

**Agenda of SCRA Board Meeting, held on
Wednesday 17th June 2026,
At Ochil House, Stirling**

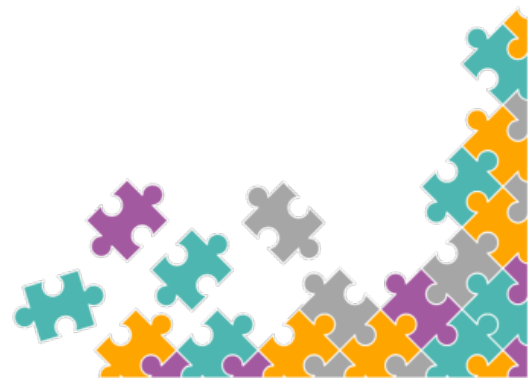
A G E N D A

**SCRA BOARD CHAIR
Cathie Cowan**

Item	Topic	Lead	Decision	Timings
1.	Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum			10:30
1.1	AOB			
2.	Declaration (s) of Interest (s)			
3.	Chair/Non-Executive Updates		For Information	10:35
4.	Minute of SCRA Board Meeting held on 18 March 2026	Chair	For Approval	10:40
5.	Matters Arising from Minute Matters Arising from Action Log	Chair	For Assurance	10:45
6.	Workplan (Board)	Chair	For Noting	10:50
7.	Committee Minutes/Committee Chair Escalation/Governance			
7.1	Minute of Audit and Assurance Committee held on 21 May 2026	Committee Chair	For Noting	10:55
7.2	Workforce Governance Committee Update	Committee Chair	For Noting	11:05
7.2.1	Wellbeing Strategy	Head of HR	For Approval	11:15
7.3	Minute of Planning and Performance Committee held on 06 May 2025	Committee Chair	For Noting	11:25
7.4	Governance Improvement Plan	Chair	For Approval	11:35
8.	Principal Reporter/Chief Executive Report			
8.1	PR/CE Report	PR/CE	For Noting	11:45
9.	Strategy & Performance			
9.1	Organisational Performance Report & introduction to official statistics	Data Manager	For Assurance	11:55
10.	Finance & Resources			
10.1	Budget Monitoring Report	Head of Finance & Resources	For Assurance	12:10
10.2	Property Annual Report	Head of Finance and Resources	For Noting	12:20
11.	Practice & Policy			
11.1	Annual Complaints Report	Information Governance Manager	For Approval	12:30

<i>Item</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Timings</i>
11.2	<i>Influencing Report 01 June 2025 to 01 June 2026</i>	Policy and Public Affairs Manager	<i>For Noting</i>	12:40
12.	<i>Risk Management</i>			
12.1	<i>Strategic Risk Register</i>	Head of Finance & Resources	<i>For Assurance</i>	12:50
12.2	<i>New Risks</i>	Head of Finance & Resources	<i>For Assurance</i>	12:55
<i>Lunch 13:00 13:30</i>				
13.	<i>Workforce</i>			
13.1	<i>Pay Gap Report</i>	Inclusion & Diversity Manager	<i>For Assurance</i>	13:30
13.2	<i>Close the Gap - Presentation</i>	Close the Gap		13:40
<i>Close</i>				

Date of next meeting, 16th September 2026, Location TBC



Minute of SCRA Board Meeting, held on Wednesday 18 March 2026, at Ochil House, Stirling

Present:

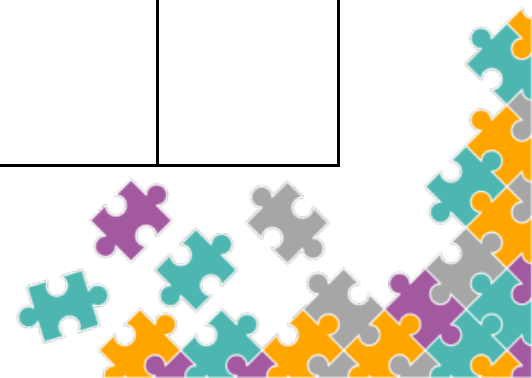
Cathie Cowan, Chair
 Steve Renwick, Vice Chair, by Teams
 Kay Barton
 Hazel Smith, by Teams
 Ying Zhang, by Teams

In Attendance:

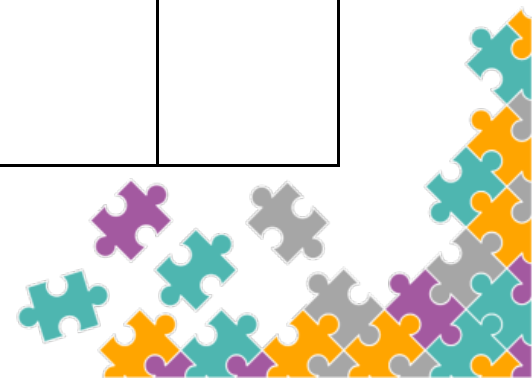
Neil Hunter, Principal Reporter/Chief Executive
 Pamela Armstrong, Governance Officer - Minute
 Douglas Cameron, Head of Digital
 Susan Deery, Head of Human Resources
 Helen Etchells, Senior Operational Manager
 Paul Mulvanny, Senior Operational Manager (SOM)
 Ross Mackenzie, Head of Finance and Resources
 Catherine Mackinnon, HR Business Partner
 Monica Sweeney, UNISON Branch Secretary
 Nick Rougvie, Children's Hearings Team Leader, Scottish Government
 Taiba Ali, Senior Policy Office, Scottish Government, by Teams
 Andrew Watson, Director of Children and Families, Scottish Government, by Teams
 Brian Taylor, Deputy Director, Children's Rights, Protection & Justice,

Item	Topic	Timescale	Owner
1.	Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum The Board Chair opened the meeting and confirmed a quorum was present. Apologies were received from Lorraine Moore, and Lynne Clow Board Members, Alistair Hogg, Head of Practice and Policy		
1.1	AOB None		
2.	Declaration (s) of Interest (s) None		
3.	Chair/Non-Executive Updates The Chair provided one substantive update from her routine sponsorship team meeting held in February. She reported that the meeting covered: the organisation's budget position, including ongoing concerns about the		

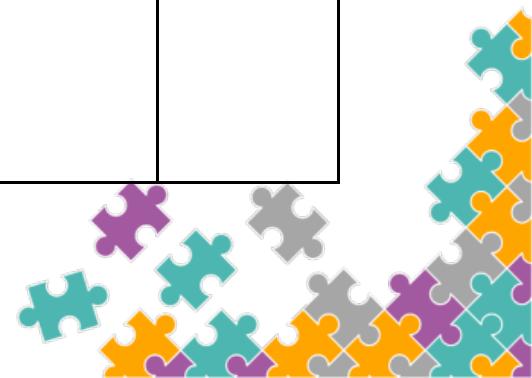
	cumulative revenue gap and 2026/2027 capital shortfall, • Board member recruitment, specifically appointments to existing vacancies, • and plans to arrange a facilitated scenario-based session involving the PR/CE, the Executive Team, and the Sponsorship Team to discuss risk sharing, decision making, relationships, and partnership working. No further updates were reported.		
4.	<i>Minute of SCRA Board Meeting held on 28 January 2026</i> The Board confirmed the minute as an accurate record of proceedings.		
5.	<i>Matters Arising from Minute</i> Matters arising were largely covered within the agenda and action log. <i>Matters Arising from Action Log</i> The Action Log was scrutinised, with several items confirmed closed, notably incorporating CCJA recruitment phasing into next budget forecast, and amendments to the December minute, other actions were noted as being on track and/or not yet due. The action related to risk sharing assurance from Scottish Government remained open and would be discussed at agenda item, 9.2 (Draft Budget 2026/2027). Issues arising during discussion: • The Vice Chair requested sight of the medium-term financial plan (MTFP) when available. • The Board discussed ongoing work relating to the Professor Norrie legislative review, noting that a strategic group had been established, with further expert input to be developed and an ambitious timeline indicated. • Assurance was provided that the Microsoft SharePoint-related work referenced previously was progressing as planned. • In relation to scenario planning for reduced funding levels, it was noted that the action had previously been considered superseded based on Scottish		



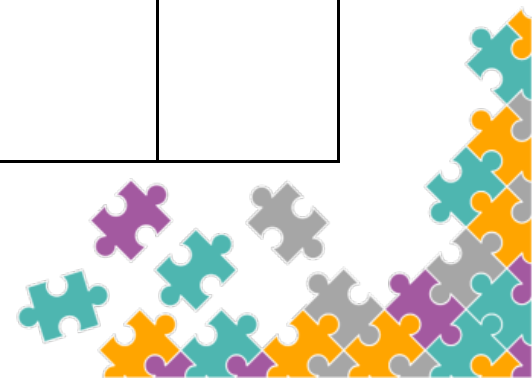
	Government assurances; however, members indicated this should be revisited during item 9.2 - the draft budget discussion. Agreed: • To present the medium-term financial plan (MTFP) to the Board when available. • To revisit the scenario planning action during the draft budget discussion scheduled today.		
6.	<i>Workplan (Board)</i> The Board noted the Workplan for assurance.		
7.1	<i>Minute of Audit and Assurance Committee held on 18 February 2026</i> Steve Renwick, Vice Chair/Committee Chair presented the minute of the Audit & Assurance Committee (AAC) meeting held on 18 February 2026 and noted the key points: • The Committee approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2026/2027 and reviewed External Audit's Annual Plan, including key risks relating to management override and the transition to the new general ledger, confirming that audit timetables and preparatory work remain on track. • It considered updated definitions and expectations for mandatory training, including Board CPD, and received a cyber risk deep dive as part of its review of the Strategic Risk Register, which indicated stable risk positions and no new risks requiring escalation. • Several action log items were formally closed, and the Committee confirmed that no new risks had emerged. • The Board noted the minute and the discussion regarding audit fees and governance findings.		
7.2	<i>Minute of Workforce Governance Committee held on 25 February 2026</i> The Board Vice Chair introduced the item on behalf of the Committee Chair, Lorraine Moore. • The Board received the summary minute of the Workforce Governance Committee (WGC) meeting held on 25 February 2026,		



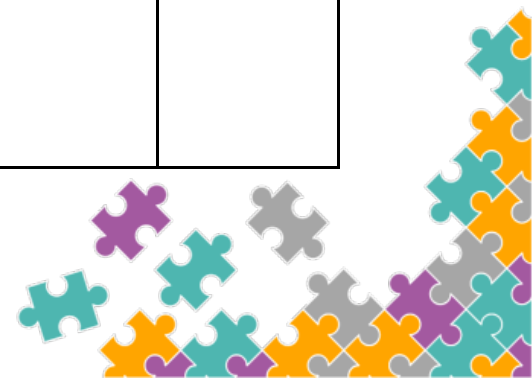
	covering key workforce, culture, and governance matters. • The Committee confirmed its revised title to better reflect its remit, reviewed the workplan, and endorsed both the draft 2026/27 Workforce Report and the Health & Safety Annual Report for Board approval. • It noted the completion of the Children's Reporter job description, evaluation, and grading implementation, with remaining follow-up actions captured elsewhere. • The Committee reviewed the updated Whistleblowing Policy, requesting final refinements prior to submission to the Board for approval, and received updates on EDI activity, forthcoming pay gap reporting, the PR/CE pay award, and recruitment activity for both Board and senior leadership roles. • No new strategic workforce risks were identified. Agreed: • Gender pay gap work to return to the June Board with findings and integration into the existing action plan. • The Board noted the Committee minute and its recommendations on the Health & Safety, Whistleblowing Policy and Annual Report and Workforce Annual Report.	June 26	SD
7.3	<i>Minute of Planning and Performance Committee held on 23 February 2026</i> Kay Barton, Committee Chair presented the minute of the Planning & Performance Committee (PPC) meeting held on 23 February 2026, noting the key points presented. • The Committee reviewed delivery of the 2025/26 Business Plan, programme governance, sustainability work, and PPC-linked strategic risks. • It confirmed that overall delivery remains broadly on track and endorsed the draft 2026/2027 Business Plan, requesting clearer representation of children and young people's influence before finalisation. • Key issues highlighted for Board attention included long-term absence pressures,		



