

AGENDA

		Papers	Action
1.	Apologies		
2.	AOB		
3.	Note of Previous Meeting	August 2023	All
4.	Matters Arising		
5.	National Partnership Agreement Review	Attached	NH/MS/SD
6.	Review of the Role of the Reporter	Attached	
6.	JNCC update		
7.	2023 SCRA staff survey		
STANDING ITEMS			
8.	Inclusion & Diversity Steering Group	Verbal	SD
9.	Health and Wellbeing Group update	Attached	NH
10.	HR Sub Group Update	Verbal	SD
11.	Programme Board update		NH/SD
12.	Policy update (a) Hearings for Children - update (b) Care and Justice Bill – stage 1 conclusion (c) UNCRC – introduction of Bill		NH
13.	Financial Update	Attached	RMack
14.	New Risks	Discussion	All
	Date of next meeting: 20 February 2024, 10.30am		

Present:

Neil Hunter, **(NH)** – Principal Reporter/ Chief Executive (Meeting Chair)
 Monica Sweeney **(MS)** – Branch Manager
 Melissa Hunt, **(MH)** - Policy and Public Affairs Manager
 Paul Mulvanny, **(PM)** - Senior Operational Manager
 Helen Etchells, **(HE)** - Senior Operational Manager
 Ross MacKenzie **(RMackK)** – Finance Manager
 Susan Deery **(SD)** – Head of HR
 Pamela Armstrong **(PA)** – Governance Officer, Minutes

	Item	Timescale	Action
1.	Apologies Maryanne McIntyre Lynn Hobbs Adele McKormick		
2.	AOB Stress Risk Assessments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MS asked if consideration can be given to including specific questions around stress in the next staff survey. MS advised stress and related issues were a concern discussed during the last Branch meeting. Staff survey planning sessions will include a discussion on a health and wellbeing sessions with a particular focus on stress and resilience. The forum was reminded there is a Wellness Action Plan that all staff can complete and discuss with their line managers during supervision. The plan is also included in the draft supervision framework, reminding managers that they should be discussing various wellness related items with staff, at least annually. This item will be discussed further at the HR Sub Group meeting. It was discussed that one of the positive takeaways from the last staff survey is that people feel well supported by their managers. There is a good opportunity to with the reinvigorated supervision framework, with a real focus on the well-being action plans, to capture those individuals who are not feeling resilient and who feel like they need additional support. 		

	<p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health and Wellbeing Group to look at the well-being action plan in terms of making sure it is known it is a tool that can be used if you have people on your team particular stress or issues with resilience or burnout. There are tools to help both managers and individuals identify what the issues are, what the triggers are, the circumstances, which stresses are an issue and then importantly start to put in place things that will help support and mitigate distress. • If after promotion of the available tools a more focused stress assessment or burnout reviews is deemed appropriate this can be brought to a future meeting. 		
3.	<p>Note of Previous Meeting The minutes of the meeting were agreed.</p>		
4.	<p>Matters Arising Covered within the agenda.</p>		
5.	<p>National Partnership Agreement Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SD feedback a draft revised partnership agreement is currently with MS for review and comments. • The revised agreement is more accessible and readable, with a clear flow, making it more visually attractive, with contemporary content and reflects our current practise. • The agreement contains guidance and direction to managers and stewards about the day-to-day mechanics are working together and communication and early discussion, at local and national levels. • The revised agreement creates a good opportunity here, both to raise the profile of partnership and to reinforce the value of being a member of UNISON. • Flyers will be available at the staff event, highlighting the benefits of UNISON membership. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNISON newsletter to members to include a partnership section. 		
6.	<p>JNCC update SD provided the following verbal update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The JNCC have met recently to discuss the currently staff pay offer. A member's ballot will be issued this week and will run for 3 weeks. • MS has held various meetings with members. Most of the feedback is that the current offer is not sufficient as it 		

	<p>does not hit the inflation rate, which is uppermost in people's minds. The cost-of-living crisis has not gone away, and people are worried.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The non-cash elements of the pay offer do not make much impact on people. • A further JNCC will be arranged at the conclusion of the ballot. 		
7.	<p>2023 SCRA staff survey</p> <p>NH reminded the NPF of the SCRA's commitment to review the survey annually, considering what worked, what didn't and what can be added.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a core set of questions, many of which remain relevant. There are also longstanding areas that were relevant the time but no longer relevant, and new items not currently in the questionnaire. • It is key when introducing the 2023 survey, to demonstrate areas of progress made in relation to the 2022 action plan. • The Health and Wellbeing group agreed for planning of the 2023 staff survey to commence. They have been asked to review the current format and respond with any comments. • MS and MH feedback that the branch have concerns around the culture in pockets of the organisation and has previously suggested that a branch survey is issued to members to get their views. As a number of areas of improvement work are currently underway within the organisation, it was suggested that the staff survey can be adapted to include questions on organisational culture and inclusive behaviour standards. This will be discussed further at the planning meetings. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To commence the process of review around the staff survey, with oversight by the Health and Wellbeing Group. 		
STANDING ITEMS			
8.	<p>Inclusion & Diversity Steering Group</p> <p>SD provided an update from the last meeting of the Inclusion and Diversity Steering Group, which on this occasion was attended by Ying Zhang, SCRA Board member.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group reviewed its current objectives and discussed progress against these objectives. It is recognised that many of the objectives sit across the organisation. • Planning for the next three-year strategy was discussed. • Sub Group updates were given. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The disability group have done work around 		

	<p>cancer and reasonable adjustments. They have submitted a business case to the NEI Excellence Awards for the neurodiversity Champions network, supported by the EDI group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Glasgow Diversity Inclusion team, continue to bring in external speakers on different subjects and are keen to keep opening that up to the rest of the organisation as well. Other local teams are encouraged to do the same. ○ The race and ethnicity group have been focusing on training, and UNISON's Year of Black Workers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a large focus on training across the organisation this year with a focus on Trans Awareness at this year's staff event. ● The annual report and mainstreaming report were taken to the June SCRA Board, who were particularly pleased with the detail of the report. ● Year on year we need to continue to demonstrate that more mainstream embedding approach. ● Our LGBT chartership with LGBT Youth Scotland concludes this year, however they have agreed to allow SCRA to continue to use the accreditation sign the work required to retain accreditation is completed within 12 months. Due to the volume of work required to gain the accreditation a working group will need to be set up. ● The remit of the Fairer Scotland Group has been reviewed and group are excited to start aligning some of the socioeconomic issues into the work we do as an organisation. 		
9.	<p>Health and Wellbeing Group update</p> <p>SD provided an update from the last weeks Health and wellbeing Group which covered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flu voucher scheme which ends on 25th August ● Update on the 2023/24 pay offer. ● Mental Wealth Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inclusive behaviour framework ○ Trauma Training ○ Learning and development plan ○ Big Team Challenge ○ Focus on men's health, infertility, and cancer. ○ The group will have a stall at the staff event. ● Individual team updates ● Planning for 2023/24 ● Staff Wellbeing ● 2023 Staff Survey 		

10.	<p>HR Subgroup Update</p> <p>SD provided an update from the last meeting of the HR Sub Group which covered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible Retirement Guidance for CONNECT • Wellbeing Update (covered in item 9) • Continual review of the Agile Working Policy and the latest CONNECT update and feedback from the LRM Network • Feedback from the LRM Network • Inclusive Standards Framework, implementation and roll out. • Revised Supervision Framework incorporating performance, annual performance feedback and links into the capability process. Draft currently with MS for her review and comment. • Trauma Training update • Summer newsletter • Learning plan update • Legislative changes around carers • Natal care and protection from redundancy - extended from maternity leave to include when you are pregnant. 		
11.	<p>Programme Board update</p> <p>NH provided the following verbal update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Programme Board met in early August, reflecting on various work that is happening. It was obviously a significant programme board deliberation session. The Board are now in what's categorised as steady stage two, looking at the ongoing review of our current ways of work prioritisation, moving into the next phase by March 2024. • Stage two priorities are around further refinement of the standard operating model, other technical function development of CSAS. • The Board approved next phase of development of the communications work which has been led by Neil McKinley, looking at letters that has been facilitated by the improvements and delivery of document core pack within CSAS. • There has been some technical input from Lidos looking at all our letter templates and opportunities to rationalise, and to also use the document core pack to produce much more flexible and easily adjustable communications. • The Board also prioritised small scale incremental activities that are meeting the criteria of being Promised aligned. • The Board is where all the programme leads come together, share information, and get that sense of 		

	<p>horizontal integration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some further detailed planning work has been done over the course of the summer, bringing the Protect priorities Connect at the digital programme. • The next meeting of the Programme Board is in September and the principle focus of that is going to be to consider the plan but also to think about resourcing. Going into the next phase there will be a requirement for resourcing across the board, within the programme team, the programme manager, project managers but also more broadly in terms of working out which teams will be involved. • The focus of I think as we all said between now and the end of March is getting us into a state of readiness. • Within the steady component, this steady component is really looking at 2024, but we also need the standard medium to longer term stuff that is a complex world because not only are looking in the business as this model. • We need to take a strategic view specifically around work looking at rights-based grounds. If we do that work and we do that well, that will have a direct impact on what the next bit of legislation looks like. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Board update to be added to standing items. • The Programme Board update report to the SCRA Board to be brought to the NPF moving forward. 		
12.	<p>Policy update</p> <p>a)</p> <p>Hearings for Children – update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerial feedback is expected by the end of the year. • Government officials are working away in the background with the whole number of partners, including SCRA, having conversations and looking at mapping some of the current ongoing activities. They are taking cross portfolio positions with government policy officials reaching out across different policy domains. • The government are taking a really thorough approach to all of the recommendations from the hearings for children report and have taken each separate recommendation and tasked people with responding to those individual recommendations to look at the viability and resourcing that would be required and how that links into the kind of culture and ethos of the hearing and whether that's something that is feasible for 		

