

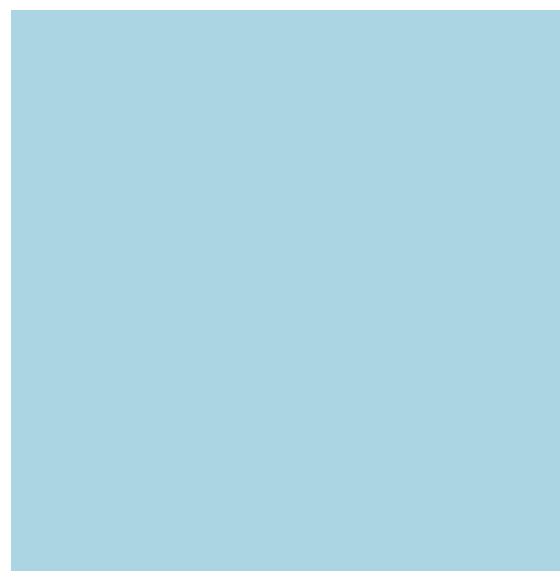
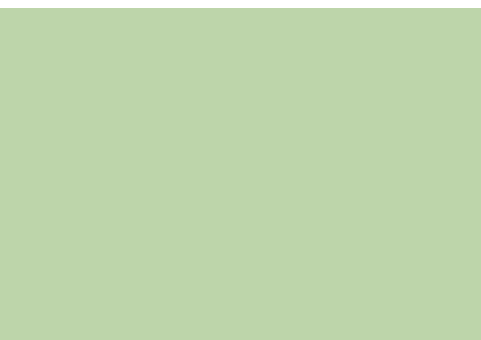
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mainstreaming Report 2023/2024



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION



Inclusion and Diversity
Challenge. Champion. Change.



Foreword

Welcome to our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Mainstreaming Report for 2023/2024. This is our annual update reporting on our work to strengthen and embed equalities, inclusion and diversity across our organisation.

At SCRA, we are fully committed to the vision, values, and ethos of the Equality Act 2010, however, it is not just about legislation - as I hope our report will demonstrate. It is about ensuring we remain an inclusive organisation based on fairness, equality, cultural diversity, dignity and respect.

Putting the needs of children and young people is at the heart of what we do every day. SCRA firmly recognises care experience as a 'tenth' protected characteristic and we continue to review our practice, policies and processes to reflect this and we remain committed to supporting the campaign to have care experience recognised. Furthermore, we are committed to the Fairer Scotland Duty whereby we will look to identify and address socio-economic disadvantage – both of resource and opportunity – to support our workforce, and also the children and families we work with and communities we serve.

As in previous years, 2023/2024 has been a busy year for inclusion and diversity activity across the organisation. From work at national level, to the growing activity in our Localities to ensure inclusion and diversity is fully embedded in every aspect of SCRA.

In fact, a significant focus of the inclusion and diversity work in 2023/2024 has been in supporting our operational Localities to mainstream inclusion and diversity at a local level. We now have at least one specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead for each of our nine Localities. There has been amazing support from colleagues and we anticipate this work will develop further in the years ahead.

We have pledged to do more to ensure we better represent the communities we serve, through more targeted and bespoke approaches to recruitment and selection, with a specific focus on increasing the number of applicants who are disabled and/or from the global majority. We are also committed to addressing our Gender Pay Gap through positive action and our refreshed Women into Leadership Network.

Our new programme work of activity and change preparing us for the transformations as we meet the Hearings for Children recommendations, the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the implementation of the Children's Care and Justice Bill (CCJB) will all focus on inclusion and rights in the Children Hearings System. Working together with our partners we will further strengthen and develop our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Neil Hunter
Principal Reporter/Chief Executive

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1. Introduction

SCRA is fully committed to the vision, values and ethos of the Equality Act 2010 and to fulfilling the three elements of the **general** equality duty as defined in the Act:

1. Elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
3. Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy, maternity and breastfeeding
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage/civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regards to the need to eliminate discrimination

In addition, SCRA is committed to complying with the Public Sector Equality Duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

SCRA's approach is to go beyond the compliance obligations and to develop an inclusive ethos within the organisation based on fairness, equality, cultural diversity, dignity and respect. SCRA recognises care experience as a 'tenth' protected characteristic and we continue to review our practice, policies and processes to reflect this.

This report:

- Builds on our previous Mainstreaming Reports to provide an overview of key achievements and mainstreaming progress made within SCRA since publication.
- Provides detail of our progress in relation to our Equality Outcomes 2020-23 and our work to promote equality, diversity and inclusion with our staff, partners and the children, young people and their families whom we serve.

2. About SCRA

The Children's Reporter sits at the heart of Children's Hearings, providing continuity as the single point of referral for all agencies with concerns about a child or young person who may be at risk of harm.

Children's Reporters routinely deal with and make critical decisions on the lives of children facing adversity and trauma such as: physical and emotional neglect; domestic abuse; parental substance misuse; mental health concerns; the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children; children disengaged in education; and children at risk of offending.

Our core role includes:

- Receiving referrals for children/young people who may be at risk.
- Ensuring that other public agencies carry out enquiries and assessments into children/young people's circumstances so we can make informed decisions about children/young people referred to us.
- Making decisions on whether to refer a child/young person to a Children's Hearing if they need compulsory measures of supervision.
- Drafting the grounds for the Hearing.
- Arranging for Hearings to take place when we decide that compulsory measures of supervision are warranted and where there is sufficient evidence to prove the grounds.
- Ensuring fair process takes place within the Hearing, including the rights of those in attendance being met.
- Establishing grounds of referral in court, where these are contested, and in defending decisions of Children's Hearings which are subject to appeal.

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

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

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

3. Why Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Matters

Equality, diversity and inclusion is about culture. In SCRA we are clear that this is a journey with no end, and we are continually evolving and learning. This journey is one of leadership, change and continuous quality improvement. We aspire to actively value our unique differences and grasp this to promote equality, understand equity, encourages diversity and nurtures inclusion.

What does being inclusive mean for everyone in SCRA?

- We can all be ourselves at work.
- We have the best people from a wide range of backgrounds.
- We understand, respect and value each other's differences.
- We are motivated and passionate about doing our best.
- We encourage creativity and innovation.
- We behave and lead in an inclusive way.
- We can raise ideas and challenge one another in a respectful way
- We value everybody's contribution and experiences.

Getting inclusion and diversity right not only makes SCRA a great place to work, but it also means that we are delivering the best possible service to children and their families – that is accessible to all, meets their individual needs and upholds their rights.

Our Commitment

SCRA aspires to be an industry leader in our behaviours, attitudes and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion where we go beyond our legal and statutory duties. We are passionate about equality, diversity and inclusion and recognise it is our collective responsibility to achieve our aspirations.

SCRA is committed to embodying and promoting the ethos and practice of equality, diversity and inclusion in all its service delivery, operations, practices, processes and policies whether pertaining to the workforce, partner agencies or children and families. SCRA aims to ensure that it employs and deploys a workforce that is diverse and equipped with the right mix of skills and experience to deliver a quality service to children.

SCRA is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce and throughout all of our working practices. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. We aspire to being an SCRA that embraces, acknowledges and is representative of all sections of society; promoting equality, tolerance and respect so that everyone is able to achieve their potential.

4. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is a specific requirement for public bodies in implementing the Equality Duty. It means integrating equality into our day to day working and considering equality in everything we do. Mainstreaming the Equality Duty has a number of benefits including:

- Equality becomes part of the structures, behaviours and culture;
- SCRA knows, and can demonstrate, how in carrying out its functions it promotes equality; and,
- Mainstreaming equality contributes to continuous improvement, improved performance and a better experience for those attending Children’s Hearings.

In Scotland, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (and subsequent updates) (“the Regulations”) impose **specific** duties.

Specific Duties: Mainstreaming Equality

In Scotland, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (and subsequent updates) are designed to help public authorities like SCRA meet the general Equality Duty.

The specific duties require SCRA to report every two years on mainstreaming the Equality Duty and the progress against achieving SCRA’s Equality Outcomes. SCRA’s Equality Mainstreaming Report must include, or be published alongside, information on:

- Progress to make the general Equality Duty integral to the exercise of SCRA’s functions;
- An annual breakdown of employment monitoring information under the duty to gather and use employee information;
- Details of the progress made in gathering and using employment monitoring information to perform the general Equality Duty; and,
- Information on the gender composition of SCRA’s Board of Governance, and the steps taken or planned towards ensuring diversity in relation to the protected characteristics of SCRA’s Board members.

Our reporting history

SCRA reports annually on progress to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion. We have published our Equality Outcomes and a report on progress in mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion since 2013. Our current Equality Outcomes cover 2020-2024.

Equality Outcomes 2020-2024

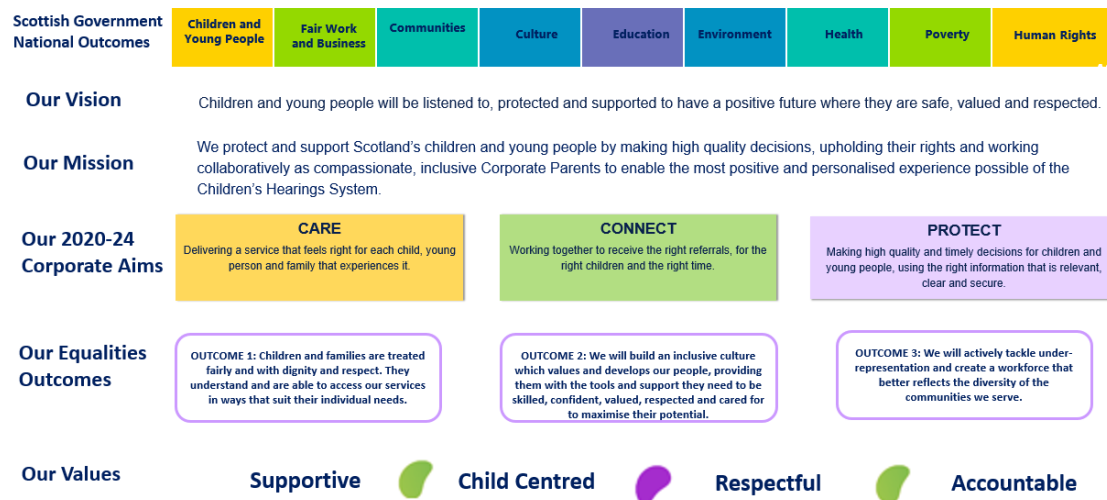
1. Children, young people and their families are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. They understand and are able to access our services in ways that suit their individual needs.
 - i. Our staff will continue to treat all children, young people and their families with dignity and respect.
 - ii. Our services will be procured, designed, shaped and delivered to meet the needs of children, young people and their families.
2. We will build an inclusive culture which values and develops our people, providing them with the tools and support they need to be skilled, confident, valued respected and cared for to maximise their potential.
 - i. Our leaders will foster a culture where our people feel included, valued, respected and cared for.
 - ii. Our staff will feel supported, respected and cared for.
3. We will actively tackle under-representation and create a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.
 - i. We will make our workforce more diverse through our recruitment and selection processes.

Aligning Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

In 2021, SCRA's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy was integrated within our new holistic Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-23. This strategy recognises the intrinsic and inextricable link between our statutory – and moral – duties for human rights, equalities and inclusion and corporate parenting. The Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy is, alongside a reform work stream, the key delivery mechanism for SCRA to Keep the Promise. This approach ensures that equality, equity, diversity and inclusion sit at the very heart of the work we are doing to Keep the Promise, as well as our business-as-usual activity. Progress across SCRA's work around rights, inclusion and corporate parenting was reported in our accessible Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Year Report Card, which first reported in 2022 (covering the year 2021-2022).

Our Equality Outcomes (see Figure 1) are now aligned with SCRA's corporate aims of care, connect and protect, which are themselves aligned to the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (or National Outcomes) which are Scotland's localisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). This Framework – like the SDG's – focus on tackling inequality to ensure a fairer Scotland for all, irrespective of background or identity. Aligning our Equality Outcomes in this way ensures that SCRA, as a public body, plays its part in contributing towards national and international goals in relation to inequality and sustainability.

Figure 1:

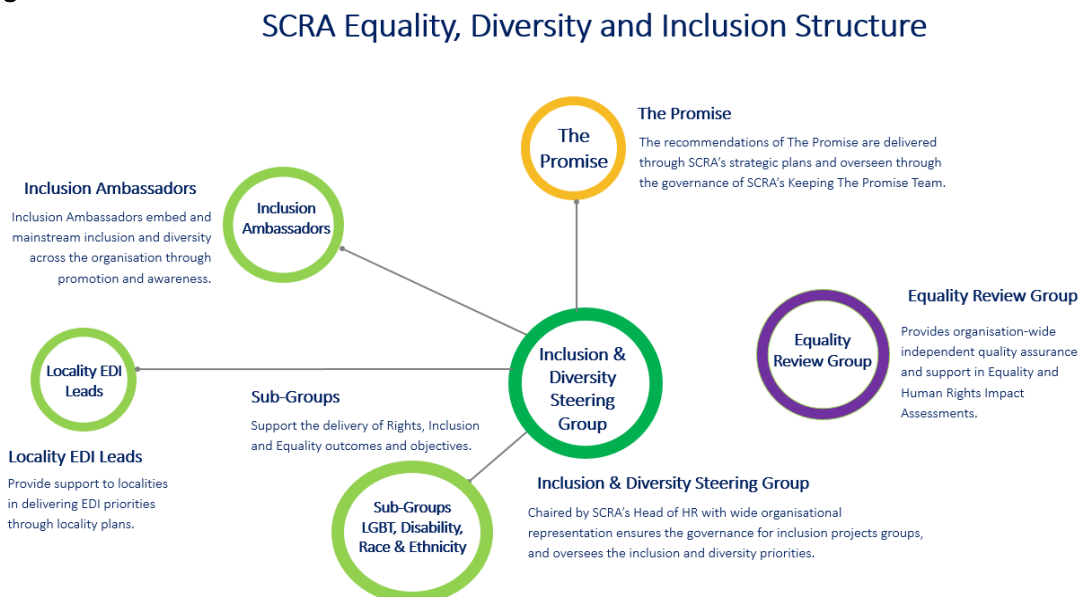


This report provides an update on our achievements and progress in relation to the equality, diversity and inclusion part of our Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2024 and our Equality Outcomes 2020-2024. It highlights how we continue to embed equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do.