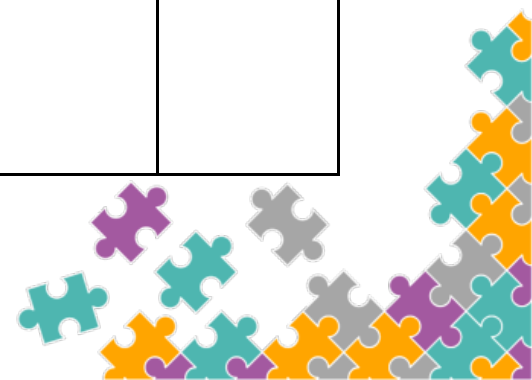
	variation in locality performance, continued court-related delays, and constraints arising from capital-dependent sustainability work. Organisational Performance Report The Board noted the Quarter 3 OPR, which showed broadly stable organisational performance alongside several significant pressures. These included rising investigation times due to a higher proportion of cases requiring court establishment, volatile police non-offence referrals (particularly in Highlands & Islands), and a substantial increase in joint reports awaiting COPFS decisions, with delays expected to continue. The report also highlighted high long-term absence in several areas despite short-term absence meeting the agreed target, alongside a revenue underspend linked to CCJA timetable changes and capital slippage due to project delays and late in-year funding. Locality variation continues to influence national KPI performance. The Board noted the Committee minute, including discussion of the OPR, sustainability deep dive, and programme assurance.		
8.1	PR/CE Report The Board received the PR/CE report, which provided an update on key national partnership and strategic developments. The report highlighted ongoing collaboration with Police Scotland through hub-based working, continued engagement with Scottish Government on amendments to The Promise Bill, and wider activity across youth justice, secure care, and the Hearings System Redesign Board. The PR/CE also noted upcoming publication of research, including work on young people's perspectives on AI, and confirmed ongoing EMT locality engagement and internal learning initiatives supporting SCRA's continuous improvement and change readiness agenda.		



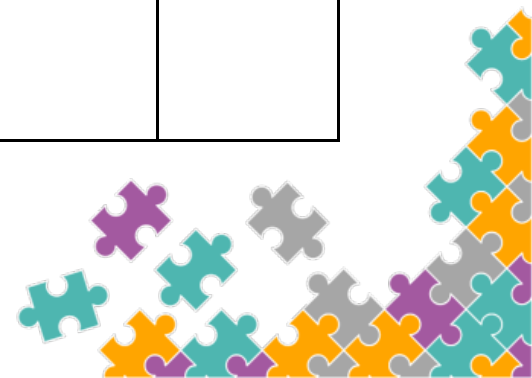
	Issues arising during discussion: • The Chair noted the report provided reassurance in relation to national engagement, legislative progress, and SCRA's visibility within government discussions. • The Chair formally acknowledged Monica Sweeney as this was her last Board meeting as Branch Secretary, praising her independent voice, pragmatism, and valuable contributions to job evaluation and partnership working. Board members expressed agreement and appreciation. The Chair reinforced the strength of the SCRA–UNISON partnership, recognising Monica's role in maintaining a constructive and respectful relationship. • The Board noted the report for assurance.		
9.1	<i>Budget Monitoring Report</i> The Head of Finance and Resources introduced the report reviewing SCRA's financial position to 28 February 2026, noting a projected £0.9m revenue underspend of £0.9m is forecast, principally arising from an unused £1m provision for CCJA recruitment. Capital expenditure had been intentionally accelerated, resulting in a manageable overspend within overall available resources. No concerns were identified regarding in-year funding, cashflow, or deliverability, and all variances were assessed as manageable through established budget controls and continued engagement with the Scottish Government. Issues arising during discussion: • A query previously raised regarding the variance between forecast electricity costs for the current year and the budgeted electricity costs for the next financial year was addressed by the Head of Finance and Resources, who confirmed the finance team had reviewed the variance and that protections against global energy price volatility explained the difference. • The Board noted the report for assurance.		



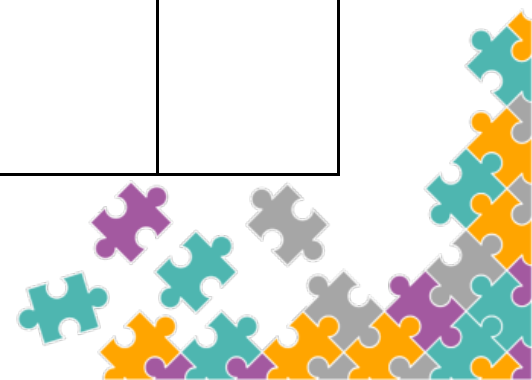
9.2	Draft Budget The Head of Finance and Resources introduced the draft 2026/2027 revenue and capital budgets, noting that the proposed £36.5m revenue budget and £4m capital requirement exceed published Scottish Government allocations but reflect the resources required to maintain statutory delivery, support workforce capacity, and progress essential digital and estate investment. The Board further noted that ministerial assurance had been provided to cover the in-year revenue gap, while capital pressures remain a significant risk due to ongoing property and digital infrastructure demands. The draft budget outlines key assumptions, risks, and mitigations to support organisational readiness for legislative and operational change in the year ahead. The Chair welcomed Brian Taylor, Deputy Director, Children's Rights, Protection & Justice, and Andrew Watson, Director for Children & Families, who joined from Scottish Government. In her opening remarks the Chair referred to her letter of February 2026 and the reference to Scottish Government's colleagues' commitment to ensuring SCRA will have the resources required to perform our statutory duties as in previous years. The Chair in this discussion wanted to test out this commitment and to agree to sharing this revenue budget deficit risk. Issues arising during discussion: Scottish Government representatives provided key assurances to the Board, emphasising partnership, shared responsibility, and continued support for SCRA's statutory functions. Shared Risk and Financial Support • Andrew Watson confirmed that the financial position represents a shared risk between SCRA and the Scottish Government, describing this as "the reality of how we will work together," and reiterated Government's commitment to enabling delivery of statutory functions. • Brian Taylor confirmed that the principle of shared risk is embedded within the		
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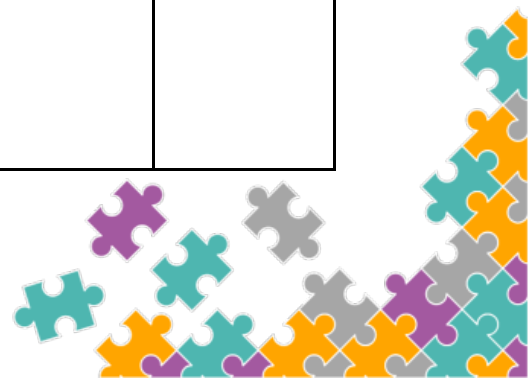
	Framework Document and implicit within the funding letter, and that the sponsor team was content for this to be explicitly recorded in the minutes. In-Year Budget Revisions - Andrew Watson provided explicit assurance that, as in previous years, he would support the movement of funds through Autumn and Spring Budget Revisions to ensure SCRA receives the funding required to maintain services. He stated this formally “for the purpose of the minutes.” Medium-Term Financial Planning - Andrew Watson confirmed that Government will work jointly with SCRA to develop a medium-term financial plan, recognising the need for shared planning in a challenging financial landscape. - He noted that Government had recently refreshed its Medium-Term Financial Strategy and provided a commitment to working in partnership with SCRA regarding in-year budgetary challenges. Board Assurance - Both representatives emphasised that SCRA is not expected to manage structural financial risks alone, and that Government and SCRA will work together on budgets, scenario development, and forward planning. Board Discussion - Kay Barton, Board Member sought assurance on potential accountability implications in a worst-case funding scenario and on organisational preparedness for significant reductions. The PR/CE confirmed that advice to the Board has been based on the best available information and sponsor team assurances regarding in-year funding. He noted that any future scrutiny would likely focus on the structural funding gap and the collective actions taken to manage risk over time.		
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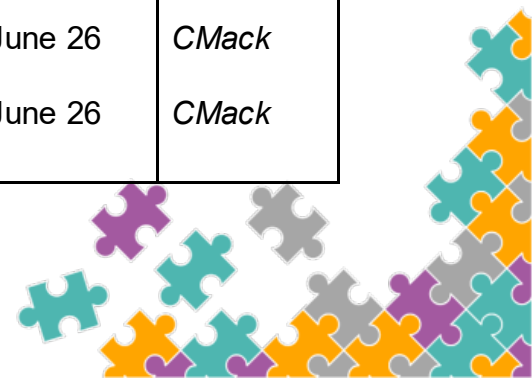
	• The Head of Finance and Resources outlined available mitigations, including engagement with the sponsor team and, if required, the use of short-term working capital solutions. • Hazel Smith, Board Member queried whether earlier scenario planning actions remained necessary; members agreed the action could be closed given the explicit assurances provided. Agreed: • To approve the Draft Budget for 2026–27 given the verbal assurances and financial risk sharing confirmation by Scottish Government representatives. In noting the shared financial risk Board Members took the assurance provided that Autumn and Spring Budget Revisions will support delivery of statutory services. The Board noted that joint medium-term financial planning with the sponsor team will proceed alongside this approval.		
9.3	<i>Sustainability Annual Report</i> The Head of Finance and Resources introduced SCRA's 2024/25 Sustainability Annual Report, which recorded total emissions of 836.9 tCO₂e. This represented a measured increase, primarily due to the inclusion of staff commuting within Scope 3 reporting. Despite this expanded reporting boundary, underlying organisational emissions continue to trend downward. The report highlighted that Property and Transport are now the largest contributors to SCRA's carbon footprint and outlined progress across the organisation's eight sustainability priority areas, including behavioural change, waste reduction, energy performance, and travel. The Board noted constraints linked to estate configuration and limited capital availability, which continue to influence the pace of environmental improvements. Issues arising during discussion: • The Board Vice Chair raised concerns about the proportion of emissions linked to staff travel and commuting, asking whether SCRA could stratify mileage allowances to		



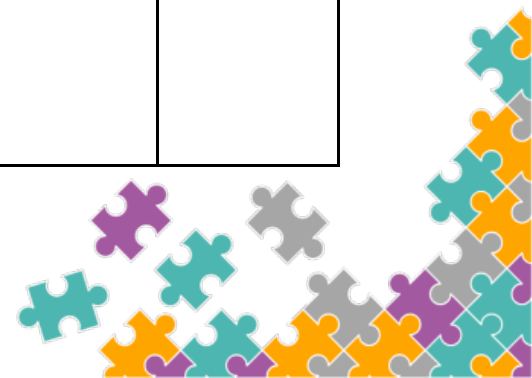
	reward low-emission vehicles and encourage environmental responsibility through salary sacrifice EV options. The Head of HR confirmed: ○ an EV salary sacrifice scheme would launch on 1 April, ○ uptake in other organisations had been modest, ○ SCRA had not yet considered differentiated mileage rates, and ○ any change would require consideration of HMRC rules, equity implications, and national comparators. • Board members explored estate usage and low-footfall properties. The Head of Finance & Resources confirmed that decisions are taken on a case-by-case basis at lease points, balancing: ○ community expectations (e.g. Orkney, Shetland), ○ the need for local presence, ○ the importance of conducting hearings close to children, and ○ the limited marketability of some older buildings. It was noted that some properties may appear financially inefficient but remain essential for service delivery. • Members acknowledged the inherent tension between environmental targets, statutory duties, and child-centred practice. Agreed: • To approve the Sustainability Annual Report. • To consider the feasibility of differential mileage rates, within HMRC rules, to encourage lower emissions.	June 26	RMack/SD
10.1	Whistleblowing Policy and Annual Monitoring Report The HR Business Partner introduced the updated Whistleblowing Policy (February 2026), which has been revised to improve clarity, accessibility, and alignment with legislative requirements, including the new protections introduced under the Employment Rights Act 2025.		