	<p>consideration or it not feasible, the reasoning behind that.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to be mindful of keeping children out of the system. While this is certainly something that We've aspired to, there are consequences when we do that. For some children, which may not be the consequences we want. 		
b)	<p>Care and Justice Bill – stage 1 conclusion</p> <p>NH introduced the Stage 1 Report for Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a piece of legislation that is getting scrutiny from a number of committees including the Justice Committee, Finance and Administrative Committee, and the Finance Minister. • Definition of a child continues to be one area the committee want to see revised with the definition of a child up to the age of 18 years. • With discussion around parental rights and responsibilities and attainment of 16 years and that change in parental at that stage, how are going to try and work within that slightly different framework? The government have very helpfully agreed to do a detailed analysis of all linked legislation. • Stage 2 will be much more significant in terms of reshaping aspects of the bill. 		
c)	<p>UNCRC – introduction of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current understanding is Government is looking to bring the bill back into Parliament at the beginning of the New Year and for it to pass and for it to become operational quite quickly. • the recognition is that the bill can only be act can only relate to Scottish legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament and that it can't have any kind of jurisdiction over legislation that that originates elsewhere, so Westminster legislation won't be subject to any kind of challenge as a result of the provisions in the bill, but that legislation passed by Hollywood will be subject to the provisions. • The court would take a reasonable approach in terms of noncompliance issue. • Other concerns would be legal challenge in relation to aspects of our work that are not included in the care and justice bill that will be included in any kind of Promise legislation but will not be included at the point the UNCRC Act is enacted and will therefore become some sort of legal challenge. The practise team are looking at areas where that that is likely to happen in the transition 		

	<p>period between one set of legislation and bringing in the next bit of legislation.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH will provide a summery overview of key areas of policy and legislative change, ahead of future meetings. 		
13.	<p>Financial Update</p> <p>RMack provided the following update,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2022/23 statutory accounts have now been audited and will be considered by the Audit & Risk Committee on 24th August. SCRA had small revenue and capital underspends in 2022/23 which are available for use in 2023/24. The Board approved £31.05m revenue and £2.7m capital budgets in March. The first tranche of the additional revenue funding required to balance the budget in 2023/24 will be delivered in September as part of the SG Autumn Budget Review process. The remaining element will be secured in January as part of the SG Spring Budget Review process. Early indications from locality budget holders are that there may be forecast revenue underspends, EMT are considering options to ensure all available resources in 2023/24 are fully utilised. Work has started on updating the 5-year Financial Plan with a particular focus on SCRA's funding requirements for 2024/25, including implementation of the Children's Care and Justice Bill. The Chair and Principal Reporter met with the new Director at SG and the Minister to make the case for a published 2024/25 budget allocation that reflects SCRA's needs. 		
14.	<p>New Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The risk around 2023/24 staff pay will be added to the strategic risk register, as is normal at the time of negotiation with SG pay policy team, SCRA and UNISON. No new risks were identified. 		
	<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <p>Tuesday 21 November 2023, 10:30-13:00, By Teams</p>		



SCRA's Partnership Agreement

Introduction

SCRA supports vulnerable children and their families and contributes nationally and locally to child welfare and justice services for the people of Scotland. Over the next few years, SCRA will focus on improving those services in line with the Hearings for Children Reporter, UNCRC and our own continuous improving programme.

To secure the best outcome for children and families we have to maintain a dynamic, improving and progressive organisation, committed to good outcomes and high quality services for children, families and our partners in the Hearing System. To do this we must use all of our resources, particularly the people who work for SCRA to best effect, to work constructively and inclusively with each other, to share ideas and action about how we can change and improve. The key to achieving this is through our staff and by engaging and involving them in the work we do and decisions which affect them. Such a partnership approach enables staff to make a contribution to improving the services we provide to children and families and supports a workforce which is motivated, valued and fully connected with the purpose of the organisation.

SCRA recognises UNISON as its key partner in this Partnership Agreement and as its single Trade Union for the purposes of collective bargaining and negotiation. SCRA is therefore committed to:

- Ensuring we value, engage and involve staff in the work we do
- having a shared commitment to the success of SCRA in providing effective and efficient services to children, their families and key partners
- having a mutual trust, honesty and respect in our partnership as well as ensuring openness and transparency in all our communications
- working to the principles of Fair Work
- drawing on the views of staff to inform the strategic agenda for a secure and positive future
- continuously improving, with the full involvement of staff, the delivery of a people centred service to ensure excellence in the provision of child welfare and justice
- providing a forum for engagement and recognising that consensus, collaboration and inclusion is the best way to improve service planning, change and development in SCRA
- promoting best practice in all areas of staff management including diversity and inclusion staff learning and development and a commitment to maximise security of employment.

This partnership framework outlines how SCRA and UNISON will work together to promote effective partnership, to involve staff and their representatives in the decisions that affect them and their work, and to enable them to influence outcomes.

Our partnership approach will include the consideration of strategic and operational issues that affect service delivery and will be visible, open, with a clear timescales, and will be carried out

through a whole range of staff engagement, consultation and involvement activities and through close joint working with recognised UNISON representatives.

It is the responsibility of managers and staff within SCRA to embrace partnership working, and this will be demonstrated by their commitment to the agreed partnership values in their day-to-day work and relationships.

Communication

SCRA is committed to open communication and will develop effective systems which will allow for timeous communication of partnership information. We believe that communication through team and locality meetings, events and activities, either virtually or face to face is key to successful information flow and understanding. We will support these activities through regular written updates/briefs and use our extensive intranet (CONNECT).

The Partnership Framework

SCRA's Partnership Framework will include a National Partnership Forum and partnership working and engagement at Locality/team level. This will ensure that partnership working will be embedded into all levels of SCRA.

Partnership at National and Locality/team level will focus on early exchange of ideas and initiatives, consider proposals for change and continuous improvement in their respective areas of service delivery or service provision. Our emphasis across our partnership will be on sharing and communicating at the outset and working openly and transparently, ensuring that any issues are resolved at the lowest level possible, thereby reducing protracted and complex employee relations issues.

Our Partnership arrangements will include appropriate Partnership Subgroups to take forward specific issues such as workforce Policy and Procedures.

The SCRA National Partnership Forum will report to the Board of SCRA on a regular basis, in order to review progress in developing and implementing partnership working. The remit and working arrangements for the Forum are outlined in Appendix A.

The Recognition and Bargaining Procedural Agreement and the Procedure for the Settlement of Collective Disputes are found at Appendix E and F respectively.

Neil Hunter
SCRA

Monica Sweeney
Unison

Revised August 2023
Next Review Date – August 2026

National Partnership Forum

Remit of the National Partnership Forum

SCRA is committed to working in partnership with UNISON in recognition of their role to represent SCRA staff and as outlined in the Recognition and Bargaining Procedural Agreement at Appendix B.

The SCRA National Partnership Forum will consider major issues affecting staff including culture, change, employment security, employment practices and learning and development. The partners will be involved in any review and/or any proposal for change in current service delivery, service provision and employment policy.

Facilities

SCRA will provide reasonable time and facilities, including administrative support, as required to support the forum in line with the facilities agreement outlined in Appendix E.

Review and Evaluation

The partners are committed to the regular review, no less than every 2 years, of the partnership framework in the spirit of continuous improvement and development. The evaluation will include review and monitoring of implementation and results from the staff survey and other means of staff feedback.

Managers and UNISON representatives have a joint responsibility to ensure the spirit and ethos of partnership is delivered upon. Managers have special responsibilities for ensuring that their approach to partnership is consistent with a positive, empowering organisational culture that engagement and communication activities, team meetings etc. are well planned and regular and that support to allow staff to influence and shape team and locality direction, plans and strategies are assured.

The National Partnership Forum will oversee a number of sub-groups of the Forum, currently as described below, but may be subject to change, depending on organisational development.

The HR Sub Group - Matters relating to employment policies and practice, partnership working on pay, new roles, descriptions and job evaluation, working methods and practices and learning and development to name key workforce issues will be considered by the HR subgroup. The remit for this Group is attached at Appendix C. .

The Health, Wellbeing and Staff Survey Group – provides a forum for Localities and Head Office to agree, develop, learn and share health and wellbeing good practice and initiatives to benefit all staff across SCRA. The Group is also responsible for the annual staff survey which informs the work programme of the group. The remit for this Group is attached at Appendix C

The Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee, whilst not a sub group of the National Partnership Forum, will deal with matters relating to pay, terms and conditions of employment, pay awards, hours of work, pensions and overall salary structure. The details of how it operates and link to the NPF are attached at Appendix D.

National Partnership Forum - Working Arrangements

1. Meetings of the SCRA National Partnership Forum will generally take place quarterly and will be chaired alternately by the co-chairs. The co-chairs will be the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive and UNISON Branch Secretary. Additional meetings will be arranged as required with the agreement of the co-chairs. The Forum will consist of up to 4 members of management and up to 4 UNISON Representatives. Meetings of the Partnership Forum will require attendance by at least 2 management and 2 UNISON representatives, to form a quorum and to ensure balance.
2. Items for inclusion on the agenda should be notified in advance of the meeting. The co-chairs will agree the agenda, which will then be distributed together with appropriate documentation to all core members before each meeting. These timescales can be varied by agreement.
3. Minutes will be approved at the following meeting and then published on Connect.
4. The Partnership Forum may establish Partnership Working Groups to deal with specific topics or issues. The membership of such working groups will be determined by the Partnership Forum, and may include any individual who can provide information or expertise. Clear terms of reference will be set for the working groups, and a remit will be agreed, which includes a time frame within which a report to the Partnership Forum is expected.
5. Staff core members must be accredited representatives nominated or elected by UNISON to represent the interests of their members, who are employees of SCRA.
6. Other line managers or employees of SCRA may be invited to participate in the Partnership Forum, and their role will be to enhance effective information exchange and consultation. Participation is intended to be flexible, so as not to exclude individuals who can contribute to partnership working. The co-chairs, on behalf of the Partnership Forum, may jointly invite these co-opted members to a meeting or series of meetings.

