked.



Tom McNamara

A member of the staff of the Scottish Ministers

Dated: 9 June 2022



PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2022

 **WWW.SCRA.GOV.UK**

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Annual Procurement Report 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

Accountable Director: Head of Finance and Resources **Date:** 8th August 2022

Recommendation:

The SCRA Board is asked to:-

- a) Note Procurement activity during 2021/22 in line with SCRA's Corporate Procurement Strategy and the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.
- b) Note the ongoing contribution of the Procurement Strategy to SCRA's ongoing work.

Reason for Report: Procurement Duties requirement.

Resource Implications: Within existing budgets.

Strategy: Procurement Strategy 2020-23.

Equalities Duties Equalities Impact Assessment Required/Completed:

☐

Yes

☒

**No – annual update of
Procurement activity**

Consultation: EMT, SG Procurement.

Document Classification: Not protectively marked.

1. Background Information

- 1.1 In accordance with The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, SCRA is required to publish an Annual Procurement Report which should include:
- A summary of the regulated procurements that have been completed during the period covered by the report;
 - A review of whether those procurements complied with SCRA's Procurement Strategy;
 - The extent to which any regulated procurements did not comply, and a statement detailing how SCRA will ensure that future regulated procurements do comply;
 - A summary of any community benefit requirements imposed as part of a regulated procurement that were fulfilled during the period covered by the report;
 - A summary of any steps taken to facilitate the involvement of supported businesses in regulated procurements during the report period;
 - A summary of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two financial years; and
 - Reporting on other matters as contained within SCRA's Corporate Procurement Strategy.
- 1.2 The report, attached at Appendix 1, also provides an overview of SCRA procurement performance across the year as well as the range and scope of the Procurement Team work and its criticality to the smooth operation and support of many aspects of SCRA's work.
- 1.3 In addition to the mandatory sections, the report also provides an update on other procurement activity including work in connection with COVID-19, Equalities & Inclusion, Cyber Resilience, Fair Work and Climate Change.
- 1.4 A copy of the Annual Procurement Report will be published on SCRA's website and a link will be sent to the Scottish Ministers.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The SCRA Board is asked to:
- a) Note the Procurement activity during 2021/22 and the continued delivery of SCRA's Procurement Strategy.
 - b) The ongoing contribution of the Procurement Strategy to SCRA's ongoing work.



SCOTTISH

CHILDREN'S REPORTER

ADMINISTRATION

Procurement in SCRA

Annual Procurement Report

For the period
1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

Published August 2022

VERSION CONTROL

VERSION NO.	REVISED BY	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES	DATE
1.0	Helen Mora	First Issued Version	31/07/2022

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Summary of Regulated Procurements Completed
3. Review of Regulated Procurement Compliance
4. Community Benefits Summary
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8. Procurement Performance
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10. Continuous Improvement Activities
11. Annual Procurement Report Template
12. Ownership and contact details

Appendix A: Summary of Regulated Procurements Expected to Commence in the next two financial years

Appendix B: Summary of non-regulated procurements completed

Appendix C: Annual Procurement Report Template

Appendix D: Glossary

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About SCRA

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

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

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

SCRA's revised Procurement Strategy 2020-23 was approved by the Board in May 2021 and refreshed in March 2022 for the period 2020 to 2024. The Strategy details the principal aims of SCRA Procurement as follows:

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

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

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

1.2 Procurement Vision

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

1.3 Looking Ahead

In developing plans for 2022/23 and beyond, the Procurement Team will ensure objectives align with the seven public procurement priorities published by the Public Procurement Group (PPG) in May 2021 and updated in April 2022: Leadership & Visibility, Sustainable Economic Recovery, Supply Chain Resilience, Maximise Impact of the Sustainable Duty, Climate Emergency, Achieving professional excellence and Developing use of systems to drive sustainable outcomes and support reporting.

1.4 Publication of Report

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

2. SUMMARY OF REGULATED PROCUREMENTS COMPLETED

The following regulated procurements were completed in the period from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

Date of Award	Contract Title/ Subject Matter	Supplier	Total Est. Value (Including Extensions (Ex. VAT))	Total Est. Value (Excluding Extensions) (Ex. VAT)	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date (Excluding Extensions)
17/08/2021	Address Look Up Software (Postcode Software)	Insight (Direct) UK Ltd	£81,443	£46,349	17/08/2021	16/08/2024
22/12/2021	Change Management Controls for Core Systems & Applications Solution (CSAS) (NCA)	Bridgeall	£56,498	£56,498	10/02/2022	30/06/2022
08/10/2021	Guest Wi-Fi Connectivity Improvement Project - Equipment	Computa-center	£60,821	£60,821	08/10/2021	31/03/2022
12/04/2021	Internal Audit Services (SCRA)	BDO	£64,570	£64,570	01/07/2021	30/06/2023

17/12/2021	Interpreting, Translation & Transcription Services - Ref: SP-21-001 - 1st Ranked Supplier	Global Connections (Scotland) Ltd	£611,000	£611,000	12/12/2021	11/11/2025
01/07/2021	Virtual Hearings Sandbox (NCA)	Brightwire Technology Services	£68,700	£68,700	01/07/2021	31/03/2022
18/8/2021	Tech Refresh – Laptops & Accessories	Hewlett Packard	£243,800	£243,800	18/08/2021	31/01/2022

* The above table does not include contract extensions which were taken during 2021/22.

3. REVIEW OF REGULATED PROCUREMENT COMPLIANCE

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

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

3.2 Review of compliance with Corporate Procurement Strategy

Key Priorities	Compliance in 2021/22
1. Ensure full compliance with EU and UK Public Sector regulations	
For all regulated procurements comply with statutory requirements for addressing Fair Work Practices, including payment of a Living Wage	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumed addressed by SPCD, APUC and Healthtrust Europe in setting up Frameworks (including Interpreting & Translation, Internal Audit). • Statements on workforce matters, CSR, Environmental performance and Sustainability included in ITTs and Evaluation criteria where applicable.

Develop a diverse range of suppliers, including SMEs, Supported Businesses and Third Sector	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed addressed by SPCD, APUC and Healthtrust Europe in setting up Frameworks (as above) and by including SMEs in non-regulated procurements. <p>No opportunities for Supported Businesses.</p>
Consider Community Benefit clauses in all contracts for goods and services over £50k in value	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed considered by SPCD, APUC and Healthtrust Europe in setting up Frameworks (as above). No Cat C Community Benefits opportunities.
Ensure that regulated procurements are carried out in compliance with SCRA's sustainable procurement duty	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed addressed by SPCD, APUC and Healthtrust Europe in setting up Frameworks (as above). Sustainability Test included in Procurement Strategies and Evaluation Criteria included in tenders issued, where appropriate.
Comply with SCRA's Health & Safety Policy by ensuring that suppliers comply with relevant regulations and best practice	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed addressed by SPCD, APUC and Healthtrust Europe in setting up Frameworks and in SCRA tender exercises, where relevant.
Follow SCRA's established approach of consulting and engaging with those affected by its procurements	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate SCRA engaged with internal stakeholders either by setting up UIGs or in discussions with business leads.
Ensuring SCRA's contracts deliver value for money	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Strategies identify best route to market and ensure demand is justified. Business Cases include whole life costing where appropriate. Opportunities for collaboration actively considered.

Ensuring that SCRA pays its suppliers within 30 days and endeavour to make payment within 10 working days of receipt of a valid invoice	Partly complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some improvement in 2021/22 payment performance, further improvement will be targeted again in 2022/23.
2. Promote continuous improvement	
Develop contract management practices across SCRA	Partly complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSM Guidance was issued to key Contract Managers for implementation from 1st April 2021. This is currently being followed up.
Develop and train staff involved in purchasing and/or managing contracts and suppliers	Partly complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further DP Training was carried out in 2021/22. CSM Training modules have been added to our E-Learning portal for implementation in 2022/23.
Embed the role of the Contracts Review Group in ensuring SCRA receives best value whilst meeting legal obligations	Partly complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts Review Group disbanded and replaced with regular meetings with IT, HR and Property Teams.
Develop relationships with Scottish Government Procurement and identify opportunities for collaborative working with other public bodies	Complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good relationships with Scottish Government Procurement and collaborated with Children's Hearings Scotland on Internal Audit Services.

3.3 Review of regulated procurements

SCRA's Head of Finance and Resources reviewed all regulated procurements in the period April 2021 to March 2022, as shown in the table above, for compliance with the organisation's Procurement Strategy and Policy.

In summary all seven of our regulated procurements:

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

Three were awarded under Scottish Government Frameworks by direct award, one was awarded by direct award using an APUC Framework, one was a direct award using the Healthtrust Europe ICT Solutions Framework and the virtual hearings sandbox and Change Management Controls for CSAS were awarded by NCA.

4. COMMUNITY BENEFITS SUMMARY

- 4.1 Consideration is given to the inclusion of Community Benefit Clauses (CBCs) in our procurement exercises, however, there were no relevant procurements during the reporting period.

Due to the pandemic, community benefits included in earlier contracts have not yet been realised, however, these will be actively pursued during 2022/23.

5. SUPPORTED BUSINESSES SUMMARY

- 5.1 SCRA actively take steps to facilitate contract opportunities for Supported Businesses where possible, however, no suitable opportunities were identified during 2021/22.

6. FUTURE REGULATED PROCUREMENTS

- 6.1 A summary of regulated procurements expected to commence within the next two financial years is included at Appendix A. Details may be subject to change due to budget revisions/resource availability, in particular following the development of the organisation's digital plan for 2022/23.

7. NON-REGULATED PROCUREMENTS

- 7.1 A summary of non-regulated procurements and contract extensions with an estimated value above £20k, awarded in the reporting period, is included at Appendix B.
- 7.2 In addition 14 non-regulated procurements below £20k, with a total value of around £143k were awarded in the reporting period.