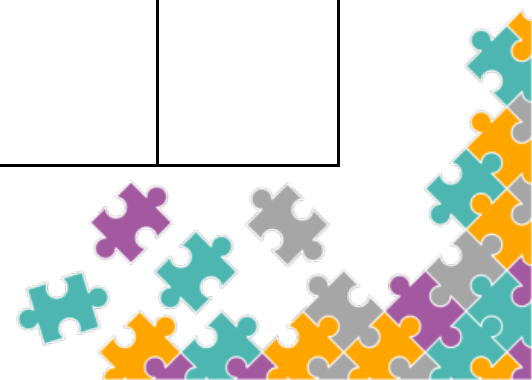
	Key changes include clearer definitions of protected disclosures, strengthened guidance for managers, more explicit escalation routes (including where concerns involve senior leaders), and the addition of a standalone summary version to support ease of use by staff. The updated policy reinforces SCRA's commitment to a transparent and safe reporting culture and ensures consistency with related governance and conduct frameworks. Issues arising during discussion: • Kay Barton, Board Member reflected that whistleblowers may share concerns informally with colleagues and sought assurance on how the policy supports staff where outcomes are unsatisfactory. The HR Business Partner advised that unresolved concerns may progress through the grievance process and noted that Section 7.2 references escalation to regulatory bodies. • Ying Zhang, Board Member raised the handling of concerns relating to Board member conduct, noting that public appointments are subject to external oversight via the Standards Commission, and suggested the policy may require explicit reference to this route. • Andrew Watson noted that Scottish Government operates a Nominated Officer Network to support complex whistleblowing cases, which may be a useful reference point for SCRA in developing practice. • Members requested that the controls section explicitly reflect the policy's governance route through committees prior to Board approval. Agreed: • To approve the revised Whistleblowing Policy. • To update the controls section to reflect the policy's governance route through committees. • To review the policy to determine whether it should include explicit reference to appropriate external bodies responsible for		
		June 26	CMack
		June 26	CMack



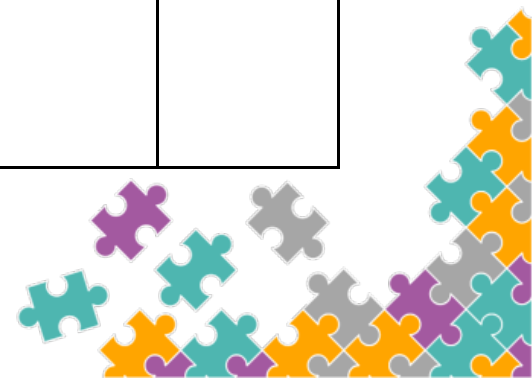
	handling concerns relating to Board member conduct.		
10.2	Health & Safety Annual Report The Head of HR introduced the Health and Safety Annual Report for 2025/26, which recorded sixteen incidents during the reporting period and no RIDDOR-reportable events. Incidents were effectively managed across localities, and long-term trend analysis continues to demonstrate stable performance in core safety measures. The report highlighted significant policy development during the year, including updates to the Naloxone Policy, Lone Working, First Aid (including new mental health first aid requirements), Display Screen Equipment, and Sharps and Bodily Fluids policies. It also outlined strengthened wellbeing initiatives, including mental health support, environmental awareness campaigns, and the annual flu vaccination programme. Overall, the report confirmed that SCRA maintains robust health and safety controls and continues to invest in staff wellbeing and safe working environments. Issues arising during discussion: • The Board discussed incidents involving violence and aggression, recognising that these situations place emotional and psychological strain on staff. Case studies in the report demonstrated how distressed children and young people's representatives can become and how this creates challenging environments for staff during hearings. The Head of HR confirmed that previously trialled external conflict management training had not fully met organisational needs. As a result, SCRA is developing a tailored programme designed specifically for the children's hearings context. • The Board Vice Chair noted that the case studies presented at the Workforce Governance Committee had been striking and, at times, difficult to read, reinforcing the importance of strong staff support and safety measures. He also referenced		



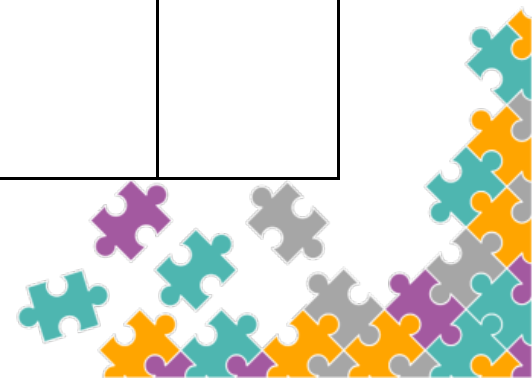
	ongoing wellbeing activity, acknowledging that the summary in the report represents only a small proportion of the organisation's wider commitment to staff wellbeing. Agreed: To approve the Health and Safety Annual Report.		
10.3	Workforce Annual Report The Head of HR introduced the Annual Workforce Report for 2025/26, which reflected a largely stable workforce profile supported by low turnover, strong learning and development activity, and positive engagement indicators. Key challenges were highlighted, including high long-term absence, an ageing workforce creating succession pressures, and increased capacity demands associated with CCJA implementation and wider organisational change. The report outlined key priorities for 2026/27, including targeted recruitment, strengthened workforce planning, job description reviews, mandatory anti-racism training, development of a new resilience framework, and continued investment in wellbeing and management development to ensure the organisation remains equipped to deliver its statutory functions and strategic aims. Issues arising during discussion: - Kay Barton, Board Member raised concerns regarding the long-term absence target, noting that current performance significantly exceeded the target and questioning whether the benchmark remained appropriate. It was noted that the Workforce Governance Committee had asked that the Head of HR conduct a benchmarking exercise to inform a review of the long-term absence target. The outcome of the review would be presented to a future Board meeting. - The PR/CE highlighted increasing psychological health-related absences, noting:		



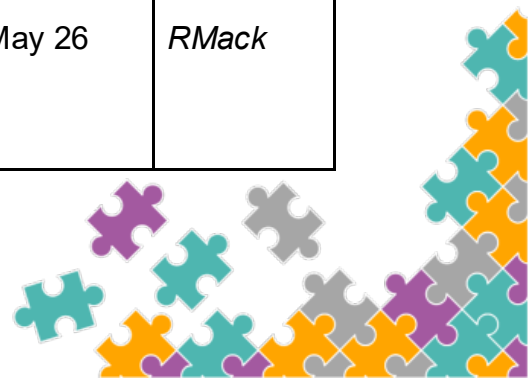
	○ rising staff anxiety linked to concerns about children's safety due to wider workforce pressures across partner agencies, ○ the increasing emotional burden carried by Reporters in situations where protections for children feel less assured, ○ ongoing work by the EMT to strengthen preventative supports, including vicarious trauma awareness and structured supervision, and ○ continued challenges in some areas where Locality managers maintain large spans of control despite efforts to rebalance workloads. • The UNISON Branch Secretary confirmed from a staff-side perspective that: ○ the psychological burden on staff is significant, ○ absence management supports are valued, and ○ wider social work resourcing pressures continue to impact on reporters' decision making. Agreed: • To approve the Workforce Annual Report. • HR to bring a proposal to the Workforce Governance Committee on revised long-term absence targets, incorporating benchmarking and demographic considerations.	May 26 (Will be tracked vis the WGC action log)	SD
11.1	SCRA Draft Business Plan 2026-27 The Head of Strategy and OD introduced the draft 2026/27 Business Plan, which sets out the final year of delivery under the 2024/2027 Corporate Plan. The Plan outlines nine organisational objectives aligned to SCRA's four strategic aims, reflecting continued focus on trauma-informed practice, improvements to the Hearings experience, strengthened communications, data-driven improvement, digital and estate development, and workforce capability. It incorporates a revised delivery framework and explicit alignment with the Target Operating Model, providing clearer		



	visibility of how teams contribute to organisational priorities. The Plan has undergone extensive consultation with EMT, functional leads, UNISON, Scottish Government and locality teams, and the Planning & Performance Committee recommended it for Board approval. Issues arising during discussion: • The PPC Chair confirmed that the PPC was satisfied the Plan provides clear alignment from corporate objectives through to locality and individual staff-level planning. • Hazel Smith, Board Member welcomed the strengthened focus on children, young people, families, and staff, noting that organisational values are more clearly reflected than in previous versions. Agreed: • To approve the draft Business Plan 2026/2027.		
12.1	<i>Strategic Risk Register</i> The Head of Finance and Resources introduced the Strategic Risk Register and highlighted several key updates for Board consideration: • Risk #2 was reframed to focus exclusively on the future partnership between SCRA and CHS. • Risk #3 was closed and replaced with Risk #281, which covers SCRA's ability to deploy resources flexibly across the country. • Risk #240 was narrowed to focus specifically on uncertainty related to the CCCESP Bill. Control ratings shifted from 86% to 78% green, while green-rated actions increased slightly from 80% to 81%. No controls or actions were rated red. Issues arising during discussion: • The Head of Finance & Resources confirmed that the updated Strategic Risk Register had been reviewed across all relevant subcommittees, each of which considered the EMT's proposed changes		



	to risk scores, mitigations, and controls. He highlighted that updated visualisation of residual risks provides greater clarity on movement in risk positions. - The Chair of the Audit & Assurance Committee, confirmed that: - the Committee had reviewed the EMT's proposed changes in detail, - members were satisfied with the EMT's judgement and risk treatment rationale, and - the Committee agreed that the updated register and associated controls appropriately reflect operational risk. Agreed: - To approve the updated Strategic Risk Register		
12.2	New Risks The Head of Finance and Resources confirmed that no new strategic risks had emerged from the meeting. However, it was noted that the existing financial sustainability risk would be updated to reflect assurances provided during the meeting. Issues arising during discussion: - The Board Vice Chair highlighted the forthcoming May elections as a potential source of political change, noting that: - at least 40 MSPs are not expected to return, - this level of turnover may lead to shifts in political attitudes toward public bodies, and - it would be prudent for SCRA to maintain awareness of any potential impact. The Chair agreed that this should remain a watching brief rather than a standalone strategic risk at this stage, while acknowledging that the position may evolve. Agreed: - To update the financial sustainability risk entry to reflect: - Government assurances provided at the meeting,	May 26	RMack



	○ the continued shared risk approach, and the commitment to joint medium-term financial planning.		
	<i>Date of the next Meeting</i> Wednesday 17 June, Location Ochil House, Stirling		