Partnership Working at Locality Level

The Locality Management Team (LMT), which manages all decision-making relating to operational matters within the agreed parameters of the Locality Management Teams are formally recognised by SCRA and have delegated decision making authority confirmed in the relevant HR/Finance and Practice Schemes of Delegation. The issues that may be included are reorganisation of staff and relocation of offices, local issues on health and safety, working methods and practices etc.

Locality Management Teams do not have to have a formal 'quorate' as such operational capacity and flexibility on the ground would make this too rigid an approach to be sustainable. However the LMT will comprise all LRMs and LSMs and a minimum of one Locality UNISON Steward – with the exception of larger Localities where (due to staff numbers) the meeting may include a minimum of two UNISON Stewards. Other staff members, e.g. Senior Practitioners may also attend LMT to inform the meeting in relation to practice and operational matters but are not involved in management decisions.

Managers and Stewards are expected to establish a day to day joint working regime and positive, engaging and highly functional relationships.

Managers retain accountability to the Senior Operational Manager for operational decision making, however it is the joint responsibility of Managers and Stewards to ensure all Locality decisions are meaningfully informed by staff views.

Further, to ensure balanced decision-making, the presumption is that all management information will be shared between the partners, (to include financial and budgetary information, information relating to workforce planning and deployment, quality assurance, workload management, property management and development of local protocols/papers/agreements which impact upon working practices). The exception to this will be matters of individual confidentiality.

In the event of disputed issues that cannot be resolved locally, these should be raised with the SOM/Branch Secretary in order to support local resolution. If there are issues of a cross cutting nature or consequence or if still unresolved, then the issue should be escalated to the National Partnership Forum for consideration and recommendation.

Partnership Working at Head Office

Partnership working for Head Office Teams will be managed directly through the HR Team and with the UNISON Branch Secretary/Head Office Stewards. This will principally be for the same issues when they arise as outlined in Locality Partnership Working, including staff survey results for Head Office. In the event of disputed issues that cannot be resolved locally, these can be raised with Head of HR/Branch Secretary in order to support local resolution,

Partnership Working with the SCRA Board

UNISON will have a standing invitation to attend SCRA Board meetings as an observer/partner

The Recognition and Bargaining Procedural Agreement

1. SCRA is committed to partnership working and collective bargaining and the principle of solving employee relations problems in partnership through discussion and agreement and in line with the Fair Work Principles.
2. SCRA recognises UNISON as the Independent Trade Union for representation of staff and members for the following purposes.
 - The individual representation of employees in grievances, capability and disciplinary matters.
 - The collective representation, including consultation and negotiation, of staff or groups of staff on all matters affecting the welfare, working lives or conditions of employment although not restricted to those.
3. SCRA:
 - recognises UNISON as the body representing staff for the purposes of informing and consulting with the workforce through the agreed arrangements outlined in this agreement.
 - recognises full time officials of UNISON or those representatives who are elected by the UNISON branch and which are notified to SCRA on an annual basis following UNISON's annual general meeting and also those which are notified on a casual basis throughout the year.
 - recognises that UNISON representatives fulfill an important role within SCRA and shall ensure that the discharge of their duties as Union representatives will in no way prejudice their career prospects or employment with SCRA.
 - will release those representatives who are elected for training which is legally required for accreditation purposes within the first 6 months of their appointment as a UNISON representative.
 - will inform all new employees of this agreement as part of their corporate induction and will encourage them to join UNISON
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 - will supply UNISON representatives with new starter details, including name and location, for the purposes of seeking to recruit them into UNISON.
 - will undertake to operate a "DOCAS" system of Trade Union subscriptions for any employee requesting this facility and in accordance with its agreement with UNISON.
 - No employee shall suffer discrimination during the course of their employment for membership of a Trade Union or undertaking activities as a UNISON representative or member.
4. UNISON will:
 - arrange for all of its representatives to be provided with appropriate training and credentials for the purpose of recognition contained within this agreement.
 - inform SCRA of the names of all elected/nominated representatives in writing within ten working days of their election and will inform SCRA in writing of any subsequent changes, each time within ten working days of the change having taken place.
 - organise training for the purposes of accreditation with the first 6 months of a representative being elected.

5. SCRA and UNISON agree to set up a Joint Negotiating and Consultation Committee (JNCC) consisting of representatives of both parties to the agreement. The JNCC shall be governed by a written constitution, a copy of which is attached to this Agreement (Appendix D).
6. In relation to grievances and matters of discipline, SCRA:
 - recognises UNISON's right to represent the interests of all or any of its members at all stages during the raising of grievances and the operation of the grievance, capability and disciplinary procedures.
 - undertakes to inform UNISON representatives immediately of the name of any UNISON staff member faced with disciplinary investigation or action to enable UNISON to make appropriate arrangements for representation. This information will be limited to the named members only.
 - will ensure that UNISON representatives will be permitted to accompany any member who has requested this to any meeting(s) with management, which are held to discuss, investigate or determine any arrangements concerning the member's contract of employment or working arrangements. This does not include normal management-staff meetings such as supervision.
 - will, where UNISON or the member has notified SCRA of their representative, provide a copy of all papers and dates of meetings related to the member's concerns or case to the representative.
7. SCRA and UNISON
 - recognise that the provisions of UNISON, the Trade Union Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (S168 - S170)), the Employment Relations Act 2004 and the Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations 2004 and the Trade Union Act 2016 are the minimum required to support effective trade unions and representation. Both parties recognise that it is vital to good employee relations for the workforce to be properly represented by the recognised Union. Furthermore both partners believe that a truly representative and effective trade union will enhance workforce employee relations.
 - agree that where an issue is raised by an individual and which has its impact on more than one individual, the matter will be referred to the appropriate partnership level e.g. National/ Locality for consideration and resolution. Where the matter or issue is localised to a particular area the matter will be raised in the first instance with the locality management and UNISON partners
 - recognise that agreement will not always be possible despite both parties best endeavours. Where a formal failure to agree has been recorded at the JNCC then either party who is seeking to make or resist a change will refer the issue to the formal disputes procedure to seek resolution and seek to avoid the breakdown of employee relations and the avoidance of industrial action.

Partnership Forum Subgroups – Remits

Remit of HR Subgroup

1. SCRA and UNISON will work in partnership on the matters outlined below, within the HR Subgroup.
 - Employment Policies and Practices
 - Inclusion and Diversity
 - Job descriptions, role development and Job Evaluation
 - Working methods and practices including technological development; working practices, new equipment and techniques
 - Reorganisation of staff and relocation of offices
 - Learning and Development
 - Staff amenities
2. Partnership discussions are not limited to the above areas and can include any other item which both partners agree to refer.
3. Where appropriate, and with the agreement of both parties, matters can be referred to the JNCC where they meet para 7 of the Recognition and Bargaining Procedural Agreement.
4. To be quorate the Sub-group will require 4 members to include 2 HR Representatives and two UNISON representatives. It is recommended that management representatives from across the workforce are also invited as members of the HR Sub Group.
5. Joint ratification of the work produced by the Sub-group will be singularly via SCRA's EMT and UNISON's Branch Committee and jointly to the National Partnership Forum for final notification.

Remit of Health and Wellbeing Subgroup

See Pamela for Remit

Appendix D

Constitution of the Joint Negotiating and Consultation Committee

1. The Committee shall be known as the Joint Negotiating and Consultation Committee and also known as the “**JNCC**”.
2. The remit of the JNCC is to establish and maintain an effective structure for good employee relations, for the avoidance of any misunderstanding and for the promotion of joint participation in all matters of common interest and concern on a consultative and negotiating basis, as outlined in Section 5 of the Recognition and Bargaining Procedural Agreement.
3. JNCC is authorised as the sole forum for collective negotiation on matters governed by these collective bargaining arrangements and will seek to negotiate and reach agreement on the matters set out below, but not limited to:-
 - Terms and conditions of employment
 - Pay awards
 - Hours of work
 - Holiday and sickness entitlements
 - Overall salary structure
 - Pensions (LGPS)
 - Voluntary Exit Schemes
4. Meetings of the JNCC shall be held as required with an agenda which shall be issued before each meeting. The agenda shall provide for any other business of an urgent nature to be discussed.
5. The JNCC shall comprise of Employers representatives and UNISON representatives, with an equal balance of representation
 - The Employer’s representatives shall consist of up to 3 members of SCRA’s Senior Management Team.
 - The UNISON representatives shall consist of up to 3 representatives of UNISON who will be selected by the UNISON Branch Executive Committee.
 - SCRA and UNISON shall make every effort to send its nominated representatives to each meeting but substitution will be permitted where it cannot be avoided.
 - SCRA and UNISON shall each be entitled to invite such officers as they feel required to attend the JNCC in order that they may make a particular contribution to the agreed agenda
 - The Principal Reporter of SCRA and the Regional Official of UNISON will have an automatic right to attend the meetings.
 - Draft minutes and action notes will be circulated to the members of the committee within 14 days of the meeting being held.
 - Minutes shall be subject to the agreement of the Committee and will be available prior to the next meeting
 - Meetings shall be judged to be quorate if 2 members of both partners are present.
6. Both SCRA and UNISON may present draft proposals relevant to the remit of the JNCC seeking agreement and these proposals will be in writing and dated. Following discussion at one or more meetings of the JNCC, proposals may be put to both the general membership of

UNISON and SCRA's Senior Team and/or Board, if appropriate, for the purpose of seeking agreement. In addition:

- The JNCC will agree the wording of any amended draft proposal which will be in writing and dated before it is put to the membership or SCRA Board / Senior Team.
 - SCRA and UNISON acknowledge that some matters, particularly those relating to contractual matters, may be subject to individual membership consultation and ballot and may require consultation.
 - Proposals which have been agreed by both parties following submission through their own internal processes will be formally written and recorded at the JNCC.
 - Agreements reached will be implemented immediately following the date they are agreed unless a separate date of implementation has been agreed as part of the overall agreement.
 - There shall be no voting at the JNCC and agreements shall be reached by the agreement of both partners.
 - Neither SCRA nor UNISON will seek to disrupt or delay the tabling, discussion or processing of any proposals for the purposes of avoiding the requirement to seek to consult and negotiate on any matter which both partners have agreed are the relevant business of the JNCC.
 - Both SCRA and UNISON Representatives agree to prepare fully for each JNCC and be prepared to put forward each parties views openly and honestly. Adjournments, although fully acceptable to support the process, should be kept to a minimum where possible.
 - Where either party fails to implement an agreement which has been freely and openly reached and recorded the other partner may record a failure to agree and refer the breach of agreement to the disputes procedure and arrangements to seek resolution for the avoidance of a dispute.
7. Members of SCRA and UNISON shall be afforded reasonable facilities to visit and communicate with all offices and staff of SCRA for the purpose of progressing the business of the JNCC.