8.0 PROCUREMENT PERFORMANCE

8.1 Supporting national policies

Digital

SCRA and CHS further developed the new and future-proofed digital platform, CSAS, within the year. In addition there was significant investment in virtual hearings technology, and refresh of laptops. SCRA hearing rooms now have cloud based video conference and collaboration units and guest Wi-Fi provision. The Procurement Team have supported the Digital Programme Manager by providing procurement advice and leading on any tendering requirements.

Environment

The potential for environmental benefits are considered in procurement exercises and where appropriate sustainability is included as one of the criteria for tender evaluation with bidders advised that sustainability is a key feature of the Procurement Reform Bill and a focus of Scottish Government.

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

There is now more prominence given to Climate Change in the organisation's Corporate Procurement Strategy and Sustainability Tests are routinely completed for all regulated procurements.

The Procurement Team support Business Managers and the Head of Property in their efforts to review historical electricity and gas consumption patterns with a view to reducing future emissions.

8.2 PCIP Healthcheck

The last Healthcheck took place in December 2019 and the next one is now programmed for 2024. The 2019 recommendations have been implemented however further improvement work is underway between Procurement and Finance Teams on recording Savings & Benefits.

8.3 2021/22 Published Spend Data

The following table was extracted from the data published by DXC Technology (formerly Spikes Cavell).

£5,617,100 Total Spend			£4,575,178 Core Trade Spend	
478 Input Suppliers	463 De-duplicated Total Suppliers	15 Duplicate Suppliers	56 SME Suppliers	4 Local Suppliers
2024 Transactions	£12,132 Avg. spend per supplier	4.34% PCard Spend	32.8% SME Spend	13.2% Local Spend

Key:

Total Spend - the total amount of spend for the year.

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

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

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

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

Transactions - The total number of transactions.

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

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

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

SME Spend - Spend with SME as a percentage of classified suppliers.

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

Local Spend - Spend with local suppliers as a percentage of classified suppliers.

8.4 Contracted Spend

Of the total procurement spend of £5,617,100 in 2021/22, £5,200,369 was contracted spend (including non-regulated contracts). This represented c. 92.6% of all procurement spend in the year.

Procurement spend is closely monitored by the Procurement Team with support from the Contract Managers.

8.5 Spend with SMEs

During 2021/22, 32.8% of SCRA's Core Trade Spend was with SMEs, however, it should be noted that DXC (Spikes) still do not have sufficient data from all suppliers on their number of employees to be able to classify them, so the number of SME's is likely to be understated.

Of the seven regulated procurements completed within the reporting period, three were awarded to SMEs. A further eleven non-regulated contracts above £20k were awarded to SMEs and c. ten contracts below £20k.

8.6 Invoices paid within 10 working days

During the year ended 31 March 2022 SCRA paid 76% of all invoices within the terms of its payment policy.

8.7 Collaborative working

SCRA utilises Scottish Government Frameworks where possible. In addition SCRA participated in the SG UIG for Interpreting, Translation & Transcription Services Framework and works with Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) where possible. We collaborated with CHS on the Internal Audit re-let which SCRA led and awarded early in 2021/22.

8.8 Savings & Benefits

Scottish Procurement have confirmed the savings that SCRA achieved from their use of Scottish Government collaborative framework agreements, was £301,364. This includes both Category A and B Frameworks. It should be noted that these are not savings which reduce SCRA's costs or help SCRA to operate within the approved level of Grant in Aid so are not counted as efficiency savings.

Savings from SCRA contracts (as distinct from Frameworks above) are captured on SCRA's Savings Tracker. Information on these savings has been captured throughout 2021-22 for regulated and non-regulated procurements, and the accumulated savings, largely based on the difference between the average of all tenders less the winning bid, amount to around £67.1k on the 12 procurement exercises where savings were calculated.

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

9.0 OTHER PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES

9.1 COVID-19 Pandemic

The provision of PPE and additional cleaning services has continued throughout the pandemic. Procurement have supported the Property and IT teams who have been managing projects particularly impacted by the challenges of uncertain market conditions and delays in supply lines.

9.2 Equalities & Inclusion

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

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

The Procurement Officer will continue to work with the Inclusion & Diversity Manager during 2022/23 to introduce further improvements where required.

9.3 Policy development

In line with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act, SCRA's Procurement Strategy was revised in March 2022 with changes approved by the senior management team.

The Procurement Policy is reviewed every two years and will be updated in 2022/23 and approved by the senior management team.

9.4 Cyber Resilience

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

From 1st April 2020, the Procurement Officers have embedded cyber security in our procurement processes by considering the importance of cyber security before commencing each procurement and where relevant completing the Cyber Security Procurement Support Tool and including relevant wording in tender documentation and Terms & Conditions of contracts where required.

9.5 Fair Work

We include a statement on Fair Work in all of our tender documents and where relevant and proportionate we include a scored question as part of the award criteria.

For monitoring purposes, we include a non-scored question in all of our procurement exercises asking suppliers to confirm whether or not they are accredited real living wage employers.

10.0 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY

10.1 Contract and Supplier Management (CSM)

New CSM guidance was issued in late 2020/21 to key Contract Managers. The Procurement Team now meet with Property, HR and IT Teams to review recent procurement exercises and plan for upcoming exercises. The Procurement Team are consulting on what difference the CSM guidance has made and improvements will be taken forward in 2022/23.

10.2 Risk Management

The Procurement Team maintain a risk register which is regularly reviewed and updated. Risks tracked during 2021/22 include:

- Insufficient capacity and/or lack of training results in failure to deliver key Business Plan and Team Plan objectives.
- Increasingly complex regulations results in non-compliance with Corporate Procurement Strategy and/or challenges to contract awards.
- Failure to ensure continuity of contract cover results in disruption to key business systems/services.
- Ineffective contract management leads to poor supplier performance going unchallenged which results in major contract dispute or delivery failure.
- Due to current market conditions tender prices significantly exceed available budgets and/or lead to significant project delays.

10.3 Procurement Procedures

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

10.4 Networks and Training

SCRA's Procurement Officers are members of a Cluster Group. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, only one virtual meeting took place during 2021/22, with further communications by email where required. In addition Procurement Officers attended the SG 16th National Procurement Conference & Professional Procurement Skills Training Zones (online) during the reporting period.

11.0 ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT TEMPLATE

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

12.0 OWNERSHIP AND CONTACT DETAILS

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

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

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

Subject Matter	Type	Expected Contract Notice Publication Date	Expected Award Date	Expected Start Date	Estimated Value of the Contract or Extension
CSAS Extension (2nd Extension)	Extension	N/A	30/06/2023	01/07/2023	£266,000
Cyber Resilience Assurance	New	20/06/2022	08/06/2022	01/08/2022	£100,000
Elgin – Hearing Suite Upgrade (Works)	New	08/08/2022	31/08/2022	19/09/2022	£79,000
Enterprise Service Agreement Software (Microsoft)	Re-Let	11/07/2022	20/09/2022	01/10/2022	£1,500,000
General Stationery & Office Paper Re-Let	Re-Let	N/A	01/10/2022	01/10/2022	£155,000
Glenrothes – 3 rd Floor (Works)	New	TBA	TBA	TBA	£90,000
Hamilton – Smart Working Reconfiguration (Works)	New	30/05/2022	28/07/2022	22/08/2022	£200,000
Independent Accreditor for CSAS	Re-Let	05/06/2023	07/08/2023	04/09/2023	£50,000
Internal Audit Services	Re-Let	07/11/2022	10/04/2023	01/07/2023	£65,000
Legal Services - Principal Reporters Statutory Duties	Extension	N/A	31/05/2023	01/06/2023	£140,000
Legal Services – Property & Related Matters	Re-Let	N/A	01/03/2023	30/04/2024	£54,000
Multi-Function Devices including print strategy	Re-Let	28/02/2023	01/05/2023	11/06/2023	£265,000
Postal Services	Re-Let	N/A	01/09/2022	01/10/2022	£880,000
Stirling - Smart Working Reconfiguration - Furniture	New	15/08/2022	03/10/2022	10/10/2022	£76,000
Stirling – Smart Working Reconfiguration (Works)	New	23/06/2022	05/09/2022	26/09/2022	£276,000
Supply of Electricity	Extension	N/A	10/02/2023	01/04/2023	£185,000
Supply of Gas	Extension	N/A	01/02/2023	01/04/2023	£36,000
Tech Refresh 2022/23	New	TBA	TBA	TBA	£185,000
Water & Waste Water Billing Services	Extension	N/A	10/02/2023	01/04/2023	£58,000
Winter Gritting Services	Re-Let	24/04/2023	31/07/2023	01/09/2023	£52,000

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

Works contracts with an estimated contract value above £50k are included in the above table for information, however, these are non-regulated due to their value and not included in Section 9 of the template at Appendix C.