Board Action Log as at June 2026

Meeting/Item	Action	Timescale	Lead	Comments	Status
Sep 25 Review of the Reporter Job Description – Update	In line with good practice develop a closure report incorporating any learning from this extensive engagement and evaluation process, reporting initially to the Programme Board.	Jun 26	SD	Closure report was presented to the recent Programme Board.	Suggest closed
Sep 25 Financial Strategy	Clearer articulation of long-term funding requirements, stronger links to environmental commitments, and careful presentation of turnover assumptions in future versions.	Sep 26	RMack		Not yet due
Dec 25 – PR/CE Report	Governance Improvement Plan to integrate Dev Session actions	Apr 26 Jun 26	PA	Chair to present plan at June Board meeting	Open
Dec 25 – Research Programme	Develop structured knowledge-exchange plan in relation to SCRA published research	Dec 26	Research Manager		Not yet due
Jan 26 – Budget Planning	Seek written assurance letter re shared risk from Scottish Government	Mar 26	RMack/NH/CC	We are not going to achieve fully and explicitly what the Board have asked - but we have achieved sufficiency to approve budget	Suggest closed
Jan 26 – Budget Planning	Develop medium-term financial plan in order to address/reduce ongoing deficit position	Jun 26	PR/CE & SG	SCRA has a medium term financial strategy in place. SCRA will operate in line with issued GiA letter. There is little prospect of any immediate deficit reduction without expenditure reduction and subsequent operational risks. The	Open

Meeting/Item	Action	Timescale	Lead	Comments	Status
				deficit cannot be addressed by SCRA alone. The PR/CE suggests this action is reworded or deleted	
March 26 - Minute of Workforce Governance Committee held on 25 February 2026	Gender pay gap work to return to the June Board with findings and integration into the existing action plan.	Jun 26	SD	Report will be presented at the June Board meeting	Open
March 26 - Sustainability Annual Report	Consider the feasibility of differential mileage rates, within HMRC rules, to encourage lower emissions.	Jun 26	RMack/SD	A tentative proposal will be taken to the next HR Sub group meeting.	Open
March 26 - Whistleblowing Policy	To update the controls section to reflect the policy's governance route through committees.	Jun 26	CMack	Controls section has been updated accordingly	Suggest closed
	To review the policy to determine whether it should include explicit reference to appropriate external bodies responsible for handling concerns relating to Board member conduct.	Jun 26	CMack	Policy updated to include explicit reference as indicated.	Suggest closed

SCRA Board Annual Workplan – 2026/27

Business Item (supporting the delivery of our corporate objectives and functions)	18 March 26	17 June 26	16 Sept 26	16 Dec 26	27 Jan 27
Planning for the future (Setting Strategic Direction)					
Sustainability Annual Report	✓				
Digital Annual Report (Via PPC)			✓		
Property Annual Report		✓			
Procurement Annual Report			✓		
Policy Overview Annual Report				✓	
Health & Safety Annual Report	✓				
Policy & Influencing Report		✓			
Research Programme				✓	
Investing in developing and maintaining effective governance systems (Managing Risk)					
Audit & Assurance Committee Minutes	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Planning & Performance Committee Minutes	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Remuneration & Nominations Committee Minutes	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Risk Register	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SCRA Standing Orders Review			✓		
Committee Self-Assessment Annual Reports			✓		
Delivering Best Value using our resources (Holding to Account)					
Budget Monitoring Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Draft Budget	✓			✓	✓

Business Item (supporting the delivery of our corporate objectives and functions)	18 March 26	17 June 26	16 Sept 26	16 Dec 26	27 Jan 27
Annual Report & Accounts			✓		
Financial Strategy			✓		
Committing to delivering service improvement and sustainability (Holding to Account)					
Annual Business Plan (setting out improvements in line with the Board's Corporate Plan) via PPC	✓		✓		
Organisational Performance Escalation/Summary Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Complaints Review		✓			
Locality Performance Reviews					✓
Valuing & Developing our Staff (Influencing Culture)					
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report			✓		
Annual Workforce Plan	✓				
Whistleblowing Policy and Annual Monitoring Report	✓				
Annual Staff Survey Results & Action Plan					✓
Business Case - Role of the Reporter (Job Review and Evaluation)			✓		
Working in Partnership (Engaging with Stakeholders)					
Chief Executive's Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓*
Communication Plan via PPC			✓		

✓* Focus on SCRA Staff Survey

Present:

Steve Renwick (Chair)
Hazel Smith (Board Member)
Kay Barton (Board Member)

In Attendance:

Cathie Cowan (Board Chair)
Neil Hunter (Principal Reporter/Chief Executive)
Alistair Hogg (Head of Practice and Policy)
Ross Mackenzie (Head of Finance and Resources)
Helen Etchells (Senior Operational Manager)
Paul Mulvanny (Senior Operational Manager)
Douglas Cameron (Head of Digital)
Pamela Armstrong (Governance Officer)

Internal Audit (BDO):

Gemma MacLeod

External Audit (Audit Scotland):

Adam Haahr

Minute:

Item	Topic	Timescale	Lead
1.	Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed attendees and confirmed the meeting was quorate.		
2.	Declaration (s) of Interest (s) The Chair declared that he and Adam Haahr worked together in another context through the Scottish Children's Young Persons Commissioner Audit and Advisory Board, where Adam Haahr is the lead auditor. He confirmed that this did not constitute a conflict of interest but was raised for transparency.		
3.	Minute of SCRA Audit and Assurance Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 18th February 2026 The Committee reviewed the minute of the previous meeting held on 18 February 2026 for accuracy.		

	Issues arising during discussion: • The Board Chair noted that Board Development referenced in the minutes had not taken place in April and required amendment, with the skills matrix instead progressing to the Board with an appended governance improvement plan. • The Chair raised a point in relation to Item 6.1 (Internal Audit Plan), highlighting the need to confirm Executive Management Team satisfaction following previous discussion. The Head of Finance and Resources confirmed that the Internal Audit Plan had been discussed and agreed, including that Freedom of Information would be included within the audit plan. Agreed: • Subject to the agreed amendments, the minute of the meeting held on 18 February 2026 was approved as an accurate record.	Immediate	PA
4.	Matters Arising from Minute of Wednesday 18th February 2026 The Committee considered matters arising from the previous meeting and confirmed that these were either addressed through the agenda or reflected in the Action Log. Matters Arising from Action Log The Committee reviewed the Action Log and noted progress against outstanding actions from previous meetings. Issues arising during discussion: • The Chair proposed closure of the Internal Audit Plan action as it had been addressed through discussion and confirmation under Item 3. • The Chair proposed closure of the action relating to financial systems (“nuts and bolts”), noting that the new accounting system was in place or progressing and that additional support and review was being provided. • The Head of Finance and Resources confirmed that remaining actions were progressing, including work on training baseline and mandatory training metrics, which was not yet due but had been discussed and would be completed for the next meeting.		

	Agreed: - To close the action relating to the Internal Audit Plan. - To close the action relating to financial systems.		
5.	Workplan The Committee reviewed the Audit and Assurance Committee Workplan. Agreed: To approve the workplan.		
6.			
6.1	Annual Audit Plan 2026-27 Gemma Macleod, BDO, introduced the Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2026–27, which set out a programme of six audits, alongside follow-up work and audit committee support, totalling 46 audit days. The plan adopts a risk-based approach aligned to the organisation’s strategic objectives, risk register and emerging priorities, including recruitment, financial controls and Freedom of Information. Issues arising during discussion: - Gemma Macleod presented the plan, confirming no substantive changes since the previous meeting, with Freedom of Information now confirmed as the practice and policy audit area. - The Board Chair highlighted the timing of the partnership engagement review and noted potential overlap with other related activity. The Chair noted that the plan should remain flexible to allow adjustments to timing where required. - Kay Barton welcomed inclusion of the corporate governance review and highlighted its value to the Planning and Performance Committee. - The Chair identified a drafting issue relating to an incorrect job title within the document. Agreed: - To approve the Internal Audit Annual Audit Plan for 2026–27, including the addition of the Freedom of Information audit.		
6.2	Internal Audit Report 2025-26 Gemma Macleod, BDO, introduced the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2025–26, which provided an overall “good” assurance opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and		

	internal controls. The report was based on six completed audits delivered in line with the approved plan, with all areas receiving moderate or substantial assurance and no high-risk findings. The report also highlighted key themes including generally strong control frameworks, effective governance arrangements, and opportunities to strengthen documentation, consistency and use of data and systems. Issues arising during discussion: • Gemma Macleod highlighted key cross-cutting themes, including strong governance and control frameworks, with opportunities to improve documentation, consistency and use of systems and data. • The Chair raised the limited reference to AI and highlighted the importance of considering emerging risks and opportunities in this area. The Head of Digital noted that development of a digital strategy would support a more structured approach to AI and wider digital risks. • The PR/CE reflected that the report demonstrated a maturing control environment, with continued focus needed on strengthening documentation and audit trails. • The Committee noted the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2025–26, including the positive overall (“good”) assurance opinion.		
6.3	Staff Development and Supervision Gemma Macleod, BDO, introduced the Internal Audit report on Staff Development and Supervision. The audit provided moderate assurance on both the design and operational effectiveness of controls. The report confirmed that a comprehensive Development and Supervision Framework is in place and operating effectively overall, with no high-risk findings, and identified opportunities to strengthen personal development planning, clarity of performance management processes, and objective setting. Issues arising during discussion: • Gemma Macleod highlighted that the Development and Supervision Framework is well established and operating effectively, with consistent supervision meetings and generally strong documentation.		

	• Gemma Macleod outlined key improvement areas relating to inconsistent recording and monitoring of Personal Development Plans, lack of clarity between supervision and the capability procedure, and the quality and consistency of annual objectives. • Kay Barton queried the distinction between informal and formal performance management processes. • Gemma Macleod clarified that this related to the need for clearer alignment between the development and supervision framework and formal capability procedures. • Members discussed the usability of systems (particularly iTrent) for recording Personal Development Plans and the impact this has on compliance and oversight. • Members noted the importance of clearly linking informal supervision processes with formal capability procedures to ensure consistent management of underperformance. • Members emphasised the importance of ensuring objectives are meaningful, measurable and aligned to organisational priorities. • The Committee recognised positive staff feedback on supervision arrangements and noted the overall strength of the framework despite the areas identified for improvement. • Members agreed that the report should be shared with the Workforce Governance Committee for further consideration. • The Committee noted the findings of the Internal Audit report and the moderate assurance opinion.	Jun 26	PA/SD
6.4	Follow Up Report Gemma Macleod, BDO, introduced the Internal Audit Follow-Up Report, which reviewed progress against 48 recommendations due for implementation by May 2026. The report confirmed that 65% of actions had been fully implemented, with a further 29% in progress, indicating good overall progress while highlighting the need to ensure timely completion of outstanding actions. Issues arising during discussion: • Gemma Macleod confirmed that no high-risk recommendations were outstanding and that progress reflected a generally positive response from management.		