Leadership & Governance

SCRA's inclusion and diversity work is overseen by an Inclusion & Diversity Steering Group, chaired by the Head of HR, which takes a strategic overview of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion as it aligns with the Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy. The programme of work is led and managed by SCRA's Inclusion & Diversity Manager, who is supported by topical inclusion and diversity groups: our Disability Group, Race & Ethnicity Group; Fairer Scotland Group; Locality Equality Leads Network; as well as a network of 38 Inclusion Ambassadors from varying locations and roles throughout SCRA who continually champion our inclusion and diversity across the organisation.

Figure 2:



SCRA's approach to inclusion and diversity is that equality and equity is not just one person's or one group's job; it is the responsibility of all of us – it has, and should always be, a collective effort. True equality requires an equitable approach and that requires culture change and a recognition of what we do well and where we need to improve. This takes time, and it takes an army of enthusiastic, dedicated and knowledgeable people with real passion, drive and enthusiasm. Work towards achieving SCRA's Equality Outcomes takes place across many different groups, teams and plans – and the structure of the inclusion and diversity work in SCRA reflects that. To achieve our Equality Outcomes requires dedication and commitment, and SCRA acknowledges this in its support for staff from across the organisation to have the time and space to do this incredibly valuable work.

The Fair Work Agreement

SCRA is committed to implementing the Fair Work Agreement. SCRA is recognised as an accredited living wage employer. SCRA also works in partnership with the recognised trade union UNISON, as set in our National Partnership Agreement and, as such, involves UNISON in decision-making and respects the right of UNISON to represent their members. SCRA also continues to employ Modern Apprentices.

As an employer we have always committed to flexible working wherever possible and our strategic well-being approach underlines our commitment to all staff achieving a positive and healthy working life. In SCRA we have approximately 199 different working patterns which evidences our flexibility and inclusivity. We also have an agile working policy that allows all staff to balance their working life between their home, our offices and our Hearings Centres.

Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment

SCRA has a statutory duty to assess the equality impact of applying its policies, practices, systems and processes. SCRA interprets this duty widely to include the full range of SCRA's policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services – essentially everything we do – and we welcome this as a mechanism to continually improve our service delivery, working environment and workforce diversity. Meaningful and timely completion of impact assessment for all new/revised policies, processes and procedures ensures that we consider equalities impact when we embark on any change – and thinking in this way as we work encourages us to think broadly about the impact of what we do and how we do it. In time, this way of thinking will become the norm and not something we have to actively engage in. We are also mindful that the general duties of the Equality Act 2010 require us to continually assess the impact of everything we do in relation to the protected characteristics. Our approach to impact assessment embraces that duty.

Our Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) is an integrated approach to the development/revision of our policies, processes and procedures ensures the promotion and safeguarding of the rights of the child (UNCRC), the protection of parents' rights (ECHR) and our legislative responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. In addition, it ensures we consider the socio-economic implications (the Fairer Scotland Duty) in all that we do, so

that we do not discriminate based on socio-economic status and that the impact of poverty (financial and opportunity) is minimised in our service delivery and working policies and practices. To provide oversight, governance and quality assurance to our EHRIA process, we have an Equality Review Group. In 2024, the Equality Review Group comprised 12 staff from across the organisation. The remit of this group is to review all the EHRIs submitted to ensure equalities and human rights impacts have been adequately considered and negative impacts mitigated.

A continued focus of EHRIA throughout 2023-24 has been to promote SCRA's EHRIA process to staff through awareness raising and bespoke training for teams. In the reporting period, 24 EHRIs were completed covering strategic and locality work and also our Keeping the Promise project work. The outcomes of all EHRIs are published on SCRA's internal intranet Connect and are publicly available on our website www.scra.gov.uk.

Embedding Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in Corporate Planning

A strong strategic approach to inclusion and diversity is required to fully embed and mainstream equality, diversity and inclusion. By embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into SCRA's integrated Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy – which is a foundation strategy upon which all of SCRA's organisational planning is built on – we ensure that equality, equity, diversity and inclusion sit at the heart of *everything* we do, now and in the future.

Additionally, SCRA's Inclusion & Diversity Manager and Planning & Performance Manager continue to work together to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is included in all corporate planning – strategic and operational, national and local. To further strengthen this approach, SCRA has aligned its new Equality Outcomes 2024-2027 with our corporate planning cycle and, as such, will produce a new set of Equality Outcomes every three years going forward.

Embedding Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in Localities

In 2023-2024 we have continued to embed equality, diversity and inclusion in our Localities and Head Office teams and, as such, have been continuing to support them on mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion at Locality – and team – level. We now have at least one specific EDI Lead for each Locality. To support this group of geographically diverse colleagues, we have a Locality EDI Lead Network. This Network is hosted on MS Teams and enables all Locality EDI Leads to share questions, good practice, ideas and get peer support or advice and guidance from SCRA's Inclusion & Diversity Manager, as well as being a mechanism to promoting inclusion and diversity opportunities and training.

The Network ensures that strategic national inclusion and diversity priorities are communicated and discussed within Localities, but that Localities can identify areas of local inclusion and diversity work to 'feed up' into the national programme. This top down, bottom up approach to inclusion and diversity ensures that strategic priorities and local needs remain at the forefront of our inclusion and diversity work, in effect providing a feedback loop from Localities to ensure our inclusion and diversity work is needs-based. In

2024 and beyond we need to focus on further supporting Localities to take responsibility for embedding this work in their areas, and support Head Office teams to do the same.

In 2022-2023, we revised our locality planning process to ensure that local responsibility for embedding and reporting on our national equality, diversity and inclusion objectives are embedded locally and that progress continues to be reported and tracked by managers across SCRA. The Locality EDI Lead Network will be further enhanced in 2024-2025 by further embedding national EDI priorities around training and impact assessment in Locality Plans as well as identifying areas of local need to influence the national programme of inclusion and diversity work. A broader programme of training will also be implemented in 2024-27, ensuring that all staff have an awareness of what is expected of them working in SCRA.

Whilst all SCRA Localities and Head Office teams have EDI priorities reflected in their Locality/Team Plans, SCRA's Glasgow Locality has an active, established and committed Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Group, which is chaired by one of their Senior Practitioners and a Locality Reporter Manager. This Group promotes EDI within the Locality and arranges learning and development sessions for Glasgow (and often all) staff around the protected characteristics and broader equality agenda, such as refugees and asylum seekers and neonatal abstinence syndrome, for example.

5. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: Achievements & Progress

This section will outline the progress SCRA has made on achieving its Equality Outcomes 2020-2024 and presents all activity pertaining to equality, diversity and inclusion since 1 April 2023.

Despite the challenges and pace of change over the past few years, we continue to make progress in embedding and mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our service delivery and our workplace. Our specific actions and achievements during 2022-2024 reflect our commitment and demonstrate the significant breadth and volume of work that has been undertaken in 2022-2024 to progress our equality, diversity and inclusion ambitions.