SUMMARY OF NON-REGULATED PROCUREMENTS & CONTRACT EXTENSIONS ABOVE £20K - AWARDED BETWEEN 01/04/2021 AND 31/03/2022

Contract/PO Ref.	Contract Title	Supplier Name(s)	Est. Total Value (ex VAT)	Contract/ Extension Award Date
SCRA/2021/18	Aberdeen Reconfiguration - Principal Contractor	North Offshore Ltd	£46,320	09/02/2022
SCRA/2020/22	Cyber Security Testing Services	NTA Monitor (T/A Intertek NTA)	£37,755	28/04/2021
SCRA/2021/37	Dalkeith - Emergency Repair Works - Principal Contractor	Corstorphine Roofing & Building Ltd	£34,375	09/03/2022
SCRA/2021/04	E-Learning Platform	Softcat Plc (sub-contracted to Learning Nexus)	£35,500	30/06/2021
SCRA/2021/32	Glasgow Lease Renewal - Strategic Advice	Avison Young (UK) Ltd	£23,800	16/03/2022
SCRA/2021/01	Hamilton - Lease Renewal - Strategic Advice	Avison Young (UK) Ltd	£22,900	14/05/2021
SCRA/2021/21	Glasgow - Staff Areas (Phase 2) - 2nd to 4th Floor Works - Principal Contractor	Interact Interiors	£50,799	19/02/2022
SCRA/2021/22	Hamilton & Stirling (Construction Phase) - Lead Consultant/Principal Designer	Space Solutions Ltd (Scotland)	£33,000	17/01/2022
SCRA/2021/05	Hearing Room Improvement - Furniture	Claremont Office Furniture	£46,718	20/09/2021
SCRA/2021/19	Hearing Room Improvement Work - Kirkwall	Casey Construction Ltd	£38,940	21/12/2021
SCRA/2021/31	Paisley - Alteration & Reconfiguration Works - Principal Contractor	MDE Scotland Ltd	£35,740	18/02/2022
SCRA/2021/08	Stirling Reconfiguration - Principal Contractor	Interact Interiors	£22,185	23/09/2021

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

Annual Procurement Report template

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

1. Organisation and report details

a) Contracting Authority Name

Scottish Children's
Reporter
Administration

b) Period of the annual procurement report

1st April 2021 to
31st March 2022

c) Required by s18 Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 to prepare an annual procurement report? (Yes / No)

Yes

2. Summary of Regulated Procurements Completed

a) Total number of regulated contracts awarded within the report period

7

b) Total value of regulated contracts awarded within the report period

£1,186,832

c) Total number of unique suppliers awarded a place on a regulated contract awarded during the period

7

i) how many of these unique suppliers are SMEs

3

ii) how many of these unique suppliers how many are Third sector bodies

0

3. Review of Regulated Procurements Compliance

a) Number of regulated contracts awarded within the period that complied with your Procurement Strategy

7

b) Number of regulated contracts awarded within the period that did not comply with your Procurement Strategy

0

4. Community Benefit Requirements Summary**Use of Community Benefit Requirements in Procurement:**

a) Total number of regulated contracts awarded with a value of £4 million or greater.

0

b) Total number of regulated contracts awarded with a value of £4 million or greater that contain Community Benefit Requirements.

0

c) Total number of regulated contracts awarded with a value of less than £4 million that contain a Community Benefit Requirements

0

Key Contract Information on community benefit requirements imposed as part of a regulated procurement that were fulfilled during the period:d) Number of Jobs Filled by Priority Groups (*Each contracting authority sets its own priority groups*)

0

e) Number of Apprenticeships Filled by Priority Groups

0

f) Number of Work Placements for Priority Groups

0

g) Number of Qualifications Achieved Through Training by Priority Groups

0

h) Total Value of contracts sub-contracted to SMEs

Not Known

i) Total Value of contracts sub-contracted to Social Enterprises

Not Known

j) Total Value of contracts sub-contracted to Supported Businesses

£0

k) Other community benefit(s) fulfilled

0

5. Fair Work and the real Living Wage

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

6. Payment performance

a) Number of valid invoices received during the reporting period.	2024
b) Percentage of invoices paid on time during the period ("On time" means within the time period set out in the contract terms).	76%
c) Number of regulated contracts awarded during the period containing a contract term requiring the prompt payment of invoices in public contract supply chains	As per Frameworks
d) Number of concerns raised by sub-contractors about the timely payment of invoices within the supply chain of public contracts	0

7. Supported Businesses Summary

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

8. Spend and Savings Summary

a) Total procurement spend for the period covered by the annual procurement report.	£5,617,100
b) Total procurement spend with SMEs during the period covered by the annual procurement report.	£1,500,658 (32.8% of Core Trade Spend)
c) Total procurement spend with Third sector bodies during the period covered by the report.	Not Known
d) Percentage of total procurement spend through collaborative contracts.	16.05%
e) Total targeted cash savings for the period covered by the annual procurement report	Not Known
i) targeted cash savings for Cat A contracts	Not Known
ii) targeted cash savings for Cat B contracts	Not Known
iii) targeted cash savings for Cat C contracts	Not Known

f) Total delivered cash savings for the period covered by the annual procurement report	£368,464
i) delivered cash savings for Cat A contracts	£301,364 *
ii) delivered cash savings for Cat B contracts	Included in (i) above
iii) delivered cash savings for Cat C contracts	£67,100
g) Total non-cash savings value for the period covered by the annual procurement report	Not Known
<u>9. Future regulated procurements</u>	
a) Total number of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two financial years	11
b) Total estimated value of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two financial years	£3,382,000

Glossary

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

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

Accountable Director: PR/CEO

Date: 21 September 2022

Recommendation:

1. To approve SCRA's Annual Report 2021/22
2. To approve arrangements for publication of SCRA's Annual Report 2021/22.

Reason for Report: For Board approval

Resource Implications: Within approved budgets

Strategy: Within approved plans

Consultation: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive
Board Chair
Head of Strategy & Organisational Development
Audit and Risk Committee

Document Classification: RESTRICTED (until publication)
Open (on publication)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. SCRA's Annual Report for 2021/22 has been prepared and is now available at Appendix 1.
- 1.2. The report covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.
- 1.3. The Annual Report will be published at 10am on Thursday 27 October 2022 and will be available on SCRA's website (www.scra.gov.uk).
- 1.4. This date has been agreed with our Sponsor Branch at the Scottish Government and the report will be formally laid in the Scottish Parliament on the afternoon of Wednesday 26 October 2021.
- 1.5. The Report has already been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee and changes incorporated.

2. Format and content

- 2.1. The report has been written and designed in-house by the Press and Communications Team in conjunction with relevant managers/leads.
- 2.2. For the 12th year now, the report will not be printed, however, as always, a PDF version will also be available on our website should people wish to print the report. The format of this year's report is similar to previous years. However, for accessibility purposes, an unformatted Word version of the report will also be available on request. In addition, we have a version available for children and young people (Appendix 2). Our website has Recite Me software which provides additional functionality to website visitors with different needs. The functionality includes: text to speech functionality (including from pdfs like the Annual Report), dyslexia software, an interactive dictionary, a translation tool with over 100 languages and it works across all devices. To access Recite Me, visitors to our website just need to click on the Accessibility Tools button which is on the bottom right of each page.
- 2.3. The Annual Report starts with a foreword, authored by SCRA's Board Chair.
- 2.4. The report also includes some of the highlights and achievements in 2021/22, including the regular 'year at a glance' section.
- 2.5. As the detailed statistics were published on 30 June in the Official Statistics suite of information, the report only includes statistics at a glance and links to the full statistical service online.

- 2.6. The report contains the regular Looking Ahead segment to reflect we are now more than six months into the new business year. This is authored by the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive (please note this is a draft for the Board meeting).
- 2.7. As with previous years, a copy of SCRA's Annual Accounts 2021/22 (including Performance Report) will be laid in the Scottish Parliament at the same time as the Annual Report. This is published as a standalone document, but there is a link to the accounts in the Annual Report.

3. Data Assurance

- 3.1. As mentioned earlier, the full statistical suite of information, including the Official Statistics was published before publication of the Annual Report (on 30 June 2022) in accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

4. Publication arrangements

- 4.1. SCRA will liaise with the Scottish Government to place the Annual Report in the Scottish Parliament before it is issued to staff and partners.
- 4.2. The Annual Report 2021/22 and Annual Accounts 2021/22 will be published firstly on SCRA's website. A latest news item will be prepared and issued on our website.
- 4.3. It will be promoted to partners via social media after it has been published on the website.
- 4.4. The report will also be promoted via our partner e-news bulletin on Friday 28 October. The e-news bulletin is issued every quarter to local and national partners (who have subscribed to the e-news).
- 4.5. A latest news item will be placed on Connect, SCRA's intranet so staff are fully aware.
- 4.6. There will also be information added to the partner news section of the CHIP website and some information will be added to the latest news section of our corporate parenting website for young people.
- 4.8. The publication arrangements are similar to previous years which worked well.

5. Recommendation:

- 5.1. To approve SCRA's Annual Report 2021/22.
- 5.2. To approve arrangements for the publication of SCRA's Annual Report 2021/22.

ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22



ENSURING POSITIVE FUTURES FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND.



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

>> ABOUT OUR REPORT

This report covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

It summarises SCRA's achievements and performance during that period and includes an update on progress against our Business Plan 2021/22.

This version of our report is aimed at people with an interest in the Children's Hearings System. We also have a version for children and young people.

You can also view this report's supporting information online, including the full set of our annual audited accounts and detailed performance report, plus our Official Statistics and interactive statistical dashboard at www.scra.gov.uk.

ABOUT OUR REPORT



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OUR COMMITMENTS TO YOU



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 VALUES

Our values are the shared motivations, beliefs and behaviours that underpin all that we do.



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

★ Supportive

We work with kindness to support children, young people and families, our partners and each other.

★ Child Centred

Children and young people are at the heart of everything we do.

★ Respectful

Everyone is respected and treated fairly, inclusively and lawfully.

★ Accountable

We are responsible for our decisions, our ethics and our learning.

FOREWORD, MICHELLE MILLER, SCRA'S BOARD CHAIR

Having worked through a year of unimaginable challenges brought on by lockdown in March 2020, this year saw the beginning of a gradual easing of public health measures to control the COVID-19 pandemic.

We had to make rapid adjustments to our day-to-day operations over December 2021 and January 2022 in response to the Omicron variant, which further impacted on our services to children, young people and their families.

SCRA staff continued to show huge professionalism and resilience in adapting to new ways of working, innovative technologies and an uncertain working environment, whilst maintaining a focus on delivering for children and young people.

Our overall vision, values and priorities continued to be important touchstones during this extended period of stress, disruption and unpredictability for everyone.

We strengthened our long-term partnerships with Children's Hearings Scotland, local authorities, Police Scotland and other key agencies to ensure the Hearings System operated as well as it could. We also developed new partnerships – such as with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library/Scottish Books Trust to help improve children's access to books.

We continued to focus on minimising delay for children and young people needing support, on forward planning for recovery and on the system-wide changes that we need to deliver if The Promise is to become the reality we all want to see.

In parallel with our support for Keeping The Promise, we pressed forward with our own programme of continuous improvement, including the Hearing rooms refurbishment across the estate.

We maintained our focus on children's rights. As a founder member of Stand up for Siblings, we helped introduce new rights

for brothers and sisters via the Children (Scotland) Act 2020, and we particularly welcome the renewed emphasis on children's rights more generally across the whole system.