Time off and Facilities Agreement

Function of UNISON representatives and officials

1. SCRA and UNISON recognise that the employee relations functions of representatives and officials are important duties in addition to their duties as employees of SCRA. Their functions and responsibilities are as follows:
 - To be responsible to and for a group of members
 - To undertake employee relations duties operating within the policies of UNISON and SCRA. Issues may include members' grievances, discipline, capability, learning and development, health and safety, inclusion and diversity issues, terms and conditions, and any matter listed in this Agreement
 - To seek full UNISON membership amongst all employees of SCRA
 - To communicate with members and to communicate with management in partnership structures and the Joint Negotiating bodies and with the relevant Union bodies
 - To represent UNISON in the joint negotiating and joint consultative infrastructure at local, regional and national level
 - To meet with other representatives, officials or full-time UNISON officials on matters covered by this Agreement
 - To attend meetings of UNISON of which the person is a representative or of which they are an official, (such as Branch or Branch Committee Meetings)
 - To convene meetings of members or representatives to meet the requirements of collective bargaining
 - To seek to ensure that agreements are adhered to
 - To organise meetings of members during working hours in accordance with the ACAS Code of Practice, prevailing local agreements or to meet the requirements of appropriate legislation concerning consultation.
2. This document sets out the formal arrangements regarding Trade Union duties and activities, in accordance with the legislative framework. It is recognised that it is not possible to be prescriptive about all duties, activities and the time required to carry them out.

Time off for Trade Union Duties

3. SCRA will grant the facility for the release of the equivalent of one full time staff member for the purpose of fulfilling the Senior Representation requirement and organisation of SCRA's UNISON branch. The Branch Secretary or in their absence, the Branch Chair, will agree with the Head of Human Resources for each financial year how this facility will be allocated to the Branch Executive. SCRA recognises that election as either a UNISON Officer and/or UNISON representative is for a period of one year and further recognises that UNISON Officers and/or Representatives can hold office for an unlimited number of years, subject only to their remaining in the employ of SCRA.
4. The release on UNISON duties will be treated in the same manner as if it were a professional secondment of one year for the purpose of employment protection. The seconded UNISON representative will retain and be paid the full package of pay and conditions which they would normally have received had they been working, including all allowances and will retain all their

employment rights including those rights to professional learning and development. This includes consultation and representation in the event of the re-structuring or re-organisation of SCRA which includes their substantive post.

5. Where the facility time agreement is utilised by an individual on a part time basis, they will be entitled to return to their full time SCRA post at the end of their period of Trade Union secondment.
6. At the end of the period of Trade Union secondment, the UNISON representative shall be entitled to return to their substantive post or suitable alternative employment if the secondment period has exceeded SCRA's Secondment Policy and the secondee has waived their rights to their substantive post.
7. SCRA will grant paid time off at the members normal rate of pay and in line with SCRA's policies and procedures, during working time for:

Accredited representatives: to carry out duties that are concerned with any aspect of collective bargaining and representation of individual members, including, but not exclusively limited to, the following:

- terms and conditions of employment including physical working conditions
- termination or suspension of employment and the duties of employment
- allocation of work or the duties of employment as between employees or groups of employees
- discipline, grievance and capability procedures
- activities associated with trade union membership
- facilities for officials of UNISON
- machinery for negotiation or consultation and other procedures; procedures for collective bargaining, disputes, joint consultation, communicating with members and other Trade Union branch officers. Participation, as a UNISON representative, at Scottish Government level at policy making and partnership working committees which relate to the business of SCRA and/or UNISON
- Participation, as a UNISON representative, in meetings of official policy making
- Consultative bodies of UNISON such as annual conferences or regional meetings.
- Representing UNISON membership on external bodies such as committees or working parties within the official Trade Union structure.
- Holding office on official bodies of UNISON.

Training : reasonable time off with pay will be granted for:

- training courses approved by the STUC or UNISON.
- newly appointed UNISON officials and will be granted reasonable time off for initial training in basic representation skills as soon as possible after their appointment and, as a maximum, within six months of election for the purposes of accreditation compliance
- for further training, particularly where the official has special responsibilities
- to deal with changes in the structure or topics of negotiation, or where significant changes in SCRA of work are being considered
- Where legislative changes affect the conduct of employee relations

Health and Safety Representatives: for the purposes of:

- Performing their functions under Health and Safety legislation
- Undergoing such training as is necessary and reasonable for the performance of their duties.
- Attending Health and Safety meetings on local, regional and national levels where appropriate.

Accredited UNISON Learning Representatives: for the purposes of:

- Analysing UNISON learning or training needs
- providing information and advice about learning or training matters
- arranging learning or training
- promoting the value of learning or training
- consulting the employer in relation to such activities
- preparation in relation to such activities
- undergoing relevant training.

UNISON members for the purposes of:

- attending workplace meetings to discuss and vote on the outcome of negotiations
- meeting full time officials to discuss individual and/or collective issues relevant to the workplace
- conducting UNISON elections

8. UNISON undertakes to give sufficient advance notice of UNISON/STUC approved course dates to line managers and will notify SCRA at the beginning of each year of the anticipated calendar of such events wherever possible and the likely number of representatives who will be required to attend.
9. Travelling and subsistence costs will be reimbursed by UNISON to accredited representatives for periods of work approved in accordance with this agreement.
10. Requests for paid time off for trade union duties for representatives shall be made to line managers using the self service function in Itrent requesting time off for trade union duties. Line managers will normally approve requests unless in exceptional operational circumstances and in discussion with the UNISON representative. SCRA shall ensure that all managers are familiar with the commitments and arrangements relating to this agreement and UNISON undertakes to ensure that the time will be wholly utilised on the business of UNISON.
11. SCRA and UNISON agree to make every effort to resolve disagreements in relation to time off for Trade Union duties and activities. Where permission to take time off is withheld, and the explanation or the reason(s) given by the appropriate manager is not accepted, the representative shall raise the matter with the UNISON Branch Secretary and Head of Human Resources. If the matter remains unresolved the Branch Secretary shall raise the matter with the Full Time Official of UNISON who may discuss the matter with the Head of Human Resources.
12. UNISON recognises that SCRA has the right to ensure that its employees who are granted paid time off, spend that time on the matters covered by this agreement and SCRA reserves the right to raise with the Full Time Official of UNISON any concerns it may have regarding the misuse of these facilities arrangements.

13. SCRA will, in line with operational needs, aim to identify appropriate backfill cover for the UNISON Representative who is seconded to the senior representative role and for any UNISON involvement in major partnership or employee relations projects, where appropriate. SCRA will also ensure where a representative is released to undertake UNISON duties, training or any major partnership or employee relations project this is reflected in their workload for the period of the project.
14. SCRA and UNISON will jointly agree the numbers of UNISON representatives involved in each aspect of major project work and discussions between the Joint Chairs of the National Partnership Forum.

Trade Union Organisational Facilities

15. SCRA agrees to provide defined facilities to UNISON representatives to enable them to discharge their duties including access to storage, communication, planning and administration support through the supply of
 - access to office space and secure storage
 - notice boards and Connect
 - telephone, email and access to audio and video conferencing
 - reasonable use of equipment
 - reasonable accommodation for meetings and Trade Union learning.

Requests for Time Off

16. All Trade Union Representatives are required to notify their Manager of the need for time off for Trade Union duties, by giving as much notice as possible by requesting time off for trade union duties via Itrent and through locality partnership discussions.
17. Where operational requirements conflict with the representative's need for time off for Trade Union duties the representative and their Manager will discuss the matter and seek to agree an appropriate solution ensuring that the time off is not unreasonably refused.
18. It is acknowledged that from time to time emergency situations arise which do not allow notification prior to the need for time off. However, in these instances the representative should notify their manager retrospectively to ensure that adequate monitoring of time off for trade union duties is carried out.
19. All time off for Trade Union duties should be recorded on Itrent and the representatives flexi sheet.

Appendix F

Procedure for the Settlement of Collective Disputes

1. SCRA

- agrees and acknowledges the rights and interests of UNISON and its representatives to challenge the decisions and proposals of SCRA in order to protect their members' employment and terms and
- undertakes to ensure and support the creation and use of robust appropriate arrangements for consultation with UNISON through the use of agreed and meaningful procedures especially where major changes affecting employees' interests are concerned.

2. Both partners

- agree that imposition of change without agreement by UNISON and industrial disruption by employees is not conducive to the development of the organisation or the morale of the employees
- acknowledge that this agreement shall not be used to short circuit or subvert the normal and agreed mechanisms for consultation and negotiation on those matters where they have a joint interest
- agree that these procedures shall only be used where the normal procedures for consultation and negotiation have been fully utilised and have broken down
- recognise that collective disputes can hamper and undermine effective employee relations
- acknowledge and agree that the prime responsibility for the settlement of disputes between them rests with SCRA and UNISON.
- agree to observe the terms of this agreement for the settlement of disputes between them
- agree not to take any action which would be in contravention of this agreement
- agree to seek to resolve their dispute at the lowest possible level to the dispute within the organisation and will seek to resolve their dispute without incurring unnecessary delay
- agree to seek the assistance of external bodies in settling their dispute before contemplation of either imposing unilateral action or disrupting the services of the business.