	- Members noted that several actions remained in progress across areas including digital development, risk management, and procurement, with some revised completion dates extending into 2026–27. - Members discussed the importance of ensuring that actions are completed within agreed timescales to avoid prolonged exposure to control weaknesses. - Members highlighted recurring themes, including documentation, monitoring, and system use, particularly in relation to training records, development plans and contract management. - The Committee noted that some recommendations had been superseded by more recent audit findings, reflecting ongoing organisational development. - The Committee noted the progress made in implementing Internal Audit recommendations.		
7.			
7.1	External Audit updates – verbal The Committee received a verbal update from Adam Haahr (External Audit) on current and upcoming external audit activity, including planning for the 2025–26 audit and engagement with the organisation. Issues arising during discussion: - Adam Haahr provided an update on external audit activity and outlined the planned timetable for the forthcoming audit. - Adam Haahr confirmed ongoing engagement with management and readiness for the upcoming audit cycle. - Members noted the importance of maintaining effective coordination between internal and external audit activity. - Members highlighted the value of early engagement to support a smooth and efficient audit process.		
8.			
8.1	AAC Annual Report The Chair introduced the draft Audit & Assurance Committee Annual Report for 2025–26, covering the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The report sets out how the Committee discharged its responsibilities and provides an evidence-based overall assurance conclusion that governance, risk management, internal control and financial reporting arrangements were		

	operating effectively. The report is intended to support preparation of the Governance Statement. Issues arising during discussion: • Members noted the overall conclusion that sufficient assurance had been received across governance, risk management, internal control and financial reporting arrangements. • Members noted the range of assurance sources reflected in the report, including Internal Audit, External Audit, risk reporting and information governance reporting. • Members discussed key areas carried forward into 2026–27, including digital and cyber risk oversight, stakeholder engagement improvements, and confirmation of the Internal Audit compliance review. • Members noted the Committee’s self-assessment outcomes, including areas for improvement such as induction arrangements, benchmarking and tracking of actions. • Members noted the continuing membership vacancy and the importance of maintaining resilience and appropriate skills within the Committee. • Members noted the transfer of Quality Assurance and case sampling oversight to the Planning and Performance Committee from November 2025. Agreed • The Committee approved the Audit & Assurance Committee Annual Report for 2025–26.		
8.2	Annual Accounts (including Accounting Policies and Governance Statement) The Head of Finance and Resources introduced the paper seeking approval of SCRA’s proposed accounting policies for 2025–26, an update on the preparation of the Annual Accounts, and approval of the draft Governance Statement for inclusion in the financial statements. The paper outlined key accounting judgement areas, audit timetable and dependencies, and confirmed that the Governance Statement provides the basis for evidencing governance, risk management and internal control across the year. Issues arising during discussion: • The Head of Finance and Resources highlighted key judgement areas for 2025–26, including pensions (and application of the IFRIC 14 asset		

	ceiling), General Fund deficit disclosure, and property valuation/indexation requirements. • Members noted the timetable for preparation and audit of the Annual Accounts, including planned external audit fieldwork and approval milestones. • Members discussed the Governance Statement and its role in evidencing governance, risk management and internal control, noting the overall positive assurance position. • Members noted the migration to a new finance system from April 2026 and the associated audit considerations. • Members noted key financial context, including pension position and General Fund deficit disclosures, and the approach to addressing these within the accounts. Agreed • The Committee approved the accounting policies for adoption in the preparation of the 2025–26 financial statements. • The Committee approved the draft Governance Statement for inclusion in the Annual Accounts.		
8.3	Pensions Update The Head of Finance and Resources provided an update on matters arising from recent meetings of the Falkirk Council Pension Fund (FCPF) Board and Committee. The report provided an overview of governance, investment and financial matters, and confirmed that the Fund remains in a surplus position, with no material changes to funding assumptions since the previous update. Issues arising during discussion: • Members noted that the Fund continues to demonstrate satisfactory compliance with regulatory requirements and ongoing delivery of its Business Plan. • Members noted recent decisions by the Fund, including approval of the budget, governance policies, and updates to the risk register and assurance arrangements. • Members noted ongoing work relating to investment policies, including considerations around responsible investment and risk management. • Members noted that the Fund remains in a surplus position and that there is no change to		

	the expected employer contribution outlook at this stage. Members noted that the next triennial valuation (as at 31 March 2026) will determine employer contribution rates from April 2027.		
8.4	Strategic Risk Register The Head of Finance and Resources provided an update to the Strategic Risk Register, which remains a key governance and planning tool supporting oversight of organisational risks. The report summarised changes since the previous meeting, including updates to risk descriptions and control/action status, and confirmed that no risks had changed score and no controls or actions were rated red. Issues arising during discussion: - Members noted that risk #281 had replaced a previous workforce-related risk, and that risks #2 and #240 had been reframed for clarity. - Members noted that the proportion of controls rated green had decreased, while the proportion of actions rated green had increased, with no controls or actions rated red. - Members noted that there had been no changes to overall risk scores. - Members discussed the importance of ongoing monitoring and oversight of risks within the Committee's remit, including those relating to financial sustainability and service delivery.		
9.			
9.1	Topical/Regulatory/Governance Issues - The Committee received an update on transition arrangements for the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) role, noting that a structured handover was underway to support continuity of information governance responsibilities. - Members received an update on the management of risks associated with Microsoft system changes, noting that system deprecation had been successfully addressed and used as an opportunity to enhance functionality.		
9.2	New Risks No new risks identified.		
9.3	Items for Escalation to the Board The Chair summarised the following items for escalation to the Board:		

	• Members agreed that the Internal Audit report on staff development and supervision should be referred to the Workforce Governance Committee, including further consideration of span of control and approaches to supervision. • Members agreed to highlight a thematic issue regarding recording and documentation across areas including personal development plans, information governance and digital processes. • Members agreed to highlight ongoing matters relating to estates indexation and wider sustainability considerations. • Members agreed to report the successful management of Microsoft system changes as a positive update to the Board.		
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Close

There being no further business, the Chair thanked members and attendees.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 12th August 2026, Bell Street, Glasgow

Present:

Lorraine Moore (Committee Chair)
Hazel Smith (Committee Vice Chair)
Steve Renwick (Committee Member)
Cathie Cowan (Board Chair/Committee Member)

Attending:

Susan Deery (Head of HR)
Neil Hunter (PR/CE)
Pamela Armstrong (Governance Officer)

	Title	Timescale	Owner
1.	AOB The Governance Officer highlighted an Internal Audit report on Staff Development and Supervision. The report had received moderate assurance and had not been included on the agenda due to timing. Agreed: To bring the report to a future Committee meeting.		
2.	Apologies None		
3.	Declarations of Interest None		
4.	Minute of the last meeting 4.1 The minute and Board summary were approved without amendment. 4.2 Matters Arising An update was provided on job description reviews, confirming that work is ongoing and will be progressed through a planned programme of activity.		
5.	Workplan The workplan was reviewed with no amendments.		
6.	Workforce Governance Committee Annual Report The Governance Officer presented the draft Annual Report. Issues arising during discussion: - The report was welcomed as clear and well structured. - Minor amendments were identified for incorporation.		



	Agreed: To recommend the report to the Board for approval.		
7.	Absence Management Update The Head of HR presented an update on absence performance and proposed changes to measurement and targets. Issues arising during discussion: - Noted a benchmarking long term absence review of comparable public bodies. - A revised approach to measurement using average working days lost was supported. - A phased reduction approach was proposed, with an interim target of 13 days. - Psychological absence was identified as a key contributor, with a mix of personal and work-related factors. - The importance of context, workforce profile, and improved reporting and narrative was emphasised. Agreed: - To progress revised absence measures and targets. - To take proposals to the HR Subgroup for implementation.		SD SD
8.	SCRA Wellbeing Strategy The Head of HR introduced the Wellbeing Strategy. Issues arising during discussion: - The strategy was positively received as clear, holistic and aligned to organisational priorities. - Members suggested strengthening measurable outcomes and refining wording. Agreed: - To recommend the strategy to the Board for approval, subject to minor amendments.	June 26	SD
9.	Onboarding Letter for New Board Members The Governance Officer presented a draft onboarding document. Issues arising during discussion: - The document was welcomed as a clear and practical guide. - Improvements were suggested to ensure accuracy of links and provide additional organisational context. Agreed: - To finalise the onboarding document ahead of new Board member appointments.	July 26	PA



10.	Employment Legislation Update The Head of HR provided an update on employment legislation. Issues arising during discussion: • Changes were outlined across several areas, including PVG scheme requirements and employment rights. • The organisation is largely compliant, with some policy updates ongoing.		
11.	Board Recruitment update New Board members are expected later in the year, with induction materials in development.		
12.	Risk The Strategic Risk Register was noted. No new strategic risks were identified.		
13.	Items for Board Escalation • Wellbeing Strategy recommended for approval to the Board. • Review and refresh of HR metrics to support optimising and moving to realistic Av. Working Days Lost having engaged through the various groups and forums.		
	Date of Next Meeting: Monday 17 August 2026 at 10:30, by TEAMS		



SCRA Board

17 June 2026

Item 7.2.1, SCRA Wellbeing Strategy

Report Classification: *Open*

For: *Approval*

Executive Sponsor: *Susan Deery, Head of HR*

Author: *Morna Sands, HR Manager*

Executive Summary

This report presents SCRA's Wellbeing Strategy for 2026–2027 for Board approval. The strategy sets out a comprehensive approach to supporting the mental, physical, social and financial wellbeing of our workforce, recognising that our people are central to delivering high-quality, trauma-informed services for children and families.

The strategy aligns with the People Strategy 2024–27, Corporate Plan and Target Operating Model, and is informed by staff feedback, workforce data and external evidence, including the CIPD Good Work Index 2025.

It establishes a clear vision of a confident, capable and compassionate workforce within an inclusive “one team” culture, supported by four core wellbeing pillars and a detailed action plan for 2026/27.

Progress will be monitored through staff feedback, workforce metrics and wellbeing indicators, ensuring continuous improvement and measurable impact.

Recommendation

The Board is invited to:

- Approve the Wellbeing Strategy 2026–2027
- Note the alignment with the People Strategy and Corporate Plan
- Support the implementation of the associated action plan and monitoring arrangements
- Note the focus on measurable outcomes and continuous improvement

Key Issues to be discussed/considered

- *Strategic importance of wellbeing: Wellbeing is recognised as a core organisational priority and critical to workforce resilience, engagement and service delivery.*
- *Alignment with strategic frameworks: The strategy supports the People Strategy, Target Operating Model and national frameworks such as the Mentally Flourishing Workplaces Framework.*

- *Workforce pressures: Staff feedback highlights positive team culture alongside challenges relating to workload pressures and absence, necessitating sustained focus on resilience and support.*
- *Four wellbeing pillars: Mental, physical, social and financial wellbeing provide the framework for action and prioritisation.*
- *Delivery through action plan: A detailed action plan sets out practical initiatives including wellbeing supports, leadership development, resilience frameworks and inclusive practices.*
- *Measurement and accountability: Progress will be tracked through staff surveys, workforce data (e.g. absence, retention), and leadership performance expectations.*

Implications:

Service

The strategy supports delivery of high-quality, trauma-informed services by enabling a resilient, engaged and capable workforce focused on outcomes for children and families.

Financial

Resource implications relate to continued investment in wellbeing initiatives (e.g. training, support services, wellbeing programmes). These are expected to be managed within existing workforce and HR budgets.

Workforce

Significant positive impact through enhanced wellbeing support, improved engagement, strengthened leadership capability and increased resilience across teams.

Infrastructure including Digital

Supports agile and flexible working, digital capability, and workplace environments that promote health and wellbeing.

Information Governance

No direct implications beyond standard data protection requirements associated with workforce data, surveys and wellbeing monitoring.

Risk Assessment/Management

The strategy contributes to mitigating key strategic risks relating to workforce capacity, absence, retention and organisational resilience.

Failure to implement the strategy effectively may increase risks associated with staff wellbeing, service delivery and performance.

Progress will be monitored through workforce metrics, staff feedback and regular review mechanisms to ensure risks are identified and addressed early.

Relevance to Corporate/Strategic Objectives

The strategy supports SCRA's corporate objectives by:

- *Valuing and developing our staff through a strong focus on wellbeing and inclusion*

- *Supporting service improvement and sustainability through a capable and resilient workforce*
- *Enabling delivery of the Target Operating Model*
- *Strengthening organisational culture, leadership and governance*
- *Promoting partnership working and employee engagement*

Equality Declaration

The author can confirm that due regard has been given to the Equality Act 2010 and compliance with the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of SCRA's decision making process.