To ensure continuous improvement and learning and encourage the use and sharing of good practice, we remain members of the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei) and the NDPB Equalities Forum. We are also represented in the Cross-Justice Working Group on Race Data & Evidence and the Scottish Government's BSL-led Justice Advisory Group.

Improving Equality Data

Recording and monitoring equality data is important, not just for data's sake, but to aid organisational and corporate planning. Equality data helps us to better understand the needs of the people we work with and for and provides us with an evidence-base for implementing and measuring change and improvement. Without it, we would not know how or where to target our action and resource. As a public sector organisation we have a finite budget, and robust equality data helps us to spend that budget in the most impactful way.

Equality Data: Service Delivery

SCRA rolled out a new computer system – Core Systems and Applications Solution (CSAS) – at the end of 2020. CSAS has fields to collect the protected characteristic information for children referred to SCRA to ensure that we provide a sensitive needs-based service to all. These include: age; sex; gender identity; disability; race/ethnicity; and religion/faith. The recording options are those set by the Census with the view that as recording across the protected characteristics improves, SCRA will have robust data on the children referred to the Reporter and those that attend Hearings which will be comparable to the wider Scottish population.

To improve the recording of children's equality data on CSAS, a quality improvement project was undertaken in the North Ayrshire Locality area throughout 2023 which saw an increase in the recording of children's ethnicity for those who are on a CSO from 48.6% to 56.9% within three months. This was a small project, involving two Assistant Reporters and two

small changes to processes, yet has shown that this improvement work is having an impact. This project will continue into 2024 and beyond and will be scaled up to achieve bigger more sustained improvements. In due course, guidance for staff will be produced on what information to record, our responsibilities to ensure the information recorded is accurate and the importance of recording this information in terms of service delivery, service improvement and data improvement. This guidance will be included in our Target Operating Model and rolled out nationally across SCRA. It is hoped that we will have robust reportable data within five years. To demonstrate our commitment to improving our recording of children's equality data in CSAS, we have included this as a specific Equality Outcome for 2024-2027.

Equality Data: Workforce

Our Employee Information Statistics Report 2023 shows that we have 481 employees in SCRA (as at 31st January 2024)¹.

As with previous years, our annual Equalities Monitoring Campaign 'Free To Be Me' was launched on the International Day of Tolerance on 16th November 2023 and ran until International Human Rights Day on 10th December 2023. The purpose of this campaign is to encourage staff to record their own personal characteristics so that we continue to increase reporting in this area. Equalities monitoring of our workforce helps us to:

- Better understand our workforce demographics and where we should concentrate action and resource to better support and respond to our colleagues' needs;
- Measure the diversity of our workforce, and how that compares to the Scottish population (and areas where we need to improve diversity);
- Explore any trends and whether actual or potential disadvantage or discrimination exist;
- Inform policy, decision-making and make improvements through our inclusion and diversity programmes and action plans;
- Provide targeted information, support and positive action initiatives (e.g. menopause awareness and resources, mental health initiatives, etc);
- Comply with the law in protecting our people from discrimination, victimisation and harassment at work; and,
- Measure and report progress in meeting our Equality Outcomes and to inform impact assessments.

Staff Survey

We conducted our annual staff survey in November 2023. Our staff survey provides a key metric of employees' views on what it is like to work for the organisation, and normally covers a range of diverse topics such as communication, learning and development, managing change, our organisational objectives and equality, diversity and inclusion.

¹ Our Employee Information Statistics 2024 report is available on our website www.scra.gov.uk

Our 2023 staff survey found that:

- 98% of staff understand their individual responsibility for inclusion and diversity and how this relates to their role;
- 95% of staff think that SCRA is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion;
- 83% of staff know how and where to report a concern about discrimination or harassment;
- 91% of staff feel they are treated fairly and respected in SCRA;
- 91% of staff think that SCRA respects individual differences (e.g. cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas, etc);
- 94% of staff think that their line manager demonstrates a commitment to and support for inclusion and diversity; and,
- 80% of staff feel that SCRA provides an environment for free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs.

The results of the staff survey are positive in terms of our inclusion and diversity work, and people's understanding of their responsibilities, their managers responsibilities and SCRA's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Whilst these are strong results, we do acknowledge that there is always room for improvement. For example, we note that whilst 83% of staff indicated that they knew how and where to report any concerns around discrimination or harassment, only 67% of respondents said they would feel confident in reporting it. In early 2024 we trained our staff on our new Inclusive Behaviours Framework and we have planned a refresh of our Dignity at Work Policies, with accompanying guidance and training, all of which, we believe, will have a positive impact on staff feeling more confident to report any instances of concerning behaviours.

Core Corporate Activity

Whilst some equality, diversity and inclusion work is specifically labelled and promoted as such, some of SCRA's core business-as-usual activity also contributes towards equality, diversity and inclusion mainstreaming. By embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our business-as-usual activity we will, similarly to impact assessment, begin to naturally consider it and it will become part of our collective psyche and not something with which we have to actively engage.

Policies & Procedures

We have a comprehensive package of policies and guidance that promote and mainstream equality and inclusion across SCRA. We have an established audit process to ensure that our policies are up to date and reflect current legislation, inclusive language and best practice. We are committed to providing an inclusive workplace where our people feel valued and cared for regardless of their age, religion or belief, race, disability, marital status, pregnancy, maternity and breastfeeding, sexual orientation, gender identity, care experience or socio-economic background. Our policies and guidance support us to achieve that. In the reporting period, we reviewed the following:

- Inclusive Standards & Behaviours Framework (new policy);
- Right to Disconnect Policy (new policy);
- Travel Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Job Evaluation Policy
- Probation Policy
- Flexible Retirement Guidance
- Lone working Policy
- Violence in the Workplace Policy
- Various health and safety policies
- Flu Vaccination Programme for staff

Training

SCRA has three mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion e-learning courses for all staff. The courses are 'Bullying, Harassment & Victimisation', 'Unconscious Bias' and 'Diversity, Equality & Discrimination'. These were relaunched in April 2023 and are a requirement for all staff to completed. These courses are also part of induction for new members of staff. Whilst we have seen increased rates of completion we still have a significant minority of staff still to conclude training in these areas. As at 29 February, the percentage of completion rates are:

- 51% of staff have completed the Bullying, Harassment & Victimisation Training (6% in progress)
- 88% of staff have completed the Unconscious Bias Training (3% in progress)
- 41% of staff have completed the Diversity, Equality & Discrimination Training (34% in progress)

We will identify with managers those staff who have yet to complete the mandatory training and ensure a plan for completion over 2024/25.

We also have access to additional equality, diversity and inclusion topical e-learning courses which focus on specific equalities related issues pertaining to the protected characteristics. We encourage managers to use these resources to address specific issues or areas of concern that may arise locally, such as age discrimination and disability discrimination.

In October 2023, we commissioned the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei) to train all SCRA staff on the new Inclusive Standards & Behaviours Framework (which was refined throughout 2022-2023). This training commenced in November 2023 and by end March 2024, 80% of the staff group have attended the training. This training covered all areas of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion and all protected characteristics, including care experience.

Property

Details of the Hearing centres owned or leased by us are published in our external website for children and their families to access in advance of their planned visit to our hearing centre and other SCRA buildings. We are continually looking at our estate to identify potential improvements to improve accessibility for staff and children and families who attend Children's Hearings. In addition, we now have Visual Information Guides for 32 of our Hearing Centres available on our website to help people coming to Hearings.