3. The agreed Disputes Procedure includes the following:

- The Disputes Procedure may be utilised by either party to a dispute by notifying the other side of the elements of dispute, a failure to agree a resolution within the normal bargaining arrangements and seek resolution through the procedures for the avoidance of imposition or industrial disruption
- All notifications of the elements of dispute by either side will be made in writing by the appropriate officials
- Where elements are agreed though the parties remain in dispute these elements of agreement will be recorded in writing and 2 copies signed by both partners.
- Prior to seeking the assistance of external bodies, discussion will take place between senior management representatives and senior UNISON representatives.
- Where the dispute has not been settled by JNCC, agreement should be reached to seek the assistance of external bodies in an effort to avoid unilateral action which would be imposed by one party on the other.
- Elements of agreement at any stage in the process will be recorded in writing and 2 copies signed by both parties to the agreement.
- Both parties will refrain from any action which would undermine the efforts of either party to resolve the elements of dispute.

- Both parties agree that assistance could be sought from a number of sources including but not limited to:
 - ACAS conciliation and dispute resolution.
 - The Scottish Government
 - The Scottish Trades Union Congress
 - Equality and Human Rights Commissioner
 - Independent Investigators or Assessors which would be jointly agreed.
- Where the parties agree to use the services of an external organisation, the Senior Officials of both parties will agree the elements of dispute to be addressed, the remit to be given to the external organisation and the general timeframe to be adopted.
- All agreements reached with the assistance of the external organisation will be recorded in writing by the Senior Officials of both sides, with a copy for each side.
- Where agreement has been reached between the parties both sides agree to be bound by those agreements.
- Resolutions reached between the parties at this stage will incorporate an undertaking that should either party determine that the agreement is unsatisfactory they will seek to resolve this without recourse to unilateral action or industrial disruption and will agree an independent assessor to review the agreement 6 or 12 months following the agreed resolution.
- Final resolution will be the acceptance by both parties of the outcome of the review and recommendations made by the assessor.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF REPORTER

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter/
Head of Human
Resources

Date: 20 September 2023

Recommendations:

1. To note the intention of the Principal Reporter to review the role of the Reporter in response to the rapidly changing policy, practice and operational environment
2. To approve the planned consultation and review process of the core role of Reporter
3. That the Board will receive updated reports at key points of the review process – specifically at the conclusion of Phase 1 and highlighting financial implications, risks and other significant issues

Reason for Report: For Board approval

Resource Implications: Additional Resources required to support the process

Consultation: EMT, UNISON

Equalities Duties Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment Completed – to be completed once the review process has been approved by the Board

Document Classification: Not Protectively Marked

1. Background

- 1.1 The Board will be aware of the transformational changes that SCRA is currently considering/planning. These changes are being planned as a result of our own continuous improvement programme, the implementation of the Children's Care and Justice Bill (CCJB) and the Hearings for Children Report a key part of Keeping the Promise. SCRA is currently considering what these changes will mean and the impact that they will have on roles, workforce and partnerships.
- 1.2 Even before the final conclusion, legislative changes and approval of hearing system redesign recommendations, it is clear that the role of the Reporter will change, develop and potentially expand. For example, we know that the planned introduction of 16/17 years old to the Hearings System will bring more complexity of need, more leading of contentious evidence and an increased risk profile in aspects of referral (e.g. potential increases in referral of offences with elements of significant harm). In addition the Hearings for Children report recommends that the Reporter works in an increasingly relational way with children and young people at an earlier stage and in advance of developing grounds. The recommendations on changes to the current grounds hearing model and our work at court, are additional significant changes. All of these will have a fundamental impact on the skills, knowledge, experience and learning needs for our core role.
- 1.3 As well as the impact of the rapidly changing external environment SCRA has, over the past few years, consistently heard from our Reporters, via the staff survey, responses to pay awards and directly to members of EMT, that the role of Reporter is no longer remunerated in the same way as public sector comparators like Procurator Fiscals and other public sector legal roles. Whilst these are only a few of the comparators we assess against, SCRA has committed to undertaking a full pay and benchmarking exercise on the role of Reporter, in partnership with UNISON, during 2023/24. This process commenced in August 2023.
- 1.4 The role of Reporters and its associated grade has not been reviewed or assessed by SCRA in well over 15 years. Whilst the fundamentals of the role have not significantly changed during that time, the absence of any systemic process of review goes some way to understanding how the role has fallen behind some key comparators. A copy of the current job description is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.5 Although the focus of the review will be on the core role of Reporter, it will be invariably challenging to conclude that exercise without considering the impact of the outcome on associated roles, like Senior Practitioner, Assistant Reporter and Locality Reporter Manager.
- 1.6 It is anticipated that to conclude this review in full, this will need to be undertaken in two phases. This is due to the fact that SCRA and key partners, such as Children's Hearings Scotland, will have a need to undertake some in-depth redesign work around how we support the hearings process and the role

of the Reporter in Hearings and Court with the introduction of a professional paid Chair.

- 1.7 This paper sets out a draft process, structure and timetable for the review of the role of the Reporter.

2. Process

- 2.1 As this review will be of interest to a large group of SCRA's workforce, it is important to be as inclusive and transparent in our planned consultation as well as being clear on the process to help manage expectations on the timescales and outcomes.
- 2.2 As stated in 1.6, it is proposed that this review is undertaken in two phases, firstly to collect baseline information and secondly to enable full and detailed consideration and assessment of all the dependencies and transformational change elements that might impact on the future role of the Reporter. An indicative draft plan is attached at Appendix 2 albeit we will require to be flexible in our approach to respond to emerging themes, issues and expectations on the role.
- 2.3 A key aspect of the initial planning process is to ensure that adequate resourcing is available for this key work. This resource has not yet been fully defined. However it must bring together three key components – credibility, and sufficient capacity and resilience to conclude the review programme. There will be a requirement to provide consistent leadership and support for the project team alongside a strong communications and engagement strategy. To deliver this it is intended to appoint a project lead for this review and consideration will be given to the option of either seconding a lead LRM (or other internal Reporter experienced role within the organisation) or appointing an external consultant to undertake this exercise (or elements of both).
- 2.4 The Children's Reporter is a unique role insofar as you can't train as a Reporter outside of SCRA – you can bring transferrable social work and/or legal skills with you - but you must complete a two year Professional Development Award on appointment to SCRA. As a consequence the preference would be to appoint an internal lead to work alongside the HR Team, and in partnership with UNISON. This will add a significant level of credibility to the review.
- 2.5 It is anticipated that the process itself will involve the following:-
 - project review of key information
 - surveying postholders and line managers on current and future developments of the role
 - planned series of face to face consultation with postholders, aligned roles and Senior Team
 - consultation with key partner bodies such as CHS, Sponsor Team on the redesign work which may impact on the functions and responsibilities of a Reporter.
 - underpinned by a robust communications strategy throughout the review

- underpinned by regular discussions on progress and findings of the review with the Board and Sponsor Team
- assess timescales further as the review progresses to ensure that all aspects of the role are considered including the impact of any new legislation which is not currently being progressed until 2025.

2.6 The draft plan at Appendix 2 details a timeline well into 2025. It is acknowledged that this might seem an overly lengthy process and one which postholders might be challenged by. However, the transformational change elements will take some time to fully consider and understand, as well as align themselves with any potential legislative changes. It is our intention to conclude the review of the role with a job description that can support the organisation and postholders for the next 10 years and so it needs to capture all expected changes within this review period.

2.7 We have committed to working in partnership with UNISON on this review.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Board are asked to:-

- To note the intention of the Principal Reporter to review the role of the Reporter in response to the rapidly changing policy, practice and operational environment.
- To approve the planned consultation and review process of the core role of Reporter.
- That the Board will receive updated reports at key points of the review process – specifically at the conclusion of Phase 1 and highlighting financial implications, risks and other significant issues.

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. **JOB TITLE** **REPORTER**

2. **JOB PURPOSE**

Deliver an effective and efficient service to children and families in line with corporate strategies and policies and relevant legislation.

3. **ORGANISATIONAL POSITION**

Immediate Line Manager: Locality Reporter Manager

Peers: HO professional staff
Reporters
Locality Support Manager

Management Responsibilities: None

4. **DIMENSIONS**

Locality team staff, ranging from 4 to 25 people.

5. **PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES**

- Ensure the delivery of an effective and high quality service for children and families by the prompt investigation and assessment of referrals in line with practice guidance.
- Ensure decisions are made in the best interests of the child in accordance with SCRA policy and guidance.
- Prepare grounds of referral for any child who may require compulsory measures of supervision.
- Ensure referrals are processed and decisions communicated appropriately to children and families and other relevant parties in accordance with SCRA's procedures.
- Work closely with support staff to ensure the effective administration of the hearings process.
- Prepare and conduct relevant proceedings in court.
- Engage effectively with key local partners to influence and ensure co-ordinated action and service provision for children and families.
- Participate constructively as a team member to ensure consistency of practice and the development of effective systems, policies and procedures.

6. QUALIFICATIONS, TRAINING, EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Degree in social work, law, education or other relevant discipline
- Evidence of continuing professional development
- Experience of working in a related field
- Understanding and knowledge of the operating environment of the Children's Hearing System and the issues affecting it
- Computer literate
- Excellent communication skills, oral and written
- Influencing skills
- Assessment and investigative skills
- Decision-making skills
- Team-working skills
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Time management skills
- Flexible and adaptable approach

7. COMMUNICATIONS

Internal: Locality Teams and HO staff.

External: Children and families, panel members, sheriffs, professionals in other agencies

8. PRINCIPAL CHALLENGE

To achieve the right outcomes for vulnerable children.