We made further progress on being the best corporate parent we can be – seeking to prioritise improvement in children and young people's experience of Hearings, both physical and virtual. We were – and will continue to be – helped and guided in this work by the views and experiences of children and young people, and we are particularly grateful to all the members of Our Hearings, Our Voice whose help in steering our improvements will be critical to our success.

The wellbeing of our staff has been a major focus of this period – we introduced wellbeing days, increased levels of support and continued to develop programmes of awareness and active help – prioritising mental health and tackling stress and isolation.

In summary, another hugely challenging year for our organisation, our staff – but one where we have retained a sense of continued stability and progress despite all the hurdles and barriers we have encountered.



YEAR AT A GLANCE 2021/22

★ APRIL

We celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Children's Hearings System

Staff with Hearings experience shared their stories to mark Care Experienced Month

The latest batch of revamped Hearing rooms are unveiled

★ MAY

Free books are available in every Hearing centre thanks to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and the Scottish Book Trust

We marked Mental Health Awareness week with the start of our first 'Big Team' walking challenge

The next set of Hearing rooms ready for a makeover are announced

★ JUNE

Our British Sign Language action plan is published

We welcomed the new Youth Justice Vision

A Virtual Hearings visual information guide was launched

★ JULY

New participation rights for brothers and sisters were implemented

We introduced new sections on our website to make it more accessible

An updated version of our Recruitment and Selection Policy was produced

★ AUGUST

We welcomed the announcement of The Promise Scotland Hearings System Working Group

The first Spotlight On series on our website is launched

More than 70 staff tuned in for the screening of Warriors: Revisiting the boys of Ballinkirrain

★ SEPTEMBER

Our Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy was unveiled

We produced a new research report 'Developing and piloting of a children's disability toolkit'

Our Official Statistics for the year were published

★ OCTOBER

Work got underway to prepare for COP26

Two new Board Members were appointed

We launched the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme

★ NOVEMBER

We ran a bowel cancer awareness raising session for staff

Colleagues shared their stories to mark International Men's Day

We also marked International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women

★ DECEMBER

SCRA carried out and published Our Hearings, Our Voice evaluation report

We supported both the Erase the Grey and the That Guy campaigns

The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 was fully implemented

★ JANUARY

Our first culture audit got underway

The new sentencing guidelines came into force

We issued guidance on the safe return to office working

★ FEBRUARY

We published our Keeping The Promise Route Plan

New research on exploring the impact of virtual Hearings on participation, rights and decision making announced

We marked Care Day with some fabulous lighthouse displays

★ MARCH

We welcomed publication of the Hearings System Working Group Issues List

Our first sensory corner was unveiled at our Hearings centre in Glenrothes

During Debt Awareness Week we provided staff with information about available help and supports

OUR STATISTICS 2021/22

You can view our Official Statistics
2021/22 - including our interactive
dashboard - on our website
www.scra.gov.uk

10,494

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
REFERRED

8,691

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
REFERRED - NON OFFENCE

14 AND

15 YEARS
ARE THE MOST COMMON
AGE OF REFERRAL

2,398

CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE
REFERRED - OFFENCE

21,909

CHILDREN HEARINGS HELD

7,265

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
WITH CSOS AT 31 MARCH

24.8% WITH
A CHILD PROTECTION
ORDER WERE AGED
UNDER 20 DAYS OLD

479

CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE ON
CHILD PROTECTION
ORDERS

REPORTING ON OUR BUSINESS PLAN

OUR PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021/22



With ongoing restrictions, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact on the Children's Hearings System, but our focus throughout remained on delivering the strategic aims outlined in our Business Plan 2021/22:

★ **Care**

Delivering a service that feels right for each child, young person and family that experiences it.

★ **Connect**

Working together to receive the right referrals, for the right children, and young people at the right time.

★ **Protect**

Making high quality and timely decisions for children and young people, using the right information that is relevant, clear and secure.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, we successfully completed a high proportion of the actions in our Business Plan which are highlighted in this next section of the report. In addition, this year's Annual Report also gives an update on the first year of our Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy.

More detailed information is available in the Performance Review section of our Annual Accounts 2021/22.

OUR STORIES

OUR PERFORMANCE AND TARGETS

Operational information and the Key Performance Indicators derived from them has again been significantly impacted by the pandemic across 2021/22 in terms of impacts on partners and our ability to deliver services. For the first half of the year we were operating under emergency legislation which was designed to reduce pressures on the system in a number of ways including:

- ✪ Removing the requirement for 2nd working day Hearings for CPOs;
- ✪ Extending CSOs for an additional 6 months (over and above the standard 12 month limit); and
- ✪ Extending interim orders from 22 to 44 days.

These specific provisions ended on 30th September 2021. More detail can be found here: [Coronavirus legislation – changes to the law.](#)

The percentage of decisions on referrals within 50 working days indicator decreased by 2 percentage points (pp) to 69% from 2020/21. This measure ensures that children and young people are receiving a timely service from SCRA. As would be expected, the continuing pandemic provided particular challenges for Reporters around decision making in terms of capacity due to other demands on their time, including, for example, the time taken to manage Hearings which as well as the traditional face to face

delivery can now be held virtually or by a mixture of face to face and virtual means. Reporters are also reliant on partner agencies to provide reports and information to help them make the right decision for a child and the time taken to receive this information has also been impacted by the pandemic in terms of pressures on other agencies in the same way that SCRA has experienced.

The scheduling of grounds Hearings within 20 working days of a Reporter decision to arrange a Hearing was down 4pp in the year to 50%. There had to be a strict prioritisation approach to allow the core business of Children's Hearings to continue through the pandemic with reduced availability of Hearing spaces due to social distancing and other constraints. This has a significant impact on the ability to schedule grounds Hearings within 20 working days. For the reasons outlined above there has been no target set for 2021/22 for these key performance indicators.

Short term absence at 1.6% was within the 2% target and was 0.6pp higher than the prior year. Agile working (primarily in this context, the ability to work at least partly from home) has in part contributed to the achievement of this target as home working enables staff to maintain attendance on days when, due to illness, they would have been unable to travel to an office. As we have increased office based working, this rate has increased.

Long term absence at 3.4% was down 0.3pp from the prior year but was still well above the 2% target. There were eight long term absences due to Covid-19 compared to six the year before.

Of the finance targets, the revenue spends (within 1% of budget), revenue savings (target of 1.5%) and the efficiency savings (target of 0.6%) were all met. The capital spends target was missed at 16.9% below budget against a target of being within 5% of budget. This was due to a combination of delays on some property projects, digital underspends due to global supply chain issues and refocusing of organisational priorities.

AIM1 – CARE

RIGHTS, INCLUSION AND CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

Our new Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2023 was launched at the start of National Inclusion Week in September 2021. The strategy runs until 2023 and aims to make sure that everything we do is grounded in respecting rights, is inclusive and provides the supports that children and families expect from SCRA as corporate parents.

We will report annually on this strategy using our new Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Year Report Card.

RIGHTS

July 2021 saw the introduction of a key piece of rights-based legislation in the Children's Hearings System to help protect the relationships between brothers and sisters. The new rules mean that brothers and sisters now have rights to appropriate participation in Children's Hearings where contact with their siblings is being considered.



To support this, we introduced new information to be very clear about the rights of participation individuals in Hearings. This included web information and a cartoon animation for children and young people. Linked to this, we are members of the Staying Together and Connected Implementation group which is focused on sibling rights.

As one of the founding members, we continue to be an active member of Stand Up For Siblings. We participated in a series of webinars in October 2021 focusing on sibling rights, participation, research and practice.

SCRA continues to sit on the implementation group for the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 and on implementation and review groups in relation to the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019. You can read more about this in our research section on page 28.

In a first, SCRA has worked in an advisory and creative way with the BBC – who are developing new 'Bitesize' online content in relation to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We continue to be involved in the Victim's Taskforce and are involved in the ongoing national work to develop standards for the Scottish Bairns' Hoose.¹⁵



As part of this, we undertook a level 2 consultation with care experienced Modern Apprentices in partnership with Health Improvement Scotland to provide advice and feedback on the Barnahus Standards.

SCRA welcomes the general agreement across the sector to allow the referral of 16- and 17-year-olds to the Principal Reporter. We are also pleased that further consultation has explored the complexity and the nuance of extending the jurisdiction of the Hearings System in this way.

Our internal 'Right Direction' group provides invaluable expert opinion and advice as we enhance our approach to rights. The group has been creating a suite of new information on rights which will be available on our website in late 2022.

We believe in advocacy as a key support for children and young people. We continue to be members of the National Advocacy Expert Reference Group and have developed positive national and local working relationships with advocacy providers. We worked with the Scottish Government to design and input to a live advocacy event for practitioners in January 2022. We continue to promote the Hearings advocacy website for children and young people.

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

In SCRA, we have adopted a rights-based approach to our inclusion and diversity work, which ensures that we treat everyone with respect, dignity, compassion, kindness and fairness.

SCRA introduced a new integrated approach to Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments (EHRIA) in March 2020 to ensure that we are fully challenging ourselves to consider the full impact of implementing e.g. a new process, a new system, a different way of working – to make sure that no-one is disadvantaged as a result, that it doesn't impact on our (of anyone else's) rights being met.

In 2021/22, we continued to embed this approach, with our Equality Review Group. Our EHRIA process has attracted attention from many other public bodies in Scotland who are interested in our approach and keen to learn from it, as well as the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) who are keen to share it as an example of best practice with their members.

Our newly established Race & Ethnicity Group – chaired by our Principal Reporter/CEO – was launched in December 2021. Watch out for our new action plan which will be published in 2022/2023.

We revised our guidance on autism, how to talk about autism and hearing loss. We published our British Sign Language (BSL) Action Plan in BSL and produced visual guides for children with autism and other sensory needs coming to a Children's Hearing.

In January 2022, we rolled-out the Hidden Disabilities sunflower scheme across all our Localities. Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard discreetly indicates to people including staff, colleagues and panel members that the person wearing it (or someone with them) has a hidden disability and may need additional support, help or more time.

