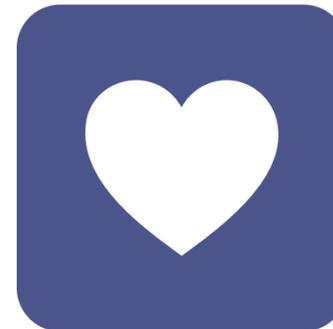


HEAD OF PRACTICE AND POLICY



This recruitment pack provides all the information you need to apply for the Head of Practice and Policy role.

www.scra.gov.uk



INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA). SCRA sits at the heart of Scotland's unique Children's Hearings System and the Head of Practice and Policy sits at the heart of SCRA. We are looking for an exceptional candidate to succeed our current Head of Practice and Policy who is retiring after 25 incredible years with SCRA.

The successful candidate will be working as part of a highly experienced and skilled senior team which includes our Heads of Service for Planning and Strategy, HR and Workforce, Digital Development, Finance and Resources and alongside our 2 Senior Operational Managers who have direct responsibility for our 9 Locality teams who are the front line of SCRA's operations. The senior team and our dedicated, highly professional SCRA staff are all contributing to the ongoing development and improvement of our organisation and to ensure that SCRA is on track to fully deliver a challenging new legislative programme in 2026-2028 and in fully Keeping the Promise by 2030.

We are embarking on a programme of sustained investment in our workforce and our Children's Hearings estate. We are a major partner in the Children's Hearings Redesign Board which has been established by Scottish Ministers to support how we and our partners will sustainably deliver on modernising the Hearings System.

We are a proud and dedicated Corporate Parent and supporters of Our Hearings, Our Voice which has helped deliver so much innovative change across the Hearings System. We are committed to partnership and engagement – across the Hearings System and with our Trade Union partner UNISON.

We are an organisation whose principle purpose is to children and young people, to ensuring their needs can be met, their safety protected and their lives full of opportunity. Our Children's Reporters and the wider SCRA team who support them, continue to work to support and protect children and young people in Scotland each day. Our Head of Practice and Policy plays a central role in our team, ensuring the integrity and quality of this work.

Thanks again for your interest in SCRA and good luck with your application for this important role.

Neil Hunter
Principal Reporter/Chief Executive



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

THE ROLE



The **Head of Practice and Policy** is a key support and adviser to the Principal Reporter on areas such as interpretation and delivery of the Reporters statutory duties and powers. This advice is captured in extensive and detailed **Practice Direction** for Children's Reporters and serves as the key frameworks as to how we deliver our functions for children in the Hearings System. The Head of Practice and Policy has a wide range of other duties and responsibilities including:

- ♥ Acting as SCRA's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and line management of our Information Governance function. This ensures that SCRA is fully compliant with data protection legislation and that children's and other data is secure and treated in line with the principles of privacy and respect. Also that SCRA responds timeously and lawfully to requests under Freedom of Information, Subject Access Requests, and Disclosure checks.
- ♥ Our Policy and Public Affairs function – ensuring that SCRA contributes to the development of public policy in Scotland, actively participates in public consultations on legislative change, engages in effective multi-agency partnerships across Scotland in pursuit of progress and improvement for children in Scotland.
- ♥ Supporting our Research work, SCRA has a small expert team of researchers who are very active in delivering programmes of work exploring existing and new areas of practice, impact of policy and delivery of support and interventions for children. The SCRA Research Team is highly regarded in both professional and academic networks and has an extensive portfolio of previous and planned **publications**.
- ♥ Providing support and line management for the team who support the groundbreaking **Our Hearings, Our Voice** – a group of Hearings-experienced young people, from across Scotland, who work to ensure change and improvement is delivered by all partners in the Hearings System, can demonstrate how children and young people's views and experiences are listened to and acted on, their rights respected and their needs fully met in current and future Hearings experience.

contd ...

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

- ♥ Line management of SCRA's Victim Information Service which ensures that individuals who may have been harmed by a child's behaviour or conduct can access information about the work of the Children's Reporter and the Hearings System, and have the right to be kept up to date on some aspects of decisions about that child. This is an area which will be expanded as part of the enactment of the [Children's \(Care and Justice\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#).
- ♥ Line management of the Practice Team - ensuring the organisation is fully supported in our practice, and up to date with changes to the law. Also providing a full range of training opportunities for all staff.
- ♥ Complaints management - adhering to a model complaints handling procedure, making sure we respond fairly and timeously to all complaints. Also ensuring that the organisation learns from those complaints.
- ♥ Supporting the Professional Development Award in Reporter Practice, to ensure that all Reporters and Assistant Reporters achieve accreditation to perform their functions.