As part of our corporate parenting duties and our ongoing commitment to improving Hearing rooms for children, we continue to roll out a Hearing Room Improvement Programme to upgrade facilities for children attending Hearings. During the reporting period and building upon our existing property portfolio improvements, the following Hearing Room upgrades were undertaken in 2023-2024: Kilmarnock; Paisley; Dumfries; Glenrothes; and Elgin. The focus of these works are to improve the experience for children and families coming to Hearings and to better enable them to participate in a more accessible and child-friendly environment. A programme of property improvement for staff workspaces is also underway and in the reporting period we have upgraded the following offices so they are more comfortable and pleasant work environments for our people: Elgin; Kilmarnock; Dumfries; Glenrothes; Glasgow; and Edinburgh.

Fairer Scotland Duty: Socio-economic Equality

The importance of the Fairer Scotland Duty has never been more significant in light of the prolonged cost-of-living crisis and tight public sector budgeting and spending. The socio-economic duty was included as provision in the Equality Act 2010 and implemented by the Scottish Government on 1 April 2018. The Duty, known as the Fairer Scotland Duty, is one of a number of duties placed on the public sector to tackle socio-economic disadvantage, child poverty, equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. The Duty requires relevant public authorities to do more to tackle inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring their strategic decision making takes account of those experiencing it. SCRA is not currently listed as a public authority that is required to report on the Fairer Scotland Duty, however, we consider the understanding of the impact of socio-economic disadvantage and inequality to be integral to everything we do and have been committed to the Duty since it was introduced.

SCRA continues to offer virtual, as well as hybrid, Children's Hearings, in addition to traditional face-to-face Hearings and our approach is constantly being refined as we learn. In keeping with this more flexible approach to Hearings provision, we are able to provide a range of options for Hearings attendance to best suit individual children and family's needs, for example, where they live rurally to attend Hearings virtually, or for a child to attend a Hearing from school if they do not have the technology to do so from home. As part of our quality improvement and Keeping The Promise work, SCRA has five Child Friendly Scheduling projects which aim to seek the views of children in terms of the scheduling and delivery of their Hearings (e.g. what time they would like their Hearing to be, what day of the week they would prefer, how they would like to attend – virtually or in-person – and how they would like to give their views during the Hearing). This work will continue into 2024 and beyond,

alongside our focus on digital improvements and the use of digital technologies, where appropriate. SCRA undertook specific research into digital exclusion so that we can fully understand the impact on children and families from and we have included in our Equality Outcomes 2024-2027 a specific outcome around poverty and digital inclusion to ensure this remains a strategic priority in the EDI work in SCRA, particularly in relation to age, disability and sex in recognition that there are differences in digital knowledge, experience and skill across those specific protected characteristics.

Our Fairer Scotland Group has spent the year refining our focus and determining what, in terms of socio-economic deprivation, SCRA should focus on. The Group's focus is on the impact of poverty (of resource and opportunity) on our service delivery, in terms of the impact that it has on the lives and experiences of the vulnerable children and families we work with. To this end, the Group has developed an Action Plan to: better understand these needs through mapping exercises; better equip our people to be aware of what supports are available for families and the impact that poverty has on their lives in relation to Reporter decision-making through training and awareness raising; and some direct supports we may be able to provide (e.g. signposting to Food Banks and other supports, the provision of free wipes and nappies in our Hearing Centres, the piloting of Shannon's Box for children being placed in care away from home).

Targeted Activity: Protected Characteristics

SCRA recognises that there are many aspects of our social and political identities that make us 'us', including things that are not covered by the Equality Act 2010, such as our upbringing, child and adulthood experiences, our education and our political beliefs. These aspects of our identity do not sit independently of one another and we understand that multiple forms of inequality often compound experiences of discrimination, and of privilege. As such, we take a rights-based intersectional and cross-sectional approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and recognise that there is overlap and interplay between the protected characteristics. Some key equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives and work in 2023-2024 cross the protected characteristics and are intersectional and, are therefore reported under the subheading of 'intersectional'. Our activities outlined in this section all serve to raise awareness, promote understanding and tolerance and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not and, as such, fulfil part of our obligations under the general Equality Duty.

Age

SCRA has an ageing workforce. As at 31st January 2024, our workforce comprises of the following:

- 16-24 years: 2.9%
- 25-34 years: 12.5%
- 35-44 years: 24.7%
- 45-54 years: 39.3%
- 55-64 years: 28.5%
- 65+ years: 2.1%

Whilst age in and of itself has not been the focus of targeted activity during the reporting period, issues pertaining to age have been of significant focus throughout the year, such as menopause and supports into retirement. Given SCRA work for children, much of our activity also focusses on children and young people. Whilst age-related these activities have been reported under other protected characteristics.

Disability

In 2016, SCRA became a Disability Confident Employer, which has been further accredited until 2026. The Disability Confident Employment Scheme is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions.

Our Employee Information Statistics show that, as at 31st January 2024, just 5.41% of our employees reported having a disability. For comparison, around one fifth of Scotland's population considers themselves to have a disability. Given the wide variety of potential disabilities and the supports provided for our workforce, we believe that this figure is under-reported, potentially as a result of a lack of awareness of what constitutes a disability under the Equality Act 2010 which is "a long-standing health condition that limits daily activity". This includes diagnoses of neurodiversity, enduring and recurring mental ill-health and critical illness, which some of our colleagues may not be aware of. We do not have accurate data on how many children we work with who have a disability or disabilities.

Our Disability Network established a Neurodiversity Champions network which comprises 30 members of staff across the organisation in various roles. The majority of the Champions undertook a train the trainer course "It takes all kinds of minds" by Salveson Mindroom so that they can provide training to our wider staff group and support when issues/queries arise. The Champions will also work on the replenishment of SCRA's sensory toolkits for children and their families in our Hearing Rooms.

We concluded our British Sign Language Plan 2020-23 and have developed our next plan to support the commitments made in the National British Sign Language Plan. Our key achievements are:-

- We improved the accessibility of our website, guidance and information and have a bespoke page on our website for BSL users. We also ensure that as many of our information videos as possible have BSL/English translation and/or subtitles and we are in the process of translating some key guidance including our complaints procedure.
- We introduced the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL, online interpreting video relay service
- We introduced an e-learning Deaf Awareness course for all staff and have run a number of 6 week BSL taster courses. 36 members of staff have attended the taster courses
- We published guidance on communicating with people who are hard of hearing and guidance on working with a BSL interpreter

We developed Assistance Dogs Guidance for staff and promoted that during Dog Assistance week in August 2023.

Gender reassignment

Gender reassignment, gender identity and transgender issues is an area of significant political and public focus and interest. It is also an increasingly arising issue in SCRA, particularly in how we should respond to a trans child or young person. As at 31st January 2024, we have no employees who reported that they are transgender. However, 0.42% preferred not to say and 76.3% did not disclose this information. As such, there *could* be some employees who do not identify as the sex they were assigned at birth and do not want to disclose this. We do not have data on how many children we work with who may be transgender, although we have notes on 120 children's files that suggest they may be transgender (e.g. a note to use a different name or different pronouns from those aligned to their sex assigned at birth).