In September 2021, we also produced new guidance on how to deal with hate crime, how to accommodate religious observance and how to use LGBTQI+ inclusive language.

To mark International Non-Binary Persons Day in July 2021, our Inclusion & Diversity Manager interviewed a non-binary trans young adult about the importance of pronouns and respecting people's right to self-identification; this video was shared on our intranet, with positive feedback from staff.

On International Men's Day in November 2021, six of our male colleagues shared their stories of how they stay physically and psychologically well.

To celebrate LGBT History Month in February 2022, three of our Inclusion Ambassadors spoke very openly and candidly about their experience of growing up and coming out. It is important to us that people feel able to share their experiences, and feel safe to do so, and that is the culture we are nurturing in SCRA. Then on International Women's Day in March 2022, colleagues shared their thoughts on gender bias in a suite of case studies which were published on our staff intranet.

In November and December 2021, SCRA supported the United Nations '16 Days of

Activism against Gender-Based Violence' campaign to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls by promoting amongst our workforce, Police Scotland's 'That Guy' campaign and Glasgow Caledonian University's award-winning 'Erase the Grey' campaign.

In July 2021, SCRA's approach to inclusion and diversity received a Bronze TIDE Award from enei (Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion) from spell out fully - enei in its annual TIDE (Talent, Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation) self-assessment benchmarking survey of members. TIDE enables us to see where we are on enei's 'Equality to Inclusion Roadmap' We are proud that SCRA was assessed as working at 'embed' level – which means we are embedding inclusive culture.

SCRA's inclusion and diversity work was also subject to internal audit in October 2021 which found a 'substantial' level of assurance in the design and operational effectiveness of our approach to inclusion and diversity.

In 2021, SCRA's inclusion and diversity practice in relation to our recording and use of equality data has been used to promote good practice by the enei and Scottish Government. The Scottish Government published a case study on SCRA's recording and use of equality data of children referred to the Reporter – it is available [here](#). The enei case study on our approach to Employee Equality Data Monitoring is available for all members of enei.

CORPORATE PARENTING

Engaging in a meaningful way with Hearings-experienced children and young people is a cornerstone of our Corporate Parenting work.

★ During 2021/22, we worked with Hearings and care-experienced young people to create a new Hearing About Me form. A new Going to a Hearing leaflet was also developed in partnership with the young people from the Proud 2 Care Champions Board in Inverclyde. The form ([which is also available online](#)) and leaflet, were due to be launched in April 2022. A massive thank you to all the young people involved.

★ In 2021 our 13th care-and-Hearings-experienced Modern Apprentice joined our North Strathclyde Locality, and has successfully completed her SVQ in Business in Administration. In February 2022, she became a champion in the organisation, promoting knowledge and understanding of learning disabilities, their impact, and how to support people with learning disabilities. The Modern Apprentice delivered training to the Disabilities Group and the Dumbarton and Paisley office staff, Human Resources and the Participation Group on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Dyslexia, and will be widening this opportunity to additional staff.

★ As part of our commitment to provide employment opportunities for young people, we also arranged a paid for work experience placement for a care experienced young person in our Aberdeen office.

★ In 2021/22 we marked the milestone of more than 35 Hearing rooms now upgraded. This was the seventh year of our Hearing Room Improvement Programme and during the year new look Hearing rooms were unveiled in Kirkwall, Bellshill, Inverness, Glasgow,

Lochgilphead and Edinburgh. The programme is based on feedback from Hearings-experienced young people (including Our Hearings, Our Voice 40 Calls to Action). Young people were also involved in the design process.

★ Following a successful pilot, in June 2021 SCRA received our first national delivery of books for children aged 0-5 in partnership with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL), who gifts books to vulnerable children affected by Social Work intervention and support. Over 2,000 books were distributed to Hearing centres for children attending their Hearings. In partnership with the DPIL another national delivery is being co-ordinated for 2022/23.

★ In March 2022, a large sensory corner was launched in our Glenrothes Hearings Centre with funding received from Skills Development Scotland. The pilot corner is a partnership with Rompa (a UK sensory company) staff in the Glenrothes office and colleagues from our Keeping The Promise team. The response was instantly positive. A formal evaluation is taking place, but initial feedback showed that the space had a positive and calming effect on both children and families. We have had some really fantastic feedback directly from children about the space that speaks louder than some formal methods.

SCRA continues to host and support Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV). SCRA also provides communications support to OHOV, and attends Board Meetings to support the project team and the young people. SCRA also delivers specialised assistance around the website, social

media (including the creation of the OHOV Tik Tok account) and design of new products, platforms and events, including the board member recruitment campaign in January 2022. In October 2021, we produced a [report for OHOV](#) reporting on the progress we have made one year one since publication of the 40 Calls to Action.

KEEPING THE PROMISE

In 2020, SCRA welcomed the findings of the Independent Care Review and committed to Keep The Promise. The Promise is a 10 year plan, and is one of transformation and reform. It is also one of continuous improvement – that looks to improve on the quality of the current service, while we work towards transformation.

SCRA'S KEEPING THE PROMISE PLAN

As part of our commitment to Keep The Promise, we developed a Keeping The Promise Route Plan – improvement projects that we could take on that would improve the experience for children and young people currently experiencing the Hearings System. This plan was informed by evidence from The Promise, Better Hearings, OHOV's 40 Calls to Action and previous research.

Our projects look at how we can better capture children and young persons' needs before they come in to a Hearing – what we can do to make that easier for them, help them to understand the process and what their rights are – who to go to for support, how they would like to participate – would they prefer to come in by video link or be there in person.



We will be working with others to look at the language that we use in the system – how we make that less corporate, less traumatic, more caring – and more understandable, for everyone!

We are focussing on choice – choice in how to attend, choice in when Hearings are – there are some times that are particularly difficult for young people and we want to avoid these, choice in preparation – we can set up visits, have people available for any question.

There are also some things that we have just moved to implement – moving our information into films and cartoons to support understanding and ease anxiety, ensuring sensory toys are always available to support children in their Hearings, providing young people with online options as well as paper to set out what they want us to know.. and we will be working to put these in place over the course of the year – working with groups of young people as we do so.

Our plan went through extensive consultation with our staff, as well as key partners in the Hearings System before being published on Care Day in February 2022.



We have created a dedicated Keeping The Promise section on our website for our plans, information, progress and how to get in touch. We are committed to making our Keeping The Promise information as accessible as possible and have provided information in different formats, including cartoon animations for children, a visual route map and a video in British Sign Language with sub titles and audio.

Work set out in the plan will be tested and implemented in 2022/2023 and 2023/2024.

Also on Care Day in February 2022 we launched our first Voice of Experience Reference Group. This group is specifically for staff with experience of the Hearings System and/or multiple approaches to care, e.g. either having been in care or having been or currently is a carer. The group, which is part of our commitment to Keeping The Promise, meets regularly to examine areas for improvement and provide feedback.

REFORM

We are a member of the Hearings System Working Group (HSWG) which was introduced in August 2021.

This group is made up of representation from:

- ★ The Promise,
- ★ Children's Hearings Scotland,
- ★ SCRA
- ★ Scottish Government and is chaired by Sheriff David Mackie.

A key deliverable for the group was the Contextual Framework to work within, key to this is the 'Issues List' – 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 March 22.

We have been working closely with the Office of the Chief Designer and other partners to begin this exploration with a series of practical workshops. Three multi-agency teams will conduct an intensive piece of work to take this forward, this is due to conclude Autumn 22.

SCRA is committed to this work and a number of staff are represented within the teams.

ENGAGEMENT

We are committed to ensuring our staff are involved in every step of the way and we continue to have virtual and face to face engagement and consultation sessions to gather and feedback views and ideas into the process. We have also been working with Hearings-experienced young people, including Our Hearings, Our Voice, the Celcis VIP group and local Champions Boards to ensure the voice of children and young people is at the centre of everything we do.

AIM 2 – CONNECT OUR PEOPLE

In 2021/22, during the second year of the pandemic, we provided significant support and advice to the workforce through a programme of FAQ updates and support. To support colleagues returning to the office, we worked in partnership with Health Protection Scotland to continuously review our robust risk assessments and in the provision of face-to-face Hearings.

★ During this period, we implemented a new Agile Working Policy following significant consultation with staff and managers. In addition, we delivered Leading Hybrid Teams training for all managers to support the new flexible working arrangements.

★ Wellbeing remained a major focus of our work in 2021/22. We offered wellbeing supports and days to our workforce to recognise the challenging impacts of working within COVID-19 restrictions and the recovery. We updated and published our Wellbeing Brochure for all staff which contains a range of information and supports.

★ We also developed further suites of wellbeing information including financial wellbeing supports recognising the cost of living pressures.

★ We provided refresher training to our 1st cohort of Mental Health First Aiders.

★ We embedded local wellbeing groups into Localities and launched a Head Office wellbeing group – with clear Terms of Reference and Plans

★ We actively supported national mental health wellbeing events including Time to Talk and Mental Health Awareness Week – with a suite of awareness raising and fun activities. We organised two Big Walk Challenges – one around Scotland and one across Australia – which brought about circa 25 teams together in each challenge to encourage staff to get outside, get active, supporting connection with colleagues, combatting loneliness, and supporting health and wellbeing.

★ We created a learning network and developed a new learning and development strategy for 2022/24 with an associated learning plan. To support this, a new section was created on our staff intranet.

★ We reviewed the annual staff survey to ensure that we retained consistency across the reporting years, but brought it up to date and improved its flow. This was issued in November 2021.

★ We commenced the first review of our roles, starting with Support Administrators and Support Assistant (Reception) staff. 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 also delivered recruitment and selection e-learning training for all recruiting managers, without which they cannot be a member of any recruitment panel.

There was lots of other activity, including the development of an Inclusive Behaviours Framework which will be consulted on during 2022/23. We also assessed SCRA's Partnership Approach against the Scottish Government'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.

In terms of policies, we reviewed our Whistleblowing, Discipline, Grievance and Investigation Policies. While we improved the length of service requirements to receive full annual leave entitlement

In 2021/22, we saw one of our long service Board Members Cathy Robertson leave, and we welcomed two new Board Members – Lorraine Moore and Kay Barton.