Whilst this role works every day with the range of organisational and corporate functions, it has a particularly close relationship with Senior Operational Managers in ensuring practice standards are well embedded in our service delivery and with our Head of Digital Delivery in order to deliver on the critical SIRO role to ensure children's information and data remains secure and respected.



View the full job description



View the person specification

THE PERSON



Given the centrality and importance of the Head of Practice and Policy to the work of SCRA and the Principal Reporter, we are looking for someone who can clearly demonstrate a high level of understanding of and support for Scotland's unique Children's Hearings System, who understands its foundational values as well as how it has evolved and developed legally and operationally over the last 55 years or so. Over and above that, we expect candidates to be able to show a real aptitude for working with SCRA's delivery and strategic partners – maintaining high levels of collaboration with agencies such as Police Scotland, The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service, Social Work Scotland (and the new National Social Work Agency) and of course our key partners in Children's Hearings Scotland and Local Authority Social Work Services. You will often be the face of SCRA in our strategic partnerships – such as the [Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership](#) and the Youth Justice Improvement Board. You will represent the organisation and the Principal Reporter in public at Parliamentary Committees, conferences and events.

Strategic Leadership and Direction

- Provide organisational leadership and authoritative direction on practice and policy across SCRA.
- Contribute to the development of corporate strategy as a member of the senior management team.
- Lead national practice and policy priorities to ensure SCRA fulfils its statutory responsibilities and promotes national children's rights and wellbeing agendas.
- Ensure that Equalities and ECHR principles are embedded across practice and policy.
- Act as Deputy Principal Reporter.

Practice Framework and Professional Standards

- Develop, implement and maintain SCRA's national practice framework, policies, guidance and tools.
- Promote best practice by ensuring frontline staff have clear, accessible resources that support highquality decision making.
- Work in partnership with the Practice Team and the Accreditation Manager to ensure the Reporter workforce has the necessary professional skills and development to deliver excellent services to children and families.
- Monitor and review practice standards to ensure consistency, legality and effectiveness.

Information Governance and Risk

- Act as SCRA's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), providing leadership and assurance on information risk management.
- Ensure robust processes are in place to safeguard sensitive information and support secure, compliant practice across the organisation.
- Ensure SCRA responds effectively to Freedom of Information requests, Subject Access Requests, and Disclosure requests

National Policy Influence and Representation

- Lead SCRA's engagement with national policy developments including youth justice, child protection, children's services planning and reform of the Children's Hearings System.
- Shape and articulate SCRA's policy position to ensure children's rights and welfare remain central.
- Coordinate SCRA responses to national consultations, parliamentary committees and parliamentary questions.
- Represent the Principal Reporter, SCRA and the Children's Hearings System at national forums including Parliamentary Committees, ensuring effective external relationships and strong public confidence.

Complex Casework and Legal Responsibilities

- Provide expert advice and support on difficult, sensitive or highprofile cases.
- Oversee appeals, complex legal matters and interpretation of case law to ensure lawful and effective practice.
- Maintain professional frameworks that support decision making by Children's Reporters, including the scheme of delegation.