Further to evaluation it is noted:

Screening completed - no discrimination noted

Involvement, Engagement and/or Consultation

The strategy has been informed by:

- *Staff Survey findings and ongoing workforce feedback*
- *Engagement with staff and managers*
- *Input from UNISON*
- *External evidence including the CIPD Good Work Index and national wellbeing frameworks*

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Wellbeing Strategy 2026–2027

Appendix 2 – 2026/27 Action Plan (included within strategy document)



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Wellbeing Strategy

2026-2027



SCRA's Wellbeing Strategy 2026-27

Introduction

The Wellbeing Strategy sets out SCRA's approach to supporting the health and wellbeing of our workforce during 2026/27. It aligns with our People Strategy, Corporate Plan and Locality Plans, and reinforces our commitment to a positive and supportive employee experience. Progress will be monitored through workforce data alongside what staff and UNISON tell us.

The strategy is informed by both staff insight and external evidence. The CIPD Good Work Index 2025 identifies health and wellbeing as the job quality factors most strongly linked to job satisfaction and motivation, a finding reflected in our Staff Survey, where colleagues consistently value our focus on individual and team wellbeing. Our People Strategy 2024–27 builds on this evidence, setting out our ambition to be an employer that values and supports its people through rewarding work, development opportunities, and a culture underpinned by psychological safety, support and wellbeing.

We invest time and resources in creating a positive workplace culture, with manageable workloads and wellbeing as key priorities. While our 2026 survey highlights strong team support, positive relationships and a clear sense of purpose as central to wellbeing and motivation, it also recognises that staffing pressures and absence can at times affect team resilience. We are not complacent and remain committed to continuous improvement.

This Wellbeing Strategy recognises that our people are our greatest asset and supports delivery of our Target Operating Model, enabling a confident, capable and compassionate workforce focused on what matters most for children and families. An agile, engaged and supported workforce is central to transforming our service delivery.

We recognise the profound impact wellbeing has across all aspects of life and that colleagues bring their whole selves to work. The strategy therefore commits to clear, measurable action to support mental, physical, social and financial wellbeing. Success will be evidenced through increased awareness and uptake of wellbeing supports, alongside improvements in perceptions of inclusion, support and psychological safety across teams.

Together, this strategy and its associated measures reinforce wellbeing as a core organisational priority. Our aim is to enable staff and managers to thrive, perform at their best, and contribute to an inclusive “one team” culture that supports one another while delivering high-quality services in line with our TOM.

¹ Pay and Benefits, Contracts, Work-life Balance, Job Design, Relationships at Work, Employee Voice, Health and Wellbeing. CIPD Good Work Index 2025



Purpose - why wellbeing matters

The Wellbeing Strategy supports delivery of SCRA's People Strategy by embedding wellbeing into how we work and the experience of working for SCRA. Spanning the four core elements of the People Strategy, it reinforces our commitment to a healthy, inclusive and supportive workplace that enables our people to perform at their best and supports delivery of our Target Operating Model.

Vision - what we are aiming for

To create a confident, capable and compassionate workforce, with inclusion and wellbeing embedded within our “one team” culture, enabling everyone to grow, contribute and deliver trauma-informed outcomes for children and families.

Principles - how we operate



- **We value and care for our people's wellbeing** - We value our people and are committed to creating a supportive environment where wellbeing, respect and compassion are everyday experiences.
- **We offer an inclusive, respectful and safe culture** - We foster a “one team” culture of trust and care, where everyone feels included, listened to and psychologically safe to be themselves and prioritise their capability and wellbeing.
- **We support sustainable ways of working that support wellbeing** - We promote manageable workloads, embrace new technologies and ways of working, and development so our people can work safely, confidently and at their best.
- **We listen, advocate and respond to wellbeing needs** - We use feedback, insight and evidence to continually strengthen wellbeing support, advocate and respond to the needs of our workforce.



Aims – what we will focus on

The Strategy is designed to work towards ensuring we:

Create a collaborative, inclusive and psychologically safe workplace

- Foster a strong “one team” culture where dignity, respect, inclusion and collaboration are everyday behaviours, underpinned by our Inclusive Standards and Behaviours Framework.
- Ensure colleagues feel safe, valued and supported to be themselves and to work together with compassion to deliver our service.
- Celebrate and support further diversity across our workforce.

Enable sustainable, healthy and meaningful work

- Promote sustainable workloads, clear role expectations and supportive working practices that protect health and build resilience.
- Ensure work is meaningful and rewarding, with opportunities to make a difference, and that people feel proud of the service they provide.
- Actively acknowledge and support wellbeing during organisational change.

Build a confident, capable and compassionate, trauma informed workforce

- Strengthen capability, confidence and motivation through learning, development and rewarding careers.
- Strengthen resilience and wellbeing by equipping our people with the skills they need to thrive, encouraging collaboration, engagement and innovation, and enabling everyone to contribute positively.
- Collaborate to deliver our service for children and families in a trauma-informed way.
- Promote clear career pathways and succession planning to support development, progression and organisational sustainability, helping colleagues understand opportunities for growth within SCRA.

Listen and continuously improve wellbeing

- Build change capacity through confident and capable leaders who role-model healthy behaviours and create supportive team environments.
- Listen to our people and use workforce data, feedback and evidence to continuously strengthen wellbeing support, respond to emerging challenges and focus effort where it has the greatest impact.



Wellbeing Strategy supports the People Strategy

The Wellbeing Strategy directly supports delivery of SCRA's People Strategy by embedding wellbeing into our culture, leadership, ways of working and everyday practice. It reinforces our commitment to being an inclusive, supportive employer and enables our people to thrive while delivering high-quality, trauma-informed services.

Fostering an inclusive and supportive workplace culture

- We support the People Strategy by promoting a culture where dignity, respect and inclusion underpin how we work together. This includes challenging stigma and discrimination related to mental, physical, financial and social wellbeing, supporting a trauma-informed workforce in how we deliver services and treat one another, and embedding behaviours aligned with our Inclusive Standards and Behaviours Framework.

Building understanding and shared responsibility for wellbeing

- The Wellbeing Strategy strengthens capability and confidence by increasing awareness and understanding of wellbeing. This includes providing education, learning and resources; encouraging open conversations supported by compassionate leadership and psychological safety, in line with our Values and Behaviours; and promoting a shared language around wellbeing and inclusion across the organisation.

Embedding wellbeing into everyday practice

- We integrate wellbeing into how work is managed and how people are supported by embedding wellbeing into policies, procedures and daily interactions. Wellbeing is a consistent feature of supervision, including at least one dedicated wellbeing-focused discussion annually, with managers supported to lead with empathy, recognition and early intervention. Colleagues are supported to access early help through a range of wellbeing resources, including supervision, the Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health, Mental Health First Aiders, psychological wellbeing assessments and clear referral pathways.

Creating a healthy, resilient and sustainable working environment

- The Wellbeing Strategy supports sustainable delivery of the People Strategy by promoting healthy working environments and practices, enabling work-life balance through flexible and agile working where possible, and supporting personal and team resilience through training, reflection and practical wellbeing actions.



Wellbeing Strategy Pillars

Our Strategy has four pillars:



- **Mental Wellbeing** – We support good mental wellbeing by creating the conditions for resilience, managing pressures effectively, and enabling people to thrive both personally and professionally.
- **Social Wellbeing** – We aim to foster a positive, inclusive workplace where people feel connected, respected and enjoy working together, helping SCRA to be a great place to work.
- **Financial Wellbeing** – We support our people’s financial wellbeing by raising awareness, providing learning opportunities and signposting to resources that help them further understand and manage their financial circumstances, and plan for the future.
- **Physical Wellbeing** – We promote physical wellbeing through a focus on prevention, healthy choices and early support where needed.



Alignment of Wellbeing Strategy with the External Environment

Our Wellbeing Strategy is aligned with the wider national and public-sector approach to employee health and wellbeing. In particular, it aligns with the [*Mentally Flourishing Workplaces \(MFW\) Framework*](#), developed by Public Health Scotland, which sets out evidence-based good practice for supporting workplace mental health and wellbeing across eight core dimensions. The Framework is endorsed by the Scottish Government and reflects national policy direction and emerging evidence on what supports a healthy, resilient workforce.

Alignment with the MFW Framework ensures that SCRA's approach is grounded in recognised best practice, consistent with external expectations, and responsive to the evolving wellbeing landscape across Scotland's public services.

The strategy's aims, principles and values support the MFW focus on inclusive cultures, compassionate leadership, sustainable work, psychological safety and continuous improvement.

The MFW has seven dimensions that promote best practice – they are interconnected and at times interdependent.



SCRA's Wellbeing Strategy maps against the MFW dimensions across our four wellbeing pillars: **mental, physical, social and financial wellbeing**.

Through this alignment, SCRA is working towards becoming a mentally flourishing organisation, where wellbeing is part of how we lead, work together and deliver our services. Supporting our workforce to thrive, strengthen resilience and capability, and deliver high-quality, trauma-informed services for children and families.



Alignment of SCRA's Wellbeing Pillars to MFW Framework



Treating People Well links to: *Mental, Social, Financial wellbeing*

- Fair treatment and respect support **mental wellbeing** / psychological safety
- Inclusion, trust and good relationships underpin **social wellbeing**
- Fair reward, security and transparency contribute to **financial wellbeing**

Workplace Culture links to: *Mental, Social wellbeing*

- Positive, inclusive culture supports mental health and reduces stress
- Collaboration, belonging and “one team” working strengthen social wellbeing

Measuring Success links to: *Mental, Social wellbeing*

- Measuring wellbeing, not just performance, validates its importance and supports mental wellbeing
- Using staff voice and feedback strengthens social wellbeing and engagement

Mental Health Awareness links to: *Mental wellbeing*

- Awareness, education and open conversations reduce stigma
- Builds confidence to recognise issues and seek help early

Learning to Grow links to: *Mental, Social, Financial wellbeing*

- Learning and development build confidence and resilience (mental wellbeing)
- Shared learning supports collaboration and connection (social wellbeing)
- Career development and capability support financial security (financial)

Accessing Support links to: *Mental, Physical, Financial wellbeing*

- Access to mental health supports and supervision protects mental wellbeing
- Occupational health and workplace adjustments support physical wellbeing
- Financial wellbeing resources (e.g. signposting) address financial stress

Looking Back to Look Forward links to: *Mental, Social wellbeing*

- Reflection, learning from experience and change support mental resilience
- Shared learning strengthens trust, engagement and social wellbeing



People Strategy and Wellbeing Pillars alignment



People Strategy Pillar 1: Supporting Our People

Aligned Wellbeing Pillar: Social and Physical Wellbeing

How will we create an environment where our people experience positive relationships, feel supported and valued, maintain good morale and resilience, and achieve a healthy work–life balance.

Wellbeing Key Actions

- **Support a ‘one team’ culture and consistency of wellbeing support** through strengthened national and local health and wellbeing networks , delivering coordinated wellbeing plans.
- **Communicate the Wellbeing Strategy clearly and consistently** to ensure awareness, transparency and engagement.
- **Promote an inclusive and respectful workplace** through behaviours aligned with Inclusive Standards and Behaviours Framework.
 - Embed through practical support, including bystander training.
 - Embed the reviewed Dignity at Work Policy (2025), supported by accessible e-learning for all staff.
- **Promote meaningful connection** by strengthening a “one team” culture and opportunities for staff to connect across the organisation.
- **Supportive supervision** by equipping managers to hold constructive, developmental conversations, with manager accountability for team wellbeing support.