DIGITAL

The period 2021/22 continued to be another technically challenging year for digital to provide a robust Hearings service in the middle of the pandemic. There was an ongoing high dependency on new services and ways of supporting delivery of the service to meet the needs of children, families and everyone attending Hearings.

We were able to strengthen our offering around a virtual Hearings service - developing discreet service models, moving from fully virtual to a more planned digital participation through choice for children, young people and families.

A dedicated team was put in place to ensure the experience was the best it could be – liaising with children, young people and families, doing virtual 'pre-Hearings visits', providing mobile data top-ups to encourage attendance and participation.

We introduced 'RAHVI the Robot' to support children, young people and families coming to Hearings with understanding what would happen and how it would take place – supporting them through the process.

During this period, we also developed, designed and implemented a cost effective guest wi-fi provision across the core 32 locations using the existing building connectivity to provide the service to families, panel members and service stakeholders. This solution has now settled in terms of use and is regarded as a highly valuable addition to the further digitisation of the service and creation of more flexible ways of working.

A standard approach and technical solution for video conferencing was designed and deployed to 50 of the 52 Hearing rooms that we have across the country, offering improved facilities for people to link in to our centres – all part of our commitment to giving children, young people and families more choice when coming to Hearings.

As well as the external service to be provided to support Hearings, internally during the year, we looked to consolidate and optimise our new case management system - Core Systems and Applications Services (CSAS). Introducing and embedding a new IT system during a pandemic was undoubtedly a challenge, but good progress was made in 2021/2022.

During the year we launched electronic papers or Hearing Information Packs (HIPs) – this is an electronic set of panel papers that panel members receive to prepare for, conduct and support decision making within, the Hearing. There was some teething troubles with the introduction of the packs, but we have been working to rectify these with our partners and some new developments are due to be introduced in early 2022/23.

As with many other public bodies, we had to deal with ongoing global supply constraints which impacted on our technology refresh in 2021/2022. Despite this, around 400 new model laptops were procured, built and issued to staff within the year as part of the laptop replacement programme. Peripherals and accessories were also included in the replacement programme.

In order to support the significant increase in digital activity across SCRA and to recognise the need for specialisms across digital service delivery and development as well as cyber security and digital planning and engagement a digital department restructure took place in the period and is now completed. The restructure has provided renewed focus and the team is now going into the period 2022/2023 well prepared to address the digital challenges of the organisation.

As we plan for 2022/2023 much focus has gone into maximising the new digital team structure, developing solid digital planning and objectives for the new period and management of operational risks. The new digital teams are engaging with staff to introduce new



developments to support the corporate goals of SCRA.

We will continue to ensure there is a robust technology replacement programme in place to maintain a high quality of end user devices for staff to support them in their work. We will continue to engage with our stakeholders, as well as look at every aspect of the digital financial model to ensure ongoing value for money and focused investments.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Partnership at local and national level is a cornerstone to our work. In 2021/2022 we continued to strengthen our key partnerships within the Children's Hearings System considering broader aspects of safeguarding, inclusion, rights and policy.

We are involved with Child Protection Committees across Scotland and provide them with data to support their work. In addition, we sit on the Police Scotland Child Protection Strategic Group. We are involved in the National Contextual Safeguarding Group, the Child Trafficking Strategy group and the multi-agency Transitions from Children's to Adult Services Working Group.



We continued to work with the national Child Protection Guidance Implementation Group;

- ★ The Family Group Decision Making Steering Group; the Expert Reference Group on Advocacy and the Advocacy Service Providers Network; the Youth Justice Strategic Leads, the Youth Justice Improvement Board and the Justice Board. We are also members of the GIRFEC Stakeholders Group (Getting It Right for Every Child) and of the Ukraine Safeguarding Group.

- ★ We are part of the Secure Care Group and part of the ongoing discussions on Secure Care Transport.

SCRA is grateful to our partners in the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) for the support they have given us in training staff in relation to the Secure Care Pathways and Standards and in developing training for us in relation to the Youth Justice Standards.

We worked with Education Scotland to develop multi-agency training around restorative approaches. We also worked with the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) Learning and Development Advisor,

Education Scotland and Disclosure Scotland to update the Education Scotland National Improvement Hub.

We are grateful to our Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) partners in Article 12 who continue to support us in training development and to colleagues in Scottish Women's Aid who are expert critical friends for us in training and policy development. Our online modular training programme for social work staff, which has the potential for creative and innovative development, has continued to grow and adapt in different areas of the country.

SCRA continues to work with other organisations in the promotion of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion. We remain active members of enei (Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion) and the Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) Equalities Forum to share areas of good practice. We are members of the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls; which exists to provide advice to Scotland's First Minister on what is needed to tackle gender inequality in Scotland.

We are members of the Cross Justice Working Group on Race Data and Evidence and its Research Sub-Group; which exists to understand race and ethnicity data, how it is categorised and gathered and what exists across all the organisations working in the justice sector in Scotland with a view to filling in gaps and standardising to promote data quality in race and ethnicity recording.

AIM 3 – PROTECT

OUR PRACTICE

In 2021/2022, the Practice Team provided the full range of Practice activities to support Reporters in their day to day work. This included giving advice to Localities throughout the year giving support and advice to Localities throughout the year, developing practice materials, delivering practice training, managing cases in the higher courts, and working with partner agencies at a national level.

Particularly significant areas of work included:

- ★ The implementation of new legislation on participation rights and other matters, arising from the Children (Scotland) Act 2020 and related amendments to the rules for children's hearings;
- ★ The extension of some provisions of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020; and
- ★ The implementation of the main sections of the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019.

Two practice directions were published (these ensure Reporters comply with the legislation and are consistent).

- ★ One about the new legislation represented the most significant legislative changes since the implementation of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. Its main impact was to enable some siblings of children referred to Children's

Hearings (and some in a similar type of relationship) to have rights to participate in the Hearing. However, it also made important reforms to the operation of Children's Hearings, including:

- ★ A new duty on a Children's Hearing to consider the need for a direction about contact with the child's brothers and sisters, amongst others;
- ★ Additional powers for a Children's Hearing to exclude someone and to order that a person can only attend a Hearing by electronic means; and
- ★ A new duty on a Children's Hearing to consider the need for a direction about contact with the child's brothers and sisters, amongst others;
- ★ We developed and delivered mandatory training on the new legislation for all reporters and assistant reporters. Due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic and the tight timescales involved, this training was delivered remotely online – the first time we have delivered such mandatory training in this way.
- ★ In addition to the two new practice directions, we reviewed the practice direction on the statement of grounds to take account of the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019. A practice note on the act was published to assist reporters in its implementation. We also revised practice direction on non-disclosure.

Further practice materials produced during the year included practice notes on child sexual exploitation, signed witness statements and missing

children, and notes in relation to changes to managing attendance in Children's Hearings and virtual Hearings.

For the first time since before the pandemic, we delivered the full schedule of core practice training and more specialised training through the year. Some of this training continued to be delivered remotely online. However, we were able to reintroduce in-person training, having recognised that some courses require to be delivered that way. In total during the year, we delivered 45 half days of online remote practice training and 38 full days of in-person training to reporters and assistant reporters. The Practice Team also supported locality-led training and practice sessions on request.

The team also was heavily involved in various internal groups within SCRA, with a particular focus on The Promise, the Standard Operating Model and non-disclosure.

Sixteen cases in the higher courts concluded during the year. Significant issues raised in these cases included whether a sheriff should have named a perpetrator of a schedule 1 offence, the use of signed witness statements in proofs and a decision by a children's hearing not to make a non-disclosure measure.

Of those that concluded, only two were initiated by us – we did not proceed with the appeals in either of them. Of the other 14, 6 appeals were refused after full consideration. There were two judicial reviews. One was granted after we did not oppose it, and the other was refused.

There was one petition to the nobile officium of the Court of Session – this was refused.

Law Reports were published to support reporter awareness and knowledge of developments in the case law, including cases involving the Principal Reporter and relevant cases in external proceedings.

We continued to be engaged in improvement work at a national level with partner agencies, including Police Scotland, the Scottish Government, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Children's Hearings Scotland and social work services. This work involved a wide range of subject matter, including the development of standards for Scotland's Bairn's Hoose, jointly reported cases, joint investigative interviewing, the new participation rights, restorative justice and the age of criminal responsibility. We regularly delivered national external training to the police and joint investigative interviewers.

In October 2021, the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) came to Scotland. It was envisaged that this would potentially have a significant impact on Hearings in Glasgow in particular, as well as other parts of the country including Aberdeen and Edinburgh. We worked with local and national partners to support our operational response, producing practice guidance particularly on issues of jurisdiction.

OUR PROPERTY

To accommodate Children's Hearings, SCRA needs to provide premises that are both safe and suitable. Hearing facilities

are central to the delivery of our services and property is one of our largest areas of expenditure.

This year, much of our work focus was on the provision of Coronavirus-safe work spaces and Hearing centres. The year provided constant challenges with the arrangements for maintenance and cleaning of our buildings with staff shortages at our contractors an ever present issue.

Again, social distancing requirements meant that many of our Hearing rooms could not safely accommodate enough people to allow Hearings to go ahead, and as a consequence virtual and hybrid Hearings were held by using the available space in our buildings or through participation from a remote location. To create permanent capacity for face to face Hearings works were carried out to enlarge existing rooms or convert alternative rooms in our buildings in Falkirk and Stirling. In other locations, existing open plan offices or vacant space continued to be used to provide larger spaces for Children's Hearings.

The design of our Hearing rooms has always reflected the needs of the Hearings System and, in particular, to create safe, well located and confidential spaces. In our core Hearing centres (those that are either owned or leased) we have much more control over the configuration and design of space. To support Better Hearings and promote participation, three contemporary designs were developed with the involvement of young people in 2017/18.

We constantly review how we are using our property assets and look for ways to reduce costs wherever possible, but at



the same time prioritising the delivery of services from our estate.