Collaboration and Partnership Working

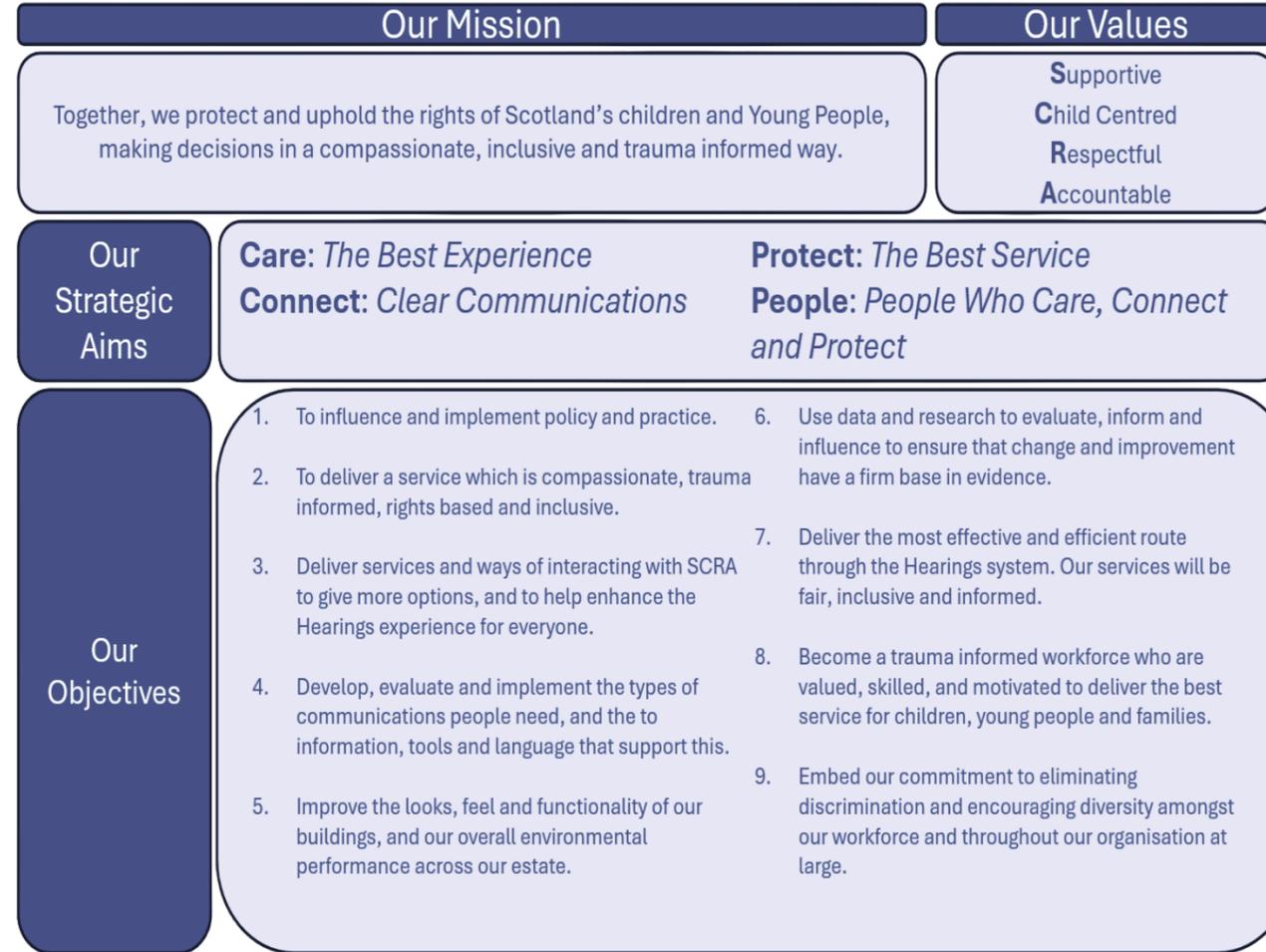
- Build and maintain strong, strategic working relationships with partners across Scotland.
- Promote highquality interagency collaboration to achieve better outcomes for children and families.
- Actively promote inclusion, integration of services, and national consistency.

The essential requirements for this role

- Degree in social work, law, education or a relevant discipline
- Experienced manager with a relevant management qualification
- Experience as a Reporter, or equivalent relevant experience
- Comprehensive knowledge of child development, legislation, case law and the operating environment of the Children's Hearings System
- Expertise in complex case practice, court work and professional judgement
- Strategic thinking, analytical ability and problemsolving skills
- Excellent people management, partnership working and communication skills
- Ability to manage competing priorities and complex organisational demands
- High emotional intelligence and resilience
- Ability to translate strategy into operational delivery
- Strong digital competence



THE ORGANISATION



Further information about SCRA and our work:



[Information about SCRA](#)
[SCRA's Corporate Plan 2024-27](#)
[SCRA as a corporate parent](#)
[SCRA's website](#)

Children and young people in Scotland will be cared for, included, respected and safe with opportunities for a positive future.

THE PAY AND REWARD PACKAGE



Salary

£80,345 - £87,663

Place of work

SCRA supports flexible/agile working and has office bases across Scotland. Your formal base and place of work will be subject to negotiation and discussion.

Extensive travel within Scotland will be involved in this role. You will be expected to be visible and accessible to SCRA staff – particularly to SCRA's Head Office in Stirling and also to other key bases such as Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Pension details

SCRA is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Closing date

Wednesday 11 March 2026

Interview Date

Week Beginning 23 March 2026 (likely to be Thursday 26 March 2026)

At SCRA, we are proud to be a socially inclusive employer and welcome applications from individuals of all backgrounds – regardless of sex, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, ethnic origin, age, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status, disability and other factors such as care experience (e.g. experience in the care system), or socio-economic background. We believe that diverse perspectives strengthen our work and help us better serve Scotland's children and young people with compassion and integrity.



FOR AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION PLEASE CONTACT:

Susan Deery
Head of Human Resources
susan.deery@scra.gov.uk

Neil Hunter
Principal Reporter/Chief Executive
neil.hunter@scra.gov.uk

For the full recruitment pack and how to apply, please visit the [Recruitment section](#) of our website.