- **Mentally Flourishing Workplace accreditation** by demonstrating progress via Mental Wealth Group and Health and Wellbeing Group initiatives.
- **Resilience tools and support** through roll out of Resilience Framework for managers and staff during 2026.
- **Employee Wellbeing and Inclusion Passports** – expansion of Wellbeing Plans to a holistic employee wellbeing and inclusion passport – framework for documentation of agreed supports for carers, neurodiversity, health etc.
- **Recognition culture** by supporting managers to actively recognise effort, impact and contribution.
- **Employee wellbeing supports** by promoting access to EAP, Occupational Health, Mental Health First Aiders, stress risk assessments, workstation assessments, psychological wellbeing reviews and secondary trauma support for high exposure roles, including clinically informed check-ins.
- **Wellbeing awareness initiatives** focused on movement, sleep, work life balance, ergonomics, financial wellbeing including Living Wage commitments.
- **Wellbeing Time off** paid Wellbeing Day for all staff during 2026/27 - we will measure % uptake rates for wellbeing days.
- **Financial Wellbeing toolkit** – develop our financial wellbeing resources further into a financial toolkit, including debt advice, free independent mortgage advice, car salary sacrifice scheme. We will measure salary sacrifice scheme take up % and add a financial wellbeing support score into the staff survey.
- **Menopause Action Plan** – develop our menopause toolkit into an action plan ahead of statutory requirement in 2027.
- **Flu campaign** – maintain the annual flu vaccination support and measure uptake %.
- **Workplace Ergonomics and Environment** - provide workspaces designed to be ergonomic, comfortable and supportive of health and wellbeing needs in line with our Property Standards.



People Strategy Pillar 2: Developing Our People

Aligned Wellbeing Pillar: Mental and Financial Wellbeing

We aim to empower our people through inclusive, blended learning and development that builds confidence, capability and wellbeing at work.

Wellbeing Key Actions:-

- **Trauma-informed practice** by embedding trauma-informed approaches in both service delivery and workforce support, including Occupational Health input where appropriate.
- **Early Intervention** – map out and communicate clear ‘referral pathways’ that differential between EAP (short term) supports, Occupational Health (medical fitness and adjustment focused support), specialist trauma therapy and annual proactive psychological wellbeing support.
- **Resilience framework** for managers to support leadership capability during periods of change and challenge, and to mitigate ‘compassion fatigue’.
- **Supervision framework** incorporating performance, development and annual wellbeing discussions, monitored through iTrent.
- **Coaching and mentoring** embedded as core elements of supervision to support growth and progression.
- **Annual learning plan** shaped by staff PDPs and wellbeing needs.
- **Learning pathways** that support career development, succession planning and professional recognition (e.g. PDAs).
- **Mental Health First Aiders** we will train a fifth cohort of MHFAs during 2026/27 and we will also look to offer specific Suicide Prevention training – a tier of support beyond MHFA to not only ask about suicide but create ‘Safety Plans’. Also develop suicide postvention plan.
- **Active Bystander training** – following training last year – empowering one team culture and actively remedying inappropriate behaviours.
- **Volunteering** – promote our volunteering policy recognising the social wellbeing benefits of volunteering including via MCR pathways.



People Strategy Pillar 3: Recruiting Our People

Aligned Wellbeing Pillars: Mental and Social Wellbeing

We want to attract and retain people who connect with SCRA's Values and see us as an inclusive organisation that supports health, wellbeing and development.

Wellbeing Key Actions

- **Employer of choice** by offering a wide range of wellbeing supports and a strong learning culture. We will introduce candidate feedback scores on wellbeing offering.
- **Inclusive recruitment and retention practices** aligned to SCRA Values and the Inclusive Standards and Behaviours Framework, supported by training, and aligned to our Equality Outcomes to diversify the workforce.
- **Workforce planning** to anticipate future skills needs, improve job security and reduce reliance on fixed-term contracts where possible.
- **Digital capability** to enable efficient, productive working and support job satisfaction and wellbeing.



People Strategy Pillar 4: Engaging Our People

Aligned Wellbeing Pillars: Mental and Social Wellbeing

We recognise that engagement and wellbeing are mutually reinforcing and that giving people a strong voice supports motivation, resilience and performance.

Wellbeing Key Actions:-

- **Role development** by involving staff in shaping new and revised roles.
- **Strong supervisory relationships** through meaningful, supportive supervision.
- **Partnership with UNISON** to strengthen collective voice, representation and wellbeing support.
- **Clear and accessible internal communications** with a strong wellbeing and development focus.
- **Regular wellbeing feedback** gathered through surveys and wellbeing groups to inform improvement and awareness.
- **Wellbeing budgets and social connection** – engage staff in wellbeing budget spend on activities and initiatives locally that enable social connection, particularly in an agile working environment, and downtime from work.



Measurement of Actions

Leadership and Management

- Leadership and management contribution to wellbeing is assessed through performance objectives, supervision and appraisal.
- Expectations include actively creating supportive team environments, promoting psychological safety, and responding appropriately to wellbeing concerns.

Staff Feedback and Experience

- Staff wellbeing is monitored through the annual Staff Survey wellbeing measures, supported by targeted pulse surveys where appropriate.
- Qualitative feedback from individuals and teams is used to understand confidence, capacity, collaboration and ability to adapt during change.
- Exit feedback is reviewed to identify wellbeing-related themes, trends and areas for improvement.

Workforce Metrics and People Data

- Workforce data is used to monitor indicators that reflect wellbeing and sustainability, and that whether wellbeing interventions are reducing pressure including:
 - employee turnover rate %, average length of service; and exit interview wellbeing-related reasons %.
 - absence levels to – absence rate % - overall and by absence reason e.g. work related stress
 - sustainable returns to work following absence
 - % of employees receiving at least 1 wellbeing supervision annually
- Data is reviewed regularly to identify emerging risks, target wellbeing interventions and inform decision-making.
- Progress towards Mentally Flourishing Workplace accreditation is reported annually.)

Culture, Inclusion and Psychological Safety

- Dignity at Work and grievance data is monitored to assess levels of psychological safety, respectful behaviour and alignment with Values and Inclusive Standards.
- The use of formal and informal routes for raising concerns is reviewed to ensure colleagues feel safe, supported and able to speak up.

Recognition and Positive Wellbeing Behaviours

- Evidence of recognition, positive leadership behaviours and supportive practices is reviewed through formal recognition mechanisms, feedback processes and management activity.
- Insight is used to understand impact on morale, engagement and wellbeing, and to reinforce good practice.



Key Recent Wellbeing Achievements

- Introduced Mental Health First Aiders nationally across roles and geography
- Delivered Trauma Skilled Practice Training
- Delivered Menopause Toolkit, resources and training
- Delivered Menstrual Health Toolkit, resources and training
- Delivered Men's Health support and resources
- Launched Financial Wellbeing resources and Power of Attorney training.
- Wellness Plans roll out - to expand to be Employee Passports which also include other supports at work such as recognising demands on carers (develop into Employee Wellbeing and Inclusion Passport), we will measure % of staff with an Employee Passport.
- Offer Annual Big Team Challenge encouraging camaraderie, accessing nature and being active
- Designed and offered Active Bystander Training
- Designed and rolling out Resilience Framework in 2026
- Annual Flu Vaccination Campaign
- Implemented new Retirement policy
- Implemented Carer's Leave
- Implemented Neo Natal Care Leave
- Improvements to Maternity and Adoption Pay, and Paternity Leave January 2026



Appendix - Priority Themes and Actions – Staff Survey 2025

What staff told us:-

Wellbeing, Resilience and Sustainable Workloads

Colleagues value wellbeing initiatives and supportive teams, but staffing pressures and workload can impact resilience and wellbeing.

Actions:

- Continue to implement the Wellbeing Strategy, with a focus on sustainable workloads and healthy ways of working.
- Strengthen uptake and awareness of wellbeing supports, including supervision wellbeing discussions, EAP, Occupational Health and MHFA. % staff accessing EAP, OH services will be measured, and number of MHFA trained staff recorded.
- Roll out resilience tools and training to support individual and team resilience and measure resilience training participation rate.
- Monitor absence, workload indicators and feedback to identify pressure points and respond early.

Leadership, Management and Supportive Supervision

Positive relationships with managers matter, and supportive supervision is central to wellbeing and engagement.

Actions:

- Support managers to lead with empathy, clarity and compassion through leadership development and resilience training.
- Embed the supervision framework, including performance, development and annual wellbeing discussions.
- Reinforce expectations for managers to role-model inclusive behaviours and psychological safety.
- Use feedback from supervision and surveys to strengthen consistency and quality.
- Measure wellbeing related training hours undertaken per manager)

Culture, Inclusion and Psychological Safety

Team support, trust and relationships are strengths, but colleagues want confidence that behaviours consistently reflect our values.

Actions:

- Embed the Inclusive Standards and Behaviours Framework across the organisation.
- Continue embedding of bystander training to empower staff to challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- Promote awareness and understanding of the revised Dignity at Work Policy and reporting routes and measure completion rates.
- Monitor dignity, and grievance data to assess psychological safety and measure completion rates including number of dignity at work complaints and grievances; and % of cases resolved informally v formally).



Engagement, Communication and Voice

Colleagues want clear communication, opportunities to be heard, and involvement in shaping change.

Actions:

- Promote focus on wellbeing in communications.
- Strengthen engagement through wellbeing groups and pulse feedback.
- Provide feedback to staff on actions taken in response to survey results.
- Measure wellbeing group participation rates nationally.

Development, Capability and Meaningful Work

Learning, development and meaningful work support motivation and wellbeing.

Actions:

- Align learning and development to staff PDPs and survey feedback.
- Embed coaching and mentoring to support growth and confidence.
- Support trauma informed practice in service delivery and workforce is supported.
- Communicate development pathways and opportunities.





Contact Information

Email HR.Helpdesk@scra.gov.uk

Minute of SCRA Planning and Performance Committee, held on Monday 01 June 2026, at Bell Street, Glasgow

Present

Kay Barton, Chair
Cathie Cowan, Board Chair (by TEAMS)

In Attendance

Lisa Bennett, Head of Strategy and OD
Paul Mulvanny, Senior Operational Manager
Roma Bruce Davies, Keeping The Promise Programme Manager, by TEAMS
Donald Lamb, Data Manager
Andrew MacDonald, Planning and Performance Manager
Douglas Cameron, Head of Digital Operations and Development
Pamela Armstrong, Governance Officer, by TEAMS

	Item	Timescale	Lead
1.	Welcome and apologies The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed attendees, and confirmed the meeting was quorate. Apologies were received from Ying Zhang, Committee Vice Chair, Lorraine Moore, Board Member, Neil Hunter, Principal Reporter/Chief Executive and Lindsay MacFadyen, Quality Assurance Manager		
2.	Previous Minutes and Action Log The minute of the previous meeting was approved as an accurate record. Action Log The Committee reviewed the action log. Issues arising during discussion: - Quality Assurance (QA) actions remain ongoing and continue to be monitored through established governance arrangements, including the Practice and Quality Network. - It was noted that QA actions have been refined to provide clearer descriptions and improved tracking. - An update on sustainability and property indicators will be brought to the August Committee meeting.	Aug 26	IA