This can be driven by lease expiries, and we look to improve the use of our buildings in these situations. As a result of forthcoming expiries at our Hamilton and Elgin offices, we have started design work for smaller office accommodation.

This work builds on the successful introduction of "smart working" project for our Kilmarnock office previously, and the gradual implementation of the new "agile" working style around the country requiring more flexible workspaces that are suitable for both office and remote workers as we adapt to different ways of working coming out of the pandemic.

Continuous investment in our properties is needed to improve service delivery and support new ways of working in our buildings. Projects were undertaken in our Dumbarton and Aberdeen offices to improve the office environment, and to reflect how we are now working, with improved open plan space, additional quiet space and room for Virtual Hearings to take place. Improvements were undertaken to the office accommodation in Glasgow, providing improved kitchen and breakout facilities for staff on locality floors and more touch down space for visiting staff.



The fabric of our buildings also requires constant attention. Condition surveys are undertaken periodically, and this can result in significant external works being necessary. Most recently works have been carried out to our buildings in Edinburgh and Dalkeith.

OUR RESEARCH

We delivered another extensive research programme in 2021/2022 with a number of reports published and several new and exciting pieces of research underway.

Age of Criminal Responsibility

In April 2020, we began conducting research on offending by children aged 12 to 15 years old. This research was commissioned by the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on the Age of Criminal Responsibility. Statistical data was extracted from the casefiles of 400 children who had been referred to the Reporter on offence grounds. This included 100 children who had committed more serious offences and had been jointly reported by the police to the Reporter and Procurator Fiscal (PF). Analyses took place which explored these children's backgrounds, histories of offending, the circumstances that influenced their behaviour, and any changes in offending or their behaviour

in the 12 months following the referral. This report was due to be published in early 2022/23.

Born into Care

In 2021/22, a study was conducted by researchers from the Universities of Lancaster and Stirling, and SCRA. The Born into Care research investigated: 1) trends in the proportion of newborns and infants being looked after away

from home, how these varied by area and deprivation, and compared with the use of these measures in England and Wales; 2) the familial and health circumstances of infants looked after away from home, including whether older siblings had previously been removed and whether siblings were placed together; 3) the pre-birth and care planning histories of the infants, including their pathways into and out of the Children's Hearings System. The research was due to be published in April 2022.

Children and Young People on Home CSOs

In May 2021 we published the seventh report in a series of reports on the effectiveness of home Compulsory Supervision Orders. The research, which was undertaken in collaboration with Robert Gordon University, examined data from 172 children aged 12-16 who had been subject to a home supervision order between the 1 April 2013 and the 31 March 2017. The sample was comprised of three groups of children, those referred on the grounds of not attending school, those referred on offence grounds, and those who had only ever been referred due to lack of parental care.

Our results indicate that home CSOs resulted in a significant increase in school attendance for children where non-attendance was a concern but that this was likely to have been supported by the fact that all of the children who were placed onto CSOs due to educational attendance were also offered or provided with additional support for attendance and attainment.

The use of home CSOs did not affect the gravity or volume of offending by children referred on offence grounds. Given the complex needs of children in conflict of law, highlighted above in our summary of the evidence relating to our work around the Age of Criminal Responsibility, it is likely that the use of legal measures alone are insufficient to address the impact of multiple adversity and structural inequalities on adolescent offence behaviours.

Children Under the Age of 12 in Residential Care

In 2020 we began a piece of research focussed upon understanding the experiences of children under the age of 12 living in residential care. The purpose of the research was to: 1) explore the background characteristics and care trajectories of children who enter residential care at a young age; 2) explore how residential care placements are associated with socioemotional wellbeing, as well as a range of behavioural, health and educational outcomes. To do this we undertook a detailed examination of the care histories of 135 children and young people who first became subject to CSOs with residential care conditions between the 1 April 2015 and the 31 March 2017. We also conducted qualitative, semi-structured interviews with 60 social workers, residential care workers, foster

carers and children's panel members. There have been two main outputs from the study to date. In September 2021 an evidence submission from the study contributed to the United Nations Day of General Discussion on the use of Alternative Care for children and young people.

In March 2022 a paper entitled ["How is the provision of residential care to children under the age of 12 associated with changes in children's behaviour and mental wellbeing"](#) was published in the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care. The main conclusions of these documents are that children who enter residential care prior to age 12 are often male, have complex trauma histories and come from families with significant levels of additional health and social care needs related to deprivation, mental health difficulties, substance misuse and interpersonal violence.

Many of the children had parents who themselves had either been in care or had been maltreated as children. It was common for the children to have had long histories of service involvement, with 50% known to services by six months of age, and 75% known to services within the first three years of life.

The next stage of this work is to explore the mechanisms that may underscore these improvements, including how residential care practices work to improve outcomes for younger children with complex trauma histories. In undertaking this work we will also explore how earlier intervention and supports to children and families, including their alternative caregivers, could be used to maintain children's

place within their homes as per the recommendations of The Promise.

Our Hearings, Our Voice Evaluation

The Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) asked SCRA to carry out an evaluation of Our Hearings Our Voice (OHOV). This aimed to answer:

- ★ What do OHOV Board Members and staff, and CHIP partner organisations see as the future strategic direction of OHOV?
- ★ What value has been added by OHOV and how has this been utilised by agencies involved in the Hearings System; and how does the work of OHOV fit in and influence the strategic direction of CHIP partner organisations (e.g. on participation, equalities, children's rights)?
- ★ What has enabled or hindered the operation of OHOV?
- ★ Is the current operating model of OHOV effective and resource efficient?

The evaluation was carried out between May and October 2021. It involved interviews and focus groups with the young people involved in OHOV, senior SCRA and Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) staff and Board Chairs, OHOV staff, and a survey of CHIP members.

It was discussed at the CHIP meeting in November 2021 and the [full report](#) as well as a version for [children and young people](#) was published in December 2021. It is a powerful piece of work which sets out an exciting next phase for the group in bringing young people's experiences of Hearings into the centre of the transformation of the system.

Piloting of a Disability Toolkit

In September 2021 we published a report outlining the development of a toolkit that could be used to identify whether children may have additional support needs. This work was based upon a request from the Disabled Children Child Protection Network (DCCPN) to develop and pilot a toolkit that would:

- ★ Allow 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;
- ★ Provide an indicator of wider vulnerability and contextual factors that were pertinent to understanding child protection risk.

The toolkit was piloted using data from 40 children aged 5-12 who were on CSOs with residential care conditions. We found that the toolkit was capable of identifying children who had previously been identified as a disability, but also highlighted children with no formal disability diagnoses who had additional support needs relating to their learning, communication, socioemotional, mental health or physical wellbeing. Discussions about how to facilitate improvement work in the area of identifying and addressing the additional support needs of children in Scotland are ongoing with the DCCPN.

Staying Connected

Care-experienced children and young people with a sibling in custody In November 2021 we were successful with a funding application from The Promise Partnership for a project in partnership with Families Outside (Scotland's

only national charity that works solely on behalf of families affected by imprisonment). This is a two year project with a full-time Research Officer from SCRA working alongside Families Outside staff.

The overall aims of the project are to address the gap in knowledge around care-experienced children and young people's experiences of sibling imprisonment; to ensure that the previously unheard voices of those with this experience are heard; and to influence how to address restoration and maintenance of contact with an imprisoned sibling for care-experienced children. To do so it will explore the following:

- ★ What are the levels of sibling imprisonment for care-experienced children and young people?
- ★ Are care-experienced children and young people supported to maintain relationships with siblings who are on remand or serving a sentence in a prison or secure unit?
- ★ What are the barriers and facilitators for care-experienced children and young people maintaining relationships with siblings who are on remand or serving a sentence in a prison or secure unit?

The project will involve the analysis of 200 case files on CSAS (SCRA's case management system) and interviews and young people (up to age 25) who have experience of a sibling serving a period of remand or custodial sentence in a prison or secure accommodation, or who themselves have served a period of remand or custodial sentence and have a care-experienced sibling.



The project will also employ a care-experienced Project Officer to work alongside the Research Officer and Families Outside staff. This project will end in October 2023 at which time a final report will be published, along with an accessible version for children and young people and related resources. At this time a number of events will also be held to disseminate the findings.

Virtual Hearings Study

In February 2022 we launched a study that aims to explore how virtual hearings are viewed by children, young people and their caregivers. The research, which is being co-produced with the young people who sit on the OHOV Board involves a number of strands:

- ★ A survey conducted with 242 foster and kinship carers in March 2022 is currently being analysed to explore the perceived impacts of virtual Hearings on children and young people. The analysis will also explore barriers and facilitators of participation, taking into consideration the changes that have been made to virtual Hearings over the course of the pandemic.
- ★ Interviews and focus groups will be conducted with parents, foster carers, kinship carers, residential carers and secure care staff about their views of participating in virtual Hearings.



requests for early reviews of decisions. Face-to-face Hearings will be compared with virtual Hearings conducted with and without RAVHI.

The findings of the virtual Hearings study will contribute to SCRA's 'Keeping The Promise 2021-2024' strategy by trying to understand how the use of virtual Hearings impacts upon the participation and rights of children and families, and whether there is a desire for virtual Hearings to remain part of the offering made to children and families around participation as we continue to learn to live with Covid-19.

These interviews will aim to understand how attending Hearings virtually differs from the experience of face-to-face participation. They will also explore perceptions about the impact of virtual Hearings on decision making, rights and participation.

★ Participatory research will be undertaken with children and young people to explore their views on Virtual Hearings. This research will explore the same issues that will be explored with parents and carers, but will adopt a child-centred and child-led approach to data collection. This element of the study is being coproduced with OHOV Board Members and one of the first planned outputs for this aspect of the work is the development of a participatory research toolkit that can be used in wider SCRA research and consultation activities with children and young people.

★ Case File Analysis using data routinely collected by SCRA in relation to Children's Hearings will be undertaken to explore the inclusion of the child's voice within Hearings held during the pandemic. Data on the decision making process will also be recorded, including the effect of Hearing type on rates of continuations, deferrals, appeals and



OUR BOARD

SCRA operates under the direction of an eight person Board. As a Non-Departmental Public Body, SCRA's Board - although acting independently - is ultimately accountable to Scottish Ministers, and Board Members are appointed by Ministers.