Appendix 2

Draft Review Plan – to be confirmed with Appointed Project Team

Start Date	Description	Lead	Completion Date
Phase 1			
August 23	Commence pay benchmarking exercise on role of Reporter and gap analysis	Sub Group of JNCC - HR Team and UNISON	December 23
September 23	Board Approval on Review of Role of Reporter	Head of HR	September 23
October 23	Appoint Lead for role review	Head of HR	October 23
November 23	Assess impact on role of Reporter from Programme Protect, CCJB, HSWG report, staff survey and pay and benchmarking exercise	Project Lead and Head of HR, UNISON	December 23
January 24	Initial consultation exercise with Reporter workforce –survey plus face to face consultations sessions with Reporter, LRM, Senior Practitioner and Assistant Reporter workforces.	Project Lead and HR Rep - UNISON	April 24
March 24	Consider outcome of pay and benchmarking exercise on 24/25 pay offer development	Head of HR	April 24
Phase 2			
April 24	Consider data gathered from consultation exercises assessed against research from November 23. Also consider again further outputs and recommendations from Programme Protect and emerging redesign work Consider any additional capacity (external and internal) to ensure conclusion within timescales	Project Lead – HR Rep - UNISON	April 24 April 24
April 24	Engage with the joint design work team and with key partners re hearings scheduling and other	Project Lead	October 24

	activity and court work		
November 24	Feedback findings from review project and hold second consultation with workforce	Project Lead – HR Rep – UNISON	December 24
January 25	Develop new role description and person specification to include values based references and hold final consultation via survey to revised role	Project Lead – HR Rep	February 25
March 25	Conclude new role and job evaluation of new role	Job Evaluation Committee	March 25
March 25	Business case for additional investment in new role to Scottish Government	Head of HR	March 25
March 25	Consider outcome of Job Evaluation in pay 25/26 offer development	Head of HR	March 25
April 25	Revised role of Reporter effective from 1 April 25	Postholders	April 25
tbc	Backdate any additional investment in new role to effective date of 1 April 25	Head of HR	tbc

SCRA/UNISON
National Partnership Forum
Health, Well-being and Staff Survey group

Agenda – Tuesday 14th November 2023, 10am – MS Teams

	Item	Purpose	Paper	Owner
1.	Apologies Helen Etchells Catherine Nixon Susan Deery Pamela Armstrong			
2.	AOB			
3.	Note of Last meeting	Approve		
4.	Matters Arising			
5.	Mental Wealth Group	Update	Verbal	MS
6.	Biodiversity Reporting	Info	Verbal	NH
7.	Property Improvement Strategy			NH
8.	Wellbeing a) Staff Wellbeing b) Team Wellbeing c) Planning for 2023/24 d) Health and Wellbeing Budgets 24/25	Update	Verbal	NH
9.	Staff Survey	Update	Verbal	NH
10.	Corporate Plan 2024-27	Update	Verbal	NH
	Date of next meeting Tuesday 13 February 2024, 10:00-12:30			

Minutes

In Attendance:

Susan Deery (chair), Alison Melrose, Monica Sweeney, Holly Kilday, Fiona Combe, Pamela Armstrong, Sarah McGhie, Sharon McArthur, Stephanie Spence, Gillian Martin

	<i>Papers</i>	<i>Action</i>
1. Welcome & Apologies	Apologies from Hazel More, Joanne Lee, Morna Sands, Helen Etchells, Colette Gallacher, Neil Hunter, Catherine Nixon, Grace Lennox, Nicola Marshall, Sue Mullen Welcome to Fiona Combe	
2. AOB	Group was reminded that the Flu voucher offer ends next Friday (25 th August). Update on Connect with link. 115 vouchers procured this year on a first come basis with 92 staff members signed up last time check was made. If more than 115 apply, will be added to waiting list and still might receive a voucher as those over 50 years eligible for vaccination through GP.	
3. Note from Last Meeting June 5 th 2023	Noted - Mistake on page 2 – should read 2023 rather than 2022 but otherwise correct.	PA to amend
4. Matters Arising	Pay offer been made to staff on the 9 th August (added to Connect). This was now out for consultation.	
5. Mental Wealth Update	Morna on holiday and group had not met over summer. However, they were taking plans they already had forward. Inclusive behaviour framework – external facilitator being recruited (by end of October. Sessions to be held in localities about this work once this person is in position. Will be looking at values / respect and how SCRA can support each other in the workplace. Will then be a follow up which will focus on the staff code of conduct (again this will be held in localities). Trauma training ongoing – SCRA now have 6 people now attended the enhanced training (NES train the trainer course) so will be able to deliver training internally to staff on the topic.	

	<p>Learning and Development Plan has been developed and will soon be out for consultation. Patricia Stevenson is leading on this work.</p> <p>The Big Team challenge 2023 has ended. A total of 159 staff took part with over 26,000 miles walked during the challenge. Prizes were awarded for first past the finish line (Edinburgh to Paris) as well as for a scavenger hunt. Challenge seen as successful and something people seem to enjoy. Will be looking ahead to 2024 challenge and what staff might like to do (similar type of physical challenge or something different).</p> <p>Mental Wealth Group Update – Men's health will be in focus as well as infertility and cancer awareness. The group will also have a stall at staff event. Had hoped to have an external supplier provide a talk on Intelligent kindness but sadly the person is unavailable that day but are looking at providing this in the future. Workshops on change thought to be good for the staff event given how much change there had been over the last few years (covid, agile working, staff moving internally to different teams etc).</p>	
6. a) Team Update & Planning for 2023/24	<p>Fiona Combes (Grampian) – wellbeing afternoon held in June. This included a mindfulness session and baking which staff had brought in. They also played wellbeing bingo before some of the group went out for dinner and the cinema. A member of staff brought in food they had cooked with a Nigerian flair which was well received. During July / August being holding smaller events such as walks (once a week) and a monthly quiz for staff. Yoga every Wednesday being offered going forward and considering holding a pumpkin competition. There is also a Locality day in September planned.</p> <p>Sharon McArthur (Grampian and Highland) – informed the group there was also a mini freezer with ice lollies and Nutra bullet for making smoothies available for staff. For the Highland Locality day a cruise on the river Ness (Caledonian boat tour) had been arranged for September. They had also arranged little presents that had been sent out to staff throughout the year (example – a small easter egg or a notebook). Some of the staff had also started creating Diamond art pictures as they were also good for mindfulness with the Coo in the Loo being popular. Kits were available on Amazon of different dimensions but did require good eyesight as the little gems were small but the finished product looked really good.</p> <p>Stephanie Spence (Glasgow) indicated that there had been some difficulty with their group meeting but that</p>	



	<p>the last meeting was held in June and another was scheduled for tomorrow and there was a locality day scheduled for the 6th September. New members joined the group and they now held a locality touch down day one a month which included cake and coffee. At the June meeting there had been a focus on hydration during the summer. They had also looked at their budget and suggested holding an event in March. Focus for the immediate future was Christmas event planning and spoke about potential voucher for staff. Also mentioned baking for a penny event in the planning stage.</p> <p>Holly Kilday (SE) – stated that South East had a birthday wheel where staff could receive prizes. There was also a staff development day planned. Over the summer they had a freezer with ice lollies available and had held a lunch a few months ago with pizza / snacks for staff. Volunteering – Christine and Holly are to attend a conference in October on Compassion and Wellbeing Fatigue. Asked if could add poster to Connect about the subject / event which is being run through university of Edinburgh. Mentioned there are speakers coming from the US to attend and will be presentation on a variety of topics. Being held on 7th and 8th October (at Rosslyn institute - cost £10 which includes refreshments). SD suggested doing a case study on Volunteering and link to policy to promote that SCRA permits staff to this).</p> <p>Sarah McGhie (Ayrshire). Jenny / Stephen had left group but Sarah Foran and Linda Wilson had joined. Planning to do a local survey on whether to do a wellbeing day or smaller events throughout the year in the locality. Had not really thought about Christmas yet. Suggested diamond art might be something that could be personalised. For example – could create a kit with the SCRA logo on it.</p> <p>Gillian Martin (Dumbarton). There has been quite a lot of staff sickness and movement of positions lately but did have plant event however. Nothing in prep for the autumn so will do a recruitment drive to attract more members to their group but have found little and often are more helpful for staff. Hoping for a meeting in the next month or so. Staff in locality looking forward to the Staff event in September as it is being held in Perth this time so nice to travel to a different location. Christmas planning already well underway and there is a Team event coming up - a cruise in Loch Lomond with 3 stop off points along the way.</p> <p>Susan Deery (HQ) – group had been around for about year. Group had recently completed a survey in HQ to ask what staff would prefer and a team day had been identified as the most popular activity (as there had</p>	<p><i>HK to liaise with MM to add to Connect</i></p> <p><i>HK, SD and MM to link up & produce case study</i></p> <p><i>SMcA will investigate whether feasible.</i></p>
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	<p>been one when the refurbishments had been completed and the office reopened which staff had enjoyed). There had also been a request for smaller social events in teams. There would also be a Teams session over next 2-3 weeks to bring people together and to gather people's views on the office refurbishment and the results of the last staff survey and any issues raised.</p>	
7. Staff Wellbeing	<p>There had been a boost in moral following the 2022/23 pay offer but now into the 23/24 pay negotiations. Susan has whether the group believed moral was good in the organisation.</p> <p>Sarah – Ayrshire moral not so good. Cost of living and coming back from holiday (holiday blues) and seen moral take a dip. Staff had expressed uncertainty over temporary contracts. Susan updated the group by stating that EMT in September would discuss the topic so an update would be available then.</p> <p>Holly – SE were preparing themselves for refurbishment which would take 14 weeks and was scheduled to run through December. Hoped that these would boost morale. Mentioned the pay offer that had come out in last few days so staff were talking about that.</p> <p>Monica – Also mentioned staff moral and temporary contracts, indicating there seemed to have been lots of movement within the organisation atm but hoped this can be addressed. Indicated that some localities were having difficulty filling positions and, coupled with long term sick leave this had put pressure on staff still working. Meetings would be held this week to discuss the pay offer with a ballot going out to members from Monday (open for 3 weeks due to holiday leave). Update would be provided after that time (when Susan returned from annual leave).</p> <p>Gillian – high volume of movement and sick leave so pressure on those left was having a domino effect which made delivering wellbeing initiative difficult. Felt morale was as low as they had ever seen it but they were doing their best to keep morale high. Felt agile working hadn't helped with a degree of social isolation so were actively trying to engage with staff where possible.</p> <p>Noted - Mental Wealth Group looking at financial support available for staff with Connect having resources and links to support for staff that might be struggling.</p> <p>Holly – LSM has brought vegetables in from her garden which has been good at lifting morale. Suggested that a</p>	