Pregnancy, maternity & breastfeeding

SCRA is compliant with the legislation on pregnancy, maternity and breastfeeding including the Management of Health & Safety Regulations 1999, Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992, Employment Relations Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010. As at 31st January 2024, 3.1% of our employees were either pregnant or on maternity leave at some point in the previous 12 months.

We have longstanding generous family friendly leave policies including antenatal care leave; maternity leave; paternity leave; adoption leave; fertility leave; dependent care leave; parental leave; and parental bereavement leave. We are also a breastfeeding friendly workplace and organisation. Our 'New & Expectant Mothers Guidance' outlines what new and expectant mothers should expect from SCRA, including a pregnancy risk assessment and how SCRA can support them to continue breastfeeding on their return to work.

Race

SCRA is a predominantly white workforce. As at 31st January 2023, 62.2% of our employees reported their ethnicity as white², 2.5% as from another ethnic background³ and 35.354% chose not to disclose their ethnicity. In 2011, the Census showed that around 4% of the Scottish population are of a minority ethnic background – the 2022 Census results were not available at the time of publication of this report. We have used the Scottish Government's Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit to review our recruitment processes and identified areas of improvement from this benchmarking exercise. Improving the diversity of our workforce will remain a continued focus.

We do not have reliable data to understand the ethnic diversity of the children we work with, however, we are committed to improving our recording of children's ethnicity, as we are with all their equality data.

² This includes British, English, Irish, Northern Irish, Scottish, Welsh and any other white background.

³ This includes Chinese, Pakistani, any Asian background, any other mixed background and 'other'.

SCRA marked Black History month in October by inviting a representative from UNISON's Black Workers Committee to speak on the challenges and barriers faced by Black and ethnic minority workers. We also publish a Black History Calendar, updated our Race and Ethnicity resources page and encouraged staff to support the annual Wear Red Day campaign as part of Show Racism the Red Card.

In February 2024, SCRA held its first development session on what it means for SCRA to become an anti-racist organisation. This session started a three year programme of work in this area and focused on

- understanding the nature and origins of racism in society
- challenging racism – within and outwith work
- baselining where SCRA is now
- establishing anti-racist practice in SCRA
- how racism and discrimination can affect our work with children – the nature of conscious and unconscious discrimination and bias
- recruitment and retention and developing our workforce
- promoting inclusive language and culture

Religion & belief

As at 31st January 2024, 21.0% of our workforce reported that they had a religion or belief, 6.4% reported no religion or belief and 72.6% did not disclose this information. We do not have reliable data to understand the religion or belief of the children and families we work with.

SCRA marked Passover, the Muslim holiday of Eid and the Christian holiday of Easter by publishing case studies from staff who wrote about the traditions associated with their faith. These case studies helped to raise awareness of different faiths across our workforce.

Sex

In common with other 'care' focussed organisations, SCRA has a predominantly female⁴ workforce: as at 31st January 2024, 88.98% of our workforce were women and 75% of our Board are women⁵.

SCRA has one of the highest gender pay gaps in the public sector in Scotland, sitting at 22.60% (mean)/29.7% (median) in 2023. This is, however, the lowest mean pay gap in seven years of reporting, with an overall reduction of 6.2% (mean) since 2017. We acknowledge the reductions are small and gradual and we are focussing on reducing this in every way possible including reviewing our recruitment and selection process and materials to ensure that women continue to apply for management posts – currently 62% of all senior managers (Grade F – G) are female - and also to encourage men to apply for non-management lower grade posts. In doing this we will use the Gender Decoder tool to identify any subtle gender

⁴ This report refers to female/male colleagues, but this includes all people who identify as female/male.

⁵ Further information is available in our Gender Representation on Public Boards 2023 report, published on our website www.scra.gov.uk

bias in our language to ensure our adverts and job descriptions are unbiased and explore new opportunities for partnership working.

Despite our gender pay gap, SCRA has good evidence of women being promoted into leadership roles. There have been 12 Locality Reporter Manager (senior frontline managers) vacancies advertised since 2018, and 11 female applicants were successfully appointed to of these vacancies (92%). SCRA also sponsors a number of women to attend Scotland's annual Women into Leadership conference and in January 2024 supported UNISON to promote women into leadership training and development across the wider trade union movement.

In 2023-2024 we signed up to membership of Henpicked, an expert Menopause organisation and are a Menopause Friendly Employer. We aim to progress to accreditation status in 24/25 and we continue to promote and raise awareness of the Menopause Toolkit we developed in 2022.

Sexual orientation

As at 31st January 2024, 26.8% of our workforce reported that they are heterosexual, 2.1% reported that they are lesbian/gay/bisexual/other and 71.1% did not disclose this information. As such, we are unclear whether there is potentially a higher number of lesbian, gay, bisexual or other non-heterosexual people in our workforce.

SCRA received LGBT Youth Charter Foundation Award in 2019, which expired at the end of 2023. Due to the diverse geographical spread of SCRA, obtaining the Bronze Award is not possible. We are committed to LGBTQI+ inclusion – for children, parents and our workforce – however, we were unable to retain the Award at the end of 2023 due to a lack of resource and operational pressures. This was also the case for the reinvigoration of our LGBT Group. Nevertheless, we have publicly committed to working towards achieving the LGBT Youth Charter Foundation Award again in 2024-2025.

At SCRA's staff conference in September 2023, we held a workshop session on LGBT+ Awareness - provided by the Scottish Trans/Equality Network, which explored LGBT+ terminology and definitions, social attitudes and experiences of discrimination faced by LGBT+ people in Scotland. The session also included LGBT+ equality and inclusion good practice. The session was intended to help people gain a greater level of understanding and confidence and be less afraid of getting things wrong when interacting with or supporting LGBT+ people.

Marriage/civil partnership

Marriage and civil partnership is a protected characteristic only in respect of the requirement to have due regards to the need to eliminate discrimination. In SCRA, as at 31st January 2024, 50.3% of our workforce reported they are married or in a civil partnership, 13.3% said they were single, 16.8% fall into an 'other' category⁶ and 32.8% did not disclose

⁶ 'Other' includes civil partnership dissolved, declared partnership, divorced, other, partner, surviving partner – civil partnership, widow

their marital status. All of SCRA's policies apply equally to those who are married or in a civil partnership and those who are not.

Care experience

SCRA recognises equality for staff and children who have experience of the care system as a 'tenth' protected characteristic. As at 31st January 2024, 0.6% of our workforce report having care experience, 8.7% do not, 0.4% preferred not to say whether they had experience of care as a child and 90.2% did not disclose this information.

SCRA continues to value its Modern Apprenticeship Programme, which has been running since 2011, in providing not only the organisation with valuable care lived experience input but also in providing young people with care experience employment and training opportunities. To date, we have provided 14 Modern Apprenticeships to care experienced young people. In addition, we also run work experience programmes for people with experience of Children's Hearings and/or of being in care. In the reporting period we ran one work experience programme.