Our Board Members reflect a wide range of experiences and backgrounds in relation to children and young people. The Board plays a significant role in setting the strategic direction of SCRA, and in challenging the organisation to ensure we deliver our plans.

More information about our Board, including a full Register of Board Members' Interests, can be found on our website at www.scra.gov.uk.

CHAIR

Michelle Miller (appointed 2018)

BOARD MEMBERS

Catherine Robertson (retired 2021)
Anela Anwar (re-appointed 2018)
Martin Teye (re-appointed 2020)
Suzanne Vestri (re-appointed 2020)
James Edgar (re-appointed 2021)
Tam Baillie (appointed 2018)
Kay Barton (appointed 2021)
Lorraine Moore (appointed 2021)



LOOKING AHEAD BY NEIL HUNTER, SCRA'S PRINCIPAL REPORTER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE REFLECTING ON 2022/2023 SO FAR...

In this coming year (2022/23) SCRA faces both challenge and opportunity in equal measure. We will make further progress in and contribution to organisational and Hearings System recovery, will reduce delay which has accumulated during this acute, unprecedented time and will gradually, but fully reopen our Hearing centres to children, young people and their families following a further stop-start year.

We will keep the best of what we have achieved during the last two years – in particular I am thinking here about more diverse forms of participation in Hearings, many of which we were forced to implement, but some of which has shown great potential to be part of our improved toolkit in the future.

We will embed and mainstream virtual Hearings across our service, whilst retaining a small national support team. Children and young

people have told us they want increased choice in how they can participate in their Hearings and we must deliver this in sustained and consistent way.

That means changes to the way we organise ourselves in SCRA, changes to our roles and how we perform them and further modernisation of our working arrangements.

SCRA staff are highly skilled, knowledgeable and committed and we will meet these challenges with a real enthusiasm and focus to keep improving the experiences for children and young people coming to and fully participating in their Hearings.

We have a massive opportunity ahead in 2022/2023 as we prepare internally to Keep The Promise. We will enthusiastically engage with the Hearings System Working Group, we will bring the experience

and knowledge of our workforce to bear in the planned redesign work and we will push ourselves every day to stay true to the vision of The Promise.

This will mean children, young people and their families can be supported much earlier than they are now. In addition, children and young people who need help and protection can have rapid access to it via the Children's Reporter and the Hearings System – who will do their work with a renewed sense of care and passion and commitment to rights of children, the dignity of their families and a real focus on delivering the best outcomes we possibly can in a safe, supportive and responsive environment.

I want to thank all our partner agencies for their help and support over 2021/2022 – another really difficult time for all. I want to recognise and respect all of the young people of Our Hearings,

Our Voice who have guided us, challenged us and held us to account to do ever better. I also want to pay huge tribute to SCRA staff who have yet again gone above and beyond every day to help keep Scotland's Children's Hearings System moving forward.

My best wishes to everyone for the year ahead.





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SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Head of Service: Lisa Bennett, Head of Strategy

Date: 21st September 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:

EHRIA Duties: Not Applicable

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

1. Introduction

- 1.1 SCRA is committed to Keeping the Promise and to working positively and effectively with our partners in doing so.
- 1.2 This report seeks to provide the Board with a high level update on the work being undertaken to address the Promise in SCRA in the previous period.
- 1.3 SCRA's Keeping The Promise Programme Board continues to oversee delivery and receives detailed reporting to ensure that plans are supported, aligned and that any risks or issues are visible.

2. Progress Update

- 2.1 There has been a great deal of activity across both reform and improvement since the report to Board in June.

Staff engagement:

- 2.2 A series of face to face staff engagements took place throughout June. The Keeping the Promise Programme manager, supported by members of the team, visited every locality for a half day to update them on the work and answer any questions that they had, and to undertake a consultation exercise with them - around the questions posed on the Hearings System Working Group HSWG Issues List.
- 2.3 These sessions received a great deal of positive feedback – people feeling better informed, more involved, and not underestimating the impact of just taking some time together as a team (and face to face) away from operations to talk, think and explore.
- 2.4 Further web events have taken place to bring staff together and continue to work through the questions posed. The staff engagement work on the Issues list is nearing completion with the final sessions taking place in early September. The outputs of the staff sessions will inform the work of the co-design teams and form the basis of a report on SCRA for the consideration of the HSWG by the end of October. A draft report will be presented to both EMT and the Programme Board in due course.
- 2.5 The June managers event provided opportunity to spend the afternoon with all managers across the organisation considering the issues list, our thoughts, ideas, frustrations and priorities – this work will also feed into the outputs.
- 2.6 Information sessions have been scheduled for November at which the findings from staff engagement will be presented back to staff along with information as to how their views, proposals and observations have been taken forward and will influence the process. The aim is to ensure that staff are kept up to date with the redesign work, recognise that their own time and feedback is valued and are informed as to how their views and proposals will be taken account of.

- 2.7 Members of the Keeping the Promise team have been working with Comms to produce regular podcasts to provide staff with another way to stay informed.

Co-Design and Reform

- 2.8 As trailed in the June report, a Collaborative Redesign Project has been initiated. This is a partnership between the Scottish Government's Office of the Chief Designer, The Promise Scotland, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and Children's Hearings Scotland.
- 2.9 The project is working on the consultation / engagement and design that is needed to produce proposals for redesign of the Children's Hearings System (Plan 21-24 The Promise).
- 2.10 The collaborative redesign project is overseen by the [Hearings System Working Group \(HSWG\)](#), who have been tasked with producing the proposals and providing them to the Scottish Government by Spring 2023.
- 2.11 The three co-design project teams focus on different parts of the Hearings System and are based on the [Hearings System Working Group Issues List](#) categories:
- Avoiding the need for compulsory measures of supervision ("Before")
 - Children and their Hearing ("During")
 - Meeting the needs of children after their Hearing ("After")
- 2.12 The work of the co-design project teams will provide the basis of the information that will be used by the Hearings System Working Group to create their recommendations. The HSWG will also take into account commissioned research, scans of existing research and information on the operation of systems in other jurisdictions. The HSWG next meets on 26 September, with our next Programme board scheduled on 27 September to allow us to debrief. The HSWG will report in April 2023 and already has the commitment of Government to bring the recommendations into legislation in the form of a Promise Bill.
- 2.13 The requirement for this piece of work was three part time resources from SCRA for three months to be part of the core teams and an additional six resources are required a day a week during this period to be part of the wider engagement.
- 2.14 SCRA have resourced this and backfilled where necessary. The teams began work at the end of August following a delayed start from May. The Issues List questions have been categorised and the relevant questions for the three teams have been re-framed to suit the design process. The design process utilises the phrase 'How might we' in order to explore themes and generate ideas around different processes and procedures e.g. 'How might we redefine which professionals attend a hearing and their role to ensure the right decision at that time is made for the child or young person?'

- 2.15 The teams have been provided with an intense schedule of meetings over the course of the three months with a view to the work concluding 18th November. The output of this work has yet to be agreed in terms of format but may take the form of a 'to be' map.
- 2.16 The Keeping the Promise Programme manager is overseeing work across all three teams to ensure we are aligned, sharing information, and have the support/guidance required. The Programme manager has regular meetings set up with the Promise Programme manager to have open conversations about the project, reflections, improvements etc. and these have proven to be very helpful.
- 2.17 An EMT 'sense making' session is planned for October to give EMT an opportunity to see the themes and ideas coming through and to consider any key messages to be fed into these sessions.

Improvement

- 2.18 Work continues across the improvement projects that have been defined, agreed and have charters in place.
- 2.19 We are very conscious in all of our improvement activity of the enormous pressure that localities and partner agencies continue to be under and are therefore mindful of the current ask – focussing on areas that can be worked on centrally where possible and asking for opt in only. The multi-agency language project has been meeting regularly, has defined its scope and deliverables and has been offering learning experiences to staff.
- 2.20 We have been working closely with the CELCIS VIP group to take forward some very tangible asks as well as develop improvement projects to do this. One of the main areas of work with VIP is around Child centred scheduling. This is a project that has been within the route plan and now has the support of both VIP and OHOV to work with us to look at what this means and develop tests for change. The initial testing that we will be doing – mindful of operational pressures is keeping within the current parameters but giving families greater choice within that. We are looking too at formalising the process around linking in from school (if that is what YP chooses)
- 2.21 Work continues around pre-hearing packs and considerations for preparation of young people coming to hearings.
- 2.22 The Promise team all undertook QI training in the spring to support the improvement work. This is being rolled out to the teams looking at hearings scheduling next.
- 2.23 The Keeping the Promise Programme Board continues to meet to oversee delivery of the Route Plan for improvement and reform, to consider communications and to assess any escalated risks.

3. Recommendation

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

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Board Dates January 2023 to December 2023

Accountable Member: Board Chair

Date: 21 September 2022

Recommendation:

To approve SCRA's Timetable of Board and Committee Meetings from January 2023 to December 2023

Reason for Report: Board Approval

Resource Implications: Within approved plans

Strategy: Within approved plans

Consultation: Board Members
Executive Management Team

Equalities Duties: Equalities Impact Assessment not required

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration

Schedule of Board and Committee Meetings 2022

Board Meetings - 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Board Meeting	Wednesday 25 January
	Wednesday 29 March
	Wednesday 21 June
	Wednesday 20 September
	Wednesday 13 December
Board Development Day	Wednesday 19 April
	Wednesday 08 November

Audit and Risk Committee - 10.30 to 1 p.m.

Audit & Risk Committee	Thursday 24 February
	Thursday 25 May
	Thursday 24 August
	Thursday 23 November

Remuneration and Nominations Committee required)

Remuneration & Succession Planning Committee	Wednesday 21 June
	Wednesday 13 December

CHS/SCRA Joint Meeting of Boards 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

CHS/SCRA Joint Meeting of Boards	TBC
	TBC

All meetings will be arranged via MS Teams and where appropriate a hybrid meeting will be arranged, locations to be advised.