	<p>“How to grow your own food” workshop or tutorial for example could be interesting for staff (perhaps early next year as growing season coming to an end)</p>	
<p>8. Staff Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> March report to SCRA Board 	<p>Neil took report to board which was discussed at the last meeting. Now looking at 2023 staff survey which is normally released at the end of November as this group has accountability for this. MM and NH, SD and Monica to meet to discuss.</p> <p>Noted that for 2021 and 2022, work had been done on the surveys so do we tweak or review of the survey for this yea? Group asked to look at the last survey and consider whether anything should be added / removed with feedback given on Teams group chat. Permission was sought to present as update before next meeting as survey likely to be published before the next wellbeing meeting.</p>	
Date of Next Meeting	14 th November 2023 – 10-12:30	



A young girl with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a bright red coat, is blowing bubbles. She is looking up at the bubbles with a joyful expression. The background is a soft-focus park scene with trees and grass. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

SCOTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

PROJECT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - FINAL

NOVEMBER 2023

LEVEL OF ASSURANCE:

DESIGN	SUBSTANTIAL
EFFECTIVENESS	SUBSTANTIAL

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FOR INFORMATION	AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE	MEMBERS

REPORT STATUS

LEAD AUDITOR(S):	GEMMA MACLEOD
DATES WORK PERFORMED:	30 OCTOBER 2023 - 08 NOVEMBER 2023
DRAFT REPORT ISSUED:	13 NOVEMBER 2023
MANAGEMENT RESPONSES RECEIVED:	13 NOVEMBER 2023
FINAL REPORT ISSUED:	15 NOVEMBER 2023



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEVEL OF ASSURANCE: (SEE APPENDIX III FOR DEFINITIONS)

DESIGN	Substantial	There is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives.
EFFECTIVENESS	Substantial	The controls that are in place are being consistently applied.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS (SEE APPENDIX III)			# OF AGREED ACTIONS
H	0		0
M	0		0
L	1	<div></div>	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF FINDINGS: 1			

BACKGROUND & SCOPE

In accordance with the 2023-24 Internal Audit Plan, it was agreed that Internal Audit would undertake a review of the project management framework at the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA).

The review focussed on how learning identified from SCRA's programme of work under "Keeping the Promise" has been used to improve SCRA's Project Management Framework and therefore the delivery of Programme Protect.

Programme Protect is a new programme of work, as of September 2023, the exploratory stage had just been completed. The overall aim and vision for the Programme is to 'spend less time on processing and more time on the decision making and things that benefit the children and young people.'

Further detail on key processes in place at SCRA can be found at Appendix I.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this review was to provide management and the Audit & Risk Committee with assurance over the design and operational effectiveness of the key controls in place in relation to Project Management. To this end we assessed whether there was a suitable Programme Management Framework in place. We also sought to understand whether an evaluation had been undertaken of previous Programme work and whether learnings from this had been incorporated into the Framework. We made an assessment whether the scope of Programme Protect had been defined and whether the Programme was subject to suitable governance arrangements.

CONCLUSION

As part of our work, we have identified one finding which was assessed as low significance.

We found that there was a suitable Programme Management Framework in place which continues to be developed as SCRA progress in their Programme Management Approach. We assessed that there was suitable evaluation and identification of lessons learned from the Promise Programme and that these were incorporated into the Programme Protect. Finally, we found that there were suitable governance arrangements in place for Programme Protect and reporting took place consistently.

We are able to provide substantial assurance over the design and operational effectiveness of controls in place to manage programmes at SCRA.

OUR TESTING DID NOT IDENTIFY ANY CONCERNS SURROUNDING THE CONTROLS IN PLACE TO MITIGATE THE FOLLOWING RISKS:

- ✓ Project governance arrangements may not be clearly defined and documented.
- ✓ An evaluation of the Promise Programme has not been undertaken.
- ✓ SCRA's Project Management Framework may not have been updated to reflect learning identified from the Promise Programme.
- ✓ The scope of the Programme Protect may not be clearly defined.
- ✓ There may not be established governance arrangements in place for Programme Protect.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICE

During the course of our review, we identified a number of areas of good practice:

- ▶ We found that the Project Management Framework contained all expected areas and that this was developed based on best practice identified by the Scottish Government.
- ▶ Lessons learned logs were kept throughout the Keeping the Promise Programme; we obtained evidence that these lessons have been incorporated into the Programme Management Framework and applied to the Programme Protect.
- ▶ There was an evaluation of performance completed at the end of Phase One of the Reform Project.
- ▶ There was evidence of suitable planning and confirmation of scope for the current stage of the Programme Protect and recognition of the areas which will be further developed as the Programme progresses.
- ▶ We found that there were suitable governance arrangements in place and that these were consistently applied.

DETAILED FINDINGS



DETAILED FINDINGS

RISK: PROJECT GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS MAY NOT BE CLEARLY DEFINED AND DOCUMENTED.

FINDING 1 - REVIEW OF FRAMEWORK AND TERMS OF REFERENCE			TYPE
<p>It is important that the governance arrangements for the Programme are clearly defined and kept up to date.</p> <p>The Project Management Framework Operating Guidance does not specify how frequently the Framework will be reviewed. Our discussions with management found that this is intended to take place at the end of each stage of the Programme. The Terms of References for the governance groups, which are appended to the Framework, stated that they are to be reviewed quarterly, but we found through our discussions with management that this has not been taking place and that these will be reviewed along with the rest of the Framework at the end of each stage.</p>			DESIGN
IMPLICATION			SIGNIFICANCE
There is a risk that reviews of key documents may not take place with sufficient regularity if the review arrangements are not captured; this could lead to decisions being made based on outdated or incomplete information.			LOW
RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION OWNER	MANAGEMENT RESPONSE	COMPLETION DATE
1. We recommend that the review arrangements for the Project Management Framework and appended Terms of Reference are updated to reflect the review arrangements and that these are applied consistently. A review should take place sooner than the end of a Programme stage if there is a known change to the Framework.	Lisa Bennett	Fully agree with recommendation - Operating guidance will be updated to accurately reflect that it, and the terms of reference be reviewed at New stage points - or if there is a known change to the framework, external/internal change that will impact the programme and its governance then these will be reviewed sooner. First review point scheduled for next programme board aligned to stage start up	30 Nov 23

OBSERVATIONS



OBSERVATIONS

- ▶ **Ongoing Development of Project Management Framework** - The Project Management Framework is still undergoing development; a new draft has been prepared with additional Change Management arrangements included, however, tolerances are yet to be confirmed. The Quality Management Approach is also yet to be developed. SCRA intends to review and update the Framework at the end of each stage of the Programme in anticipation of the next stage and the processes that will be required. These areas are not relevant to the work currently being undertaken as part of planning therefore the risk associated with them not being completed at this point in time is minimal.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX I: BACKGROUND

SCRA have been implementing a programme of work called “Keeping the Promise” since 2021 to implement the recommendations raised as part of the Independent Care Review. This programme involved the implementation of several projects under two branches “Improvement” and “Reform”.

Later, as part of work looking at the Business Plan; it was decided to deliver the Business Plan objectives through three programmes of work; Care, Connect and Protect. Each of the programmes represents a strategic aim of the Corporate Plan. This audit focussed on Programme Protect, the aim of which is “spend less time on processing and more time on the decision making and things that benefit children and young people.”. The programme therefore focusses on identifying methods of operating a more efficient and effective service.

A new Programme Management Framework was created to support delivery of the Business Plan and was approved by the SCRA Board in February 2023; this is a developing process, and the Framework continues to undergo update and review. The Framework was developed based on the Scottish Government approved model and scaled for the needs of the organisation. The Framework includes expected areas such as project approval arrangements, roles and responsibilities, governance and reporting arrangements, and change management processes.

The Programme Protect is separated into three stages:

- “Steady” - to Steady the current systems, people and processes identifying quick wins to achieve efficiency (implementation due by the end of 2023)
- “Ready” - get ready for the future by focussing on future legislative change and quality standards. Further discovery and building on prototypes, fleshing out the scope of what will be delivered (implementation due by the end of 2024) and;
- “Go” - full delivery of prototypes and changes (2025 and beyond).

SCRA are currently in the “Steady” stage of the Programme; they have completed the discovery phase and are continuing to plan before moving towards delivery. As part of the discovery phase there was a series of workshops undertaken; this was an approach which was taken from the Collaborative Redesign Project part of the Promise Programme.

Prior to the workshops commencing, there was some work done to gather information on existing issues of inefficiency or ineffectiveness within the organisation. These issues were recorded in a list which was broken down by the different projects within the programme and were used to guide the workshops. The workshops were run to understand current issues in the system and develop insights, define areas of change, generate ideas and develop these ideas into prototypes that can be tested and refined.

In June 2023, the Programme Board was presented with the outcome of the exercise; a paper presenting the prototypes developed by the project teams along with impact soring, prioritisation and dependencies.