Our Voice of Experience Reference Group, which is comprised of colleagues from across Scotland with a wide range of experiences of care, including fostering, adoption, being in care and as kinship carers, was formed in March 2022. The group has met regularly throughout 2022 and 2023 both online and in person to identify areas of improvement for children, young people and families attending Hearings. They have submitted two reports to our Executive Management Team and the Keeping the Promise Programme Board with recommendations for improvements. Our Principal Reporter has attended a number of the away days to support the group and their activities. The Voice of Experience Reference Group has also had guest speakers, including those specialising in care and trauma, as well as hosting staff who wish to consult with them about Keeping the Promise projects and Equalities. They continue to meet regularly to further consider improvements needed to make the Hearings System – and the work of SCRA – care-experienced person friendly.

SCRA showed its support to Care Experience Week by members of staff taking part in the Love Rally on 29 October, organised by Who Cares? Scotland, which celebrates the care experienced community and provided opportunities for learning and connection. The theme was Lifelong Rights and focused on the commitments made in The Promise, that care can have a lifelong impact and support for care experienced people must exist throughout their lifetime.

Intersectional

SCRA recognises that protected characteristics are not independent of one another and that we all have intersectional identities. SCRA's values sit at the heart of everything we do, irrespective of our job roles. Our intersectional identities are inextricably interlinked with our values and how these influence our behaviours. How we behave and the language we use, consciously and unconsciously, is what others see – and feel – and is an expression of our commitment to SCRA's core corporate values of being supportive, child-centred, respectful and accountable.

In 2023, we finalised SCRA's new Inclusive Standards & Behaviours Framework. These sit alongside our Management Standards and other existing policies, such as the Code of Conduct and Dignity at Work Policy to better illustrate and describe the values and behaviours we expect all our colleagues to uphold and demonstrate at work. The Standards & Framework outlines how we can all, through our behaviours, language, attitudes and approaches, contribute to an inclusive SCRA which recognises the value of diversity and is consistent with SCRA's core corporate values. The six over-arching inclusive principles to inclusive standards and behaviours are:

- Working together – we will form effective, inclusive, psychologically safe and respectful partnerships and relationships with people, internally and externally, from a range of diverse backgrounds, sharing information, best practice, resources and support;
- Communicating & influencing – we communicate purpose and direction with clarity, integrity and enthusiasm while respecting the varied needs, beliefs and opinions of others;
- Developing self & others – we focus on continuous learning and development for ourselves, for others and for the organisation;
- Changing & improving – we will seek out opportunities to create effective change and harness innovation and creativity to ensure continuous improvement through our ways of working, including how we seek and provide feedback;
- Leadership & decision-making – we engage inclusively and supportively with others in delivering a shared vision by valuing our differences, ensuring fairness and opportunity for all. We use evidence and knowledge to support accurate, reliable and expert decision-making and the provision of advice carefully, ensuring we consider alternative options, implications and risks; and,
- Delivering a quality customer focussed service – we deliver our services for our people and the children and families with whom we work with professional excellence, expertise and efficiency, taking account of the diverse needs of everyone we work with. We provide exceptional and inclusive customer service internally and externally, with our partners as well as children and families.

In recognition of the importance of inclusive behaviours and leadership, we commissioned the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei) to review the Inclusive Standards & Behaviours Framework and develop a national rollout programme of training for implementation. The implementation of the Inclusive Standards & Behaviours Framework commenced in November 2023 with a training session with SCRA's Executive Management Team and a session with the HR Team; followed by all SCRA managers in December 2023 and January 2024, with all staff being trained by end March 2024. The next phase of this work will be using the Inclusive Standards & Behaviours Framework to inform our review of recruitment, supervision, succession planning and talent management and learning and development.

Embedding the importance of Health & Well-being

Mental health and wellbeing continues to be a key focus for SCRA and a significant effort has been put in to promoting and encouraging staff to consider their own and others mental

wellbeing. Our growing cohort of Mental Health First Aiders continue to provide guidance to staff alongside our HELP Employee Assistance Programme.

We retain a focus on the financial wellbeing of our staff given the ongoing cost of living crisis and ensure that our financial wellbeing page on our intranet is updated and relevant in providing information, guidance and supports to our staff.

In May 2023, the Mental Wealth Group supported and promoted Mental Health Week – the theme was anxiety and asked colleagues to share their experiences and check in with each other in the aim to reducing the stigma/barriers around anxiety, depression and stress related symptoms.

We launched a new Right to Disconnect Policy and accompanying FAQ, which recognises that disconnecting from work is vital to a healthy and sustainable work-life balance, and to support personal resilience. As such, every employee is entitled to switch off outside of their normal working hours and enjoy their time away from work without being disturbed, unless there is an emergency or prior agreement to do so, for example while on 'standby'.

SCRA offered another Big Team walking / fitness challenge which invited staff to virtually walk from Edinburgh to Paris over the course of 5 weeks with a scavenger hunt along the way. Board members from Our Hearings, Our Voice chose the winner of one of the challenges – to design a flag for the 2024 event. By the end of the 5 weeks challenge a total of 26,024 miles / 41,882 km had been stepped with 28 teams and 159 individual members of staff involved. As part of the challenge and in conjunction with Ecologi, SCRA planted 32 trees (one for every 5 participants that took part). This partnership helped offset our carbon impact and was well received by those who participated. Preparations are now underway for the 2024 Big Team Challenge which will be launched as part of Mental Health Awareness Week (13-19th May 2024). The theme of this year is Movement: Moving more for our mental health

The mental wealth group promoted "Time to Talk" day on 1st February. This is a national initiative run annually by the charity SeeMe to encourage staff in workplaces across the country to come together to discuss Mental Health. It is recognised that one in four people will experience mental health issues in any one year. The 1st February is also Breathing Space Day. This year marks 20 years since the launch of this national service aimed at those over the age of 16 who may be feeling low, anxious or depressed by providing a confidential telephone service that allows people to discuss their concerns with trained councillors.

SCRA also promoted World Menopause Day on the 18th October. The purpose of the day is to raise awareness on the menopause and support options for improving health and wellbeing. Staff were encouraged to visit the menopause toolkit on Connect for information and resources on the topic. SCRA's Menopause Group had an information stall at the Staff Event held in September which was well attended by staff.

SCRA offered a free flu vaccination to staff for the sixth year. We recognise the good Scottish Government offer for all people over the age of 50 to receive a flu vaccination which is reducing the requirement on SCRA's provision. However, SCRA will continue to provide the opportunity for flu vaccinations but will decrease the number of vouchers

procured when the scheme opens in July 2024 to align with the number of vouchers redeemed in 2023.

Understanding Trauma

SCRA is committed to Trauma Informed Practice and better understanding and appreciating the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) on the children and families we work with, and also on our colleagues. To enhance this, our Trauma Training Programme, which is aligned to the National Trauma Training Framework – has four elements:

- Locality and Head Office based Secondary Trauma Sessions;
- Trauma informed e-learning (provided by NHS Education Scotland);
- Trauma skilled training course (provided by NHS Education Scotland); and,
- Train the Trainer Programme (provided by NHS Education Scotland).

We have taken a staged approach to becoming more trauma informed, focussing initially on the Secondary Trauma Sessions which focus on the signs and symptoms of secondary trauma, as well as emphasising the supports available for colleagues experiencing secondary vicarious trauma. These sessions encourage managers and colleagues to consider what supports they may need and how they can limit the impact of vicarious trauma as a result of the work we do with vulnerable children and families. Sessions have been delivered to our all SCRA Localities.