A Programme Protect Brief was prepared to outline the scope and objectives of the Programme. There are five projects which make up the Programme Protect:

1. Before (Referrals)
2. During (Hearings)
3. After (Courts)
4. Inputs (Reports)
5. Outputs (Letters)

There are individual Project Plans in place for each of the above projects which outline the aim and scope of the projects.

There are two groups which meet regularly to manage, support, oversee and co-ordinate activities during the programme.

1. The Programme Board is collectively responsible for programme delivery and for ensuring programme outcomes align with SCRA Strategic Goals.
2. The Strategic Programmes Group is a forum for Programme Managers to communicate and co-ordinate information across projects and programmes. This group acts as a filter to the Programme Board and escalates matters up, as appropriate.

There are Terms of Reference in place for both groups which outline their roles and responsibilities.



APPENDIX I: BACKGROUND

There is an eight-weekly reporting cycle in place as below:

- SCRA Board receive an Organisational Performance Report which includes high level progress on the achievement of the Business Plan
- The Programme Board receive Programme Reports & Business Plan Dashboards which cover Programme progress, milestone achievement, forecasts, issues for escalation, and Business Plan progress
- The Strategic Programmes Group receive Programme Reports which cover Programme progress, milestone achievements, forecasts and issues.

There is a high-level timeline in place which outlines when each stage of the Programme is expected to be completed and a more detailed Programme Roadmap Mural Board. There is also a Gantt Chart in place for the current Steady stage which shows when each task is expected to be completed.

A Risk Register is in place for the Programme within Decision Time, the Risk Management System which is used across SCRA. It is intended that, as the Programme moves from planning to delivery, individual Project Risk Registers will be created. A set of Programme risks were identified at the outset of the Programme through discussion with Managers and the Programme Board and new risks are identified in the same way. Key risks are escalated to the Programme Board and an overview Risk Detail Report is shared.

A definition of benefits and the approach to benefits management has been captured in the Programme Management Framework Operational Guidance. In line with this, SCRA have created a Benefits Matrix which captures the expected benefits from the Programme under the following headings:

- People benefits
- Systems benefits
- Change management benefits
- Benefits to children, young people and their families

The Programme Manager and Project Co-Ordinator were responsible for creation of this Matrix with input from Managers. Benefits are currently very high level, and it is intended that these will be refined as the programme moves into delivery. There is a Measurement Plan in place to identify and plan for the data SCRA will need to collect and analyse to inform whether success criteria are met; the Plan is a live document which will be adjusted as the programme proceeds. A 'Hopes and Fears' document has also been created for the programme.

SCRA are currently looking at cost for the programme at a very high level. An update on the Financial Strategy was presented to the SCRA Board in September 2023; this included reference to the Programme Protect and identified that there was a requirement for increased resources for programme activity across the five years of the Strategy. SCRA are currently awaiting the Scottish Government's response to the Hearings for Children Report. It is intended that there will be greater focus on cost as part of the transition from planning to delivery.

When SCRA set up the Programme Protect Framework, some of the managers from the Promise Collaborative Redesign Project were brought in to be managers of Protect Programme projects and were thus well placed to implement learning and good practice identified from the Promise.

There were Lessons Learned Logs maintained for each of the Promise Projects which were reviewed at Keeping the Promise Programme Board meetings. A closure report was produced on conclusion of Phase One of the Reform Project in September 2023, which reviewed performance and captured learning and how this had been incorporated into the Programme Management Framework.



APPENDIX II: DEFINITIONS

LEVEL OF ASSURANCE	DESIGN OF INTERNAL CONTROL FRAMEWORK		OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTROLS	
	FINDINGS FROM REVIEW	DESIGN OPINION	FINDINGS FROM REVIEW	EFFECTIVENESS OPINION
SUBSTANTIAL	Appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks.	There is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives.	No, or only minor, exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls.	The controls that are in place are being consistently applied.
MODERATE	In the main there are appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks reviewed albeit with some that are not fully effective.	Generally, a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives with some exceptions.	A small number of exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls.	Evidence of non compliance with some controls, that may put some of the system objectives at risk.
LIMITED	A number of significant gaps identified in the procedures and controls in key areas. Where practical, efforts should be made to address in-year.	System of internal controls is weakened with system objectives at risk of not being achieved.	A number of reoccurring exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls. Where practical, efforts should be made to address in-year.	Non-compliance with key procedures and controls places the system objectives at risk.
NO	For all risk areas there are significant gaps in the procedures and controls. Failure to address in-year affects the quality of the organisation's overall internal control framework.	Poor system of internal control.	Due to absence of effective controls and procedures, no reliance can be placed on their operation. Failure to address in-year affects the quality of the organisation's overall internal control framework.	Non compliance and/or compliance with inadequate controls.

RECOMMENDATION SIGNIFICANCE	
HIGH	A weakness where there is substantial risk of loss, fraud, impropriety, poor value for money, or failure to achieve organisational objectives. Such risk could lead to an adverse impact on the business. Remedial action must be taken urgently.
MEDIUM	A weakness in control which, although not fundamental, relates to shortcomings which expose individual business systems to a less immediate level of threatening risk or poor value for money. Such a risk could impact on operational objectives and should be of concern to senior management and requires prompt specific action.
LOW	Areas that individually have no significant impact, but where management would benefit from improved controls and/or have the opportunity to achieve greater effectiveness and/or efficiency.
ADVISORY	A weakness that does not have a risk impact or consequence but has been raised to highlight areas of inefficiencies or potential best practice improvements.



APPENDIX III: TERMS OF REFERENCE

EXTRACT FROM TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this review is to provide assurance over the design and operational effectiveness of the key controls in project management in the following areas:

- Framework
- Learning
- Scope
- Governance

KEY RISKS

1. Project governance arrangements may not be clearly defined and documented
2. An evaluation of the Promise Programme has not been undertaken
3. SCRA's Project Management Framework may not have been updated to reflect learning identified from the Promise Programme
4. The scope of the Programme Protect may not be clearly defined
5. There may not be established governance arrangements in place for Programme Protect

EXCLUSIONS/LIMITATIONS OF SCOPE

The scope of the review is limited to the areas documented under the scope and approach. All other areas are considered outside of the scope of this review.

Our work is inherently limited by sampling and therefore will not provide assurance overall project management processes within SCRA. We are reliant on the honest representation by staff and timely provision of information as part of this review.



APPENDIX IV: STAFF INTERVIEWED

BDO LLP APPRECIATES THE TIME PROVIDED BY ALL THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN THIS REVIEW AND WOULD LIKE TO THANK THEM FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION.

LISA BENNETT	HEAD OF STRATEGY & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	AUDIT SPONSOR
ROMA BRUCE DAVIES	PROGRAMME MANAGER	KEY CONTACT
KAREN GARSIDE	PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR	KEY CONTACT



APPENDIX V: LIMITATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Audit & Risk Committee is responsible for determining the scope of internal audit work, and for deciding the action to be taken on the outcome of our findings from our work. The Committee is also responsible for ensuring the internal audit function has:

- The support of the organisation's management team.
- Direct access and freedom to report to senior management, including the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee.

Internal controls covers the whole system of controls, financial and otherwise, established by the Board in order to carry on the business of the organisation in an orderly and efficient manner, ensure adherence to management policies, safeguard the assets and secure as far as possible the completeness and accuracy of the records. The individual components of an internal control system are known as 'controls' or 'internal controls'.

The Board is responsible for risk management in the organisation, and for deciding the action to be taken on the outcome of any findings from our work. The identification of risks and the strategies put in place to deal with identified risks remain the sole responsibility of the Board.

LIMITATIONS

The scope of the review is limited to the areas documented under Appendix III - Terms of reference. All other areas are considered outside of the scope of this review.

Our work is inherently limited by the honest representation of those interviewed as part of colleagues interviewed as part of the review. Our work and conclusion is subject to sampling risk, which means that our work may not be representative of the full population.

Internal control systems, no matter how well designed and operated, are affected by inherent limitations. These include the possibility of poor judgment in decision-making, human error, control processes being deliberately circumvented by employees and others, management overriding controls and the occurrence of unforeseeable circumstances.

Our assessment of controls is for the period specified only. Historic evaluation of effectiveness may not be relevant to future periods due to the risk that: the design of controls may become inadequate because of changes in operating environment, law, regulation or other; or the degree of compliance with policies and procedures may deteriorate.

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**SCRA/UNISON
National Partnership Forum**

Finance update 21 November 2023

Author: Ross Mackenzie – Finance Manager

- The Board approved £31.05m revenue and £2.4m capital budgets in March, on the basis of a SG commitment to fund SCRA's assessed needs in excess of the published budget of £25.2m revenue and £1.9m capital. The first tranche of the additional revenue funding required to balance the budget in 2023/24 (£2.75m) was delivered in September as part of the SG Autumn Budget Review process. The remaining element will be requested in early December as part of the SG Spring Budget Review process. This request will be based on the latest forecasts from budget-holders, inclusive of achievable spending plans and current pay offer. These forecasts are showing significant revenue underspends and, although capital spend is forecast to be broadly on budget, a very large capital spend is still to come in Q4. EMT keep under constant review options for utilising forecast revenue underspends. EMT recently made decisions to reduce the number of temporary contract arrangements whilst accepting that this creates a managed budget risk for 2024/25.
- The Board approved SCRA's latest 5 year Financial Plan in September. This had a particular focus on SCRA's funding requirements for 2024/25, including implementation of the Children's Care and Justice Bill and resources to scale up programme/transition activities from 2024/25. The Principal Reporter and Head of Finance and Resources met with the new Director at SG in late October to make the case for a published 2024/25 budget allocation that reflects SCRA's needs, and last week provided additional briefing papers in support of this. SG are timetabled to publish a 2024/25 budget in early December.
- SCRA's own 2024/25 budget setting process is underway, with budget holders submitting returns by Friday 17 November. As in previous years, these returns will be collated and presented to EMT in early December. The draft budget will be subject to stringent challenge and review in February, and signed off by the Board in March.