We have worked with NHS Education Scotland to provide comprehensive e-learning and more focussed face-to-face trauma informed training. The e-learning modules are mandatory for all SCRA staff on our e-learning platform and is a requirement for further trauma training. The Trauma Skilled Training aims to help colleagues translate understanding and knowledge from the following areas into their practice at work: ways that trauma affects people; what trauma skilled practice looks like; how to hear and talk about trauma; how to develop relationships that support recovering following traumatic events; and the importance of caring for our own well-being. To date, 50 colleagues have received this training. We have worked with NES Scotland to train our own in house trainers and this training will be further rolled out based on the plan developed by our internal trainers.

SCRA has also developed an annual psychological support process with our Occupational Health Provider which offers all case holding/access staff with the opportunity for further supports based on a self assessment process which is considered by professionally qualified OH staff who will determine whether staff members require any further additional supports. This will be launched late March 2024.

Notable Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Achievements

In June 2023, we participated in enei's annual TIDE (Talent Inclusion & Diversity Evaluation) benchmarking exercise – an exercise that focussed solely on the prior 12 months activity. TIDE is enei's self-assessment benchmarking tool which measures an organisation's approach and progress on diversity and inclusion over the following areas: workforce; strategy and planning; leadership and accountability; recruitment and attraction; training

and development; other employment practices; communication and engagement; and procurement. TIDE enables us to identify our inclusion and diversity strengths and areas for improvement which are then used when planning our programme of work. Organisations who participate in TIDE are benchmarked against other organisations TIDE entries in that year. In 2023, we again achieved a Silver TIDEmark Award when benchmarked against other organisations, retaining the Award from 2022.

6. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: Priorities for 2024-2025

This is the last year of work under our current Equality Outcomes 2020-2024; consultation and engagement on SCRA's Equality Outcomes 2024-2027 began in summer 2023, with consultation taking place with our workforce, partner agencies, children and the public between November 2023 and March 2024.

Our Equality Outcomes 2024-2027 are:

1. We will consistently ask for and check the accuracy of children's equality data to improve the recording of children's protected characteristics on SCRA's computer system, CSAS so that we can identify areas of inequality and also identify trends and patterns in outcomes between and within the protected characteristics.
2. We will review and revise our recruitment process so that it is more inclusive to attract more diverse candidates to work for SCRA and encourage greater workforce diversity.
3. We will become a proactively anti-racist organisation; this will include all staff taking part in a mandatory anti-racist programme of work led by an expert external provider, actively challenging racism and better understanding potential discrimination in our decision-making.
4. We will work to understand the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on how we engage with children and families, focusing specifically on how age, disability and sex influence their ability to engage with, and participate in, Children's Hearings; to ensure we do not discriminate against those who experience poverty.

Topical Activity

In 2024-2025 we are again committed to delivering an ambitious programme of equality, diversity and inclusion work. This will include a Disability Plan which will continue to focus on neuro-inclusivity, BSL and will also have a focus on cancer as this is an issue which has significant impacts on our colleagues. Our Race Equality Action Plan will be informed and developed following our planning session in February 2024 and will focus on better understanding racism and racial inequality in SCRA and in Scotland to enable us to identify activities and actions that we can take to address this.

Workforce diversity is important to us, and with relatively little turnover it is an area that will take some time to improve on. Nevertheless, there are things we can do to ensure our recruitment processes are fair, transparent, inclusive and attract diverse talent, and this will

be a focus of work throughout 2024-2025, particularly how we might attract younger applicants, attract more men to the organisation (particularly to lower grades to reduce our Gender Pay Gap) and attract people from the global majority. We will be working to embed the Inclusive Standards & Behaviours Framework across SCRA which will promote and encourage an inclusive culture through ensuring inclusive recruitment, inclusive supervision and line management, inclusive succession planning and inclusive learning and development for all our colleagues.

SCRA will consider progress to regaining the LGBT Youth Charter foundation Bronze Award which expired at the end of 2023. We hope to deliver some training and/or awareness raising sessions on transgender issues as these are increasingly raised issues from operational colleagues working with transgender children. We already have robust transgender guidance managers and Transgender Policy colleagues which was introduced in 2019.

Our work promoting mental health awareness and support, and our Trauma Training Programme and trauma awareness will continue to be a significant focus throughout 2024-2025 and beyond. A resilience programme will be piloted for managers in 24/25 and then following evaluation consideration will of the programme will be rolled out to all staff in future years. The work we do at SCRA is often traumatic and it is imperative that our colleagues are supported in delivering their roles, but also in recognising the impact that their work can have on their own mental health. SCRA will implement a programme of psychological support for case holding/access staff to ensure that there are regular supports available to those that need them. SCRA is facing quite significant organisational and legislative change and we recognise change is often difficult for people therefore our colleagues may be needing support in staying mentally healthy.

There will be a focus on increasing training and learning opportunities for all staff in equality, diversity and inclusion. We will ensure our colleagues have completed the mandatory e-learning but will also promote the topical inclusion and diversity e-learning to broaden understanding and awareness of equality issues. Furthermore, we endeavour to host training and awareness sessions across the protected characteristics where any need arises.

Mainstreaming Activity

We believe that mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion is a journey of continuous improvement and culture change. Awareness raising and understanding inequality across and between the protected characteristics is only part of the journey; the other part is in embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our ways of working, rather than seeing it as a specialised 'add on'. By embedding our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion in our Rights, Inclusion & Corporate Parenting Strategy, we are providing a foundation upon which all organisational strategy and plans are built, thus ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is considered across and within everything we do.

Mainstreaming is further achieved by (in addition to the topical equality, diversity and inclusion work) embedding a robust and impactful approach to Equality Impact Assessment,

through delivering consistent mandatory training and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our localities to ensure it is a local priority, as well as a strategic one. As such, we will have a continued focus throughout 2024-2025 and beyond on:

- Training and awareness raising of our EHRIA process to empower colleagues to be able to identify when an EHRIA is required and complete them fully and timeously;
- The development of a risk reporting framework to manage organisational risk in relation to EHRIA;
- Ensuring colleagues have completed the mandatory e-learning, and ensuring managers are aware of its importance, and promoting the use of topical e-learning amongst managers; and,
- Developing and expanding our Locality EDI Lead Network.

Finally, a significant focus of work in 2024-2025 will be in improving the recording of equality data – both of our staff and of children we work with. Our colleague’s equality data is entirely self-reported on our HR system, iTrent, and many colleagues do not wish to disclose their information. We will work to raise awareness of why it is so important for us to have this data in terms of planning and resourcing work that is as impactful as possible to our colleagues. The recording of children’s equality data on our case processing system, CSAS, is more complex. Much of the information we have is provided by partner organisations (usually social work, education, police and health) and is not provided by children themselves. We will be working over the course of the coming year and beyond to ensure national consistency in the recording of this information, ensuring its accuracy and checking regularly to ensure it is up to date. By improving our data, we will be better able to establish whether the children we work with are reflective of the population (and where any differences may be), identify areas of inequality and also identify trends and patterns in outcomes between and within the protected characteristics.



Inclusion and Diversity
Challenge, Champion, Change

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