	Item	Timescale	Lead
	Agreed Completed actions, including the finalisation of the Business Plan and the property/sustainability deep dive timing, were agreed for closure.		
3.	Matters Arising Covered within agenda		
4.	PPC Workplan The Committee reviewed the PPC Workplan. Issues arising during discussion: - The property deep dive will be rescheduled to late August/September. - Clarify confusion between digital and sustainability narrative.	Aug 26 Aug 26	PA PA
5.	OPR (Q4) The Data Manager introduced the Quarter 4 Organisational Performance Report (OPR), covering the period January to March 2026 and year-end performance. The report outlined overall performance across key indicators, noting variation across measures and localities. It highlighted increasing non-disclosure orders and joint reports awaiting decisions from COPFS, alongside decreasing offence referrals and attendance at Hearings, and increasing use of virtual Hearings. Issues arising during discussion: - Performance across indicators was reported as broadly around amber, with some improvement in specific measures including older cases and timeliness. - It was noted that the capital target had been met. - Variation across localities was discussed, with Highlands and Islands experiencing high volumes and pressure. Support was being provided from other localities and there was ongoing work with Police locally. Central locality showed improvement but continued to experience staffing challenges. - The spotlight section on non-disclosure orders highlighted increasing volumes, complexity of recording, and recent system and process improvements including new recording arrangements and redaction tools. - Significant discussion focused on joint reports and delays in decision-making by COPFS. It was noted that cases awaiting decision beyond thirty working days had		

	Item	Timescale	Lead
	increased to over eight hundred and were impacting performance data, including offence referral trends. • Ongoing engagement with COPFS was noted, including planned meetings and work to support data processes in relation to delays in joint report decision-making. • It was noted that the reduction in offence referrals may not reflect actual changes due to these delays. • Additional discussion covered complaints in Grampian attributed to a single-family case, increased use of virtual Hearings linked to workforce and geography, challenges in measuring children and young people's participation (as distinct from attendance) , and difficulty identifying non-accidental injury within current data systems. • The Committee noted the Quarter 4 OPR and associated performance trends.		
6.1	Business Plan 2026/27 The Planning and Performance Manager introduced the Business Plan 2026/27, covering the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 and representing the final year of the Corporate Plan 2024–27. • The plan sets out SCRA's objectives across its four aims: Care, Connect, Protect and People. • It includes delivery route maps, performance measures, and resourcing arrangements for the year ahead. • The plan reflects continued delivery of the Target Operating Model and organisational change through to 2030. Issues arising during discussion: • It was noted that the document reflected final formatting and presentation enhancements, including communications input. • The inclusion of route maps was highlighted as supporting understanding of delivery across the year and at locality level. • The plan was described as providing clear alignment between organisational priorities and delivery activity. • It was noted that the plan reflects the ongoing trajectory towards the Target Operating Model. • Positive feedback was provided on the clarity and presentation of the final document. • The Committee noted the Business Plan 2026/27.		
6.2	Business Plan 2026/27 - Q1 update The Planning and Performance Manager introduced the Quarter 1 update on delivery of the Business Plan 2026/27,		

	Item	Timescale	Lead
	providing an overview of progress across the nine objectives aligned to the organisation's four strategic aims. • The report provided an "at a glance" summary of delivery across all objectives and programme activity. • Overall progress was reported as being in line with expectations. • No risks requiring escalation to the Committee or the Board were identified at this stage. Issues arising during discussion: • Progress across the Business Plan was discussed, including ongoing delivery across all nine objectives. • Updates were noted in relation to programme activity, including digital delivery, engagement with the Police, workforce activity, and property developments. • The position in relation to Dundee office developments was referenced as part of wider estates work. • Ongoing activity relating to recruitment and workforce planning, including audit work, was noted. • It was noted that further detailed updates on specific programme areas would continue to be reported through established governance routes. • The Committee noted the Quarter 1 Business Plan update and progress reported.		
7.1	Report on Case Sampling exercise - Participation Rights in Children's Hearings The Head of Strategy and OD introduced the Quality Assurance report on participation rights in children's hearings, examining reporter practice in assessing whether individuals meet the criteria for participation and the information provided to support their involvement. • The report presented findings from a case sampling exercise focusing on siblings or those with sibling-like relationships. • The exercise found little improvement since the previous 2024 review. • Key issues identified included low levels of recording of reporter decisions, limited and inconsistent information from local authorities, and complexity in recording processes. • Where individuals were identified as having participation rights, they were provided with the necessary information to participate.		

	Item	Timescale	Lead
	Issues arising during discussion: • It was noted that there had been no significant improvement since the previous exercise, despite actions including refresher training. • The complexity of the current recording process within CSAS was discussed as a contributing factor to inconsistent recording. • The importance of high-quality information about sibling relationships and contact in supporting decision-making was emphasised. • It was noted that where participation rights were identified, individuals were supported appropriately to participate in hearings. • The role of partnership working with local authorities to improve information quality was highlighted. • The Committee reviewed and noted the findings of the Quality Assurance report and associated action plan. Agreed: • To develop and bring forward a proposal for a follow-up case sampling exercise to assess improvement in participation rights recording. • To ensure that national engagement activity (including Stand Up for Siblings network and broader partner engagement) is reflected within the action plan to support improvement in participation rights.	Aug 26 Aug 26	LMacF /LB LB
7.2	Progress report of QA programme The Head of Strategy and OD introduced the progress report on the Quality Assurance case sampling programme and associated action plan tracker. • The report provided an update on progress against the 2026/27 case sampling programme and the status of actions arising from previous exercises. • The 2026/27 programme includes a series of planned exercises covering areas such as interim compulsory supervision orders, decision-making, statement of grounds, and reporter investigations. • Progress of actions is tracked and reviewed through established governance arrangements, including the Practice and Quality Network and EMT. Issues arising during discussion: • Progress against the action plan tracker was discussed, including completion of some actions and revised timescales for others.		

	Item	Timescale	Lead
	- It was noted that some actions had been completed and closed, including those relating to Harmful Sexual Behaviour training. - It was also noted that some actions had revised delivery approaches and timescales, including those relating to joint reports and planned training. - One action relating to systems changes (CV4, relating to Article 12, Child's views) was noted as overdue and dependent on digital priorities. - The Committee noted the progress of the 2026/27 case sampling programme. - The Committee noted the status of actions within the case sampling action plan tracker.		
8.	Corporate Plan 2027-30 Development The Planning and Performance Manager introduced the report outlining the proposed approach to developing the Corporate Plan for 2027–2030. - The plan will set out a three-year framework aligning delivery of the Target Operating Model with legislative, financial, and operational factors. - A “kernel of strategy” approach will be used, focusing on diagnosis, guiding policy and coherent actions. - The plan will adopt a purpose-led approach, moving away from a traditional mission, vision, and values framework. - The paper also outlined the proposed timeline for development, engagement, and approval. Issues arising during discussion: - The shift to a purpose-led plan was discussed, including its relationship to organisational culture and alignment with ongoing HR workstreams. - It was noted that the current range of organisational statements and frameworks may be complex, and that the proposed approach aims to provide greater clarity and alignment. - The proposed engagement approach and timeline were outlined, including future engagement with the Board, localities, and external stakeholders. - The Committee noted the proposed approach to development of the Corporate Plan 2027–2030. Agreed: - To arrange a Board development session to support engagement and input into the development of the Corporate Plan 2027–2030.		
		Aug 26	LB/PA

	Item	Timescale	Lead
9.	Deep Dive – Programme Portfolio The Head of Strategy and OD introduced an update on programme activity, providing key messages from Programme Board and oversight of delivery across the programme portfolio. • The report summarised Programme Board activity, including governance, approvals, and progress across programme delivery. • Programme Board updates from February and May 2026 included progress on key implementation activity, including Non-Disclosure (ND), Family Centred Scheduling (FCS), and wider programme delivery. • Programme Board approved key programme deliverables including Target Operating Model (TOM) 2.1, the Programme Delivery Plan 2026/27 and the Digital Delivery Plan. • The Target Operating Model sets the long-term vision for a rights-based, trauma-informed, digitally enabled service delivering improved outcomes for children and families. • The Programme Delivery Plan outlines the next phase of delivery toward Interim TOM 2 by 2027, focusing on referrals and partner collaboration, court activity, and partner data exchange as key areas of step change. Preparation for implementing new legislation will be incorporated as timescales become clearer. • The Digital Delivery Plan sets out delivery across five programme areas including digital portal development, data sharing, business systems, communications, and infrastructure. • An independent assurance review reported an Amber/Green status, indicating successful delivery of the programme is considered probable with appropriate management of risks. • A developing portfolio management approach aims to improve prioritisation, alignment, and connectivity across programme activity. Issues arising during discussion: • Progress was noted in relation to Non-Disclosure (ND) implementation, which had been successfully delivered, with lessons learned to follow. • An update on Family Centred Scheduling (FCS) confirmed delivery remains on track for completion within planned timescales. • The Committee noted with approval the ongoing work to develop a portfolio management approach to		

	Item	Timescale	Lead
	improve oversight and prioritisation of programme activity, alongside delivering business as usual. • The findings of the independent assurance review were highlighted, including the overall delivery confidence assessment. • The Committee noted the Programme Update and supporting appendices.		
10.	External Environment The Head of Strategy and OD provided a verbal update on developments within the external environment. Issues arising during discussion: • Children's Care and Justice Act (CCJA) implementation, with progress reported on internal preparation, training activity, and ongoing engagement with partners. • Hearings System Redesign, noting that the legislation has been passed, with implementation expected to be phased and extending beyond 2028. • Wider external developments were also noted, including: ○ Ongoing work relating to mandatory reporting of child abuse, with varying views across partner organisations and potential future impact on referral activity. ○ Development of Bairns' Hoose, with SCRA contributing to partnership activity. ○ The publication of the Family C review, with engagement underway in relation to the associated action plan. ○ Emerging work in relation to care system legislative reform, including engagement with national reviews. • It was noted that changes within the political and policy landscape present a degree of uncertainty, and ongoing engagement with Scottish Government and partners will be important. • The importance of maintaining strong relationships with Ministers and stakeholders, including opportunities for Board engagement, was highlighted.		
11.	Committee Self-Assessment The Committee considered an informal self-assessment of its work so far, ahead of its first Annual Report to the Board.		

	Item	Timescale	Lead
	- The item focused on supporting periodic review of the Committee's effectiveness, performance, and governance arrangements. - The self-assessment process forms part of good governance practice and helps ensure the Committee continues to operate in line with its remit and responsibilities. Issues arising during discussion: - The purpose of Committee self-assessment was outlined, including its role in promoting continuous improvement in governance. - It was noted that self-assessment provides an opportunity to reflect on areas such as effectiveness of meetings, quality of information provided, and clarity of roles and responsibilities. - The Committee discussed the approach to undertaking the self-assessment, including how feedback would be gathered and considered. - It was noted that the outcomes of the process would help inform any changes or improvements to Committee practice, structure, or reporting. - The importance of ensuring that the Committee remains aligned to its strategic oversight role and governance expectations was highlighted, including appropriate escalation of issues to the Board. - The Committee noted the approach to self-assessment.		
12.	Risk The Committee considered an update on current and emerging organisational risks. - The report provided an overview of current risks reflected in the organisation's risk registers. - It also considered whether any new or emerging risks had arisen during the reporting period. Issues arising during discussion: - An update was provided on current risks, including those recorded within operational and strategic risk registers. - The status of existing risks and any updates to risk levels or mitigating actions were noted. - It was confirmed that no new risks had been identified for escalation during the reporting period.		
13.	Items for Escalation to the Board The Committee agreed the following key matters for escalation to the Board, with reference to relevant agenda items: OPR (Item 5)		

	Item	Timescale	Lead
	○ Ongoing joint reporting delays (COPFS) and the impact on offence referrals, timeliness and decision-making. ○ The need to explain distortion in performance data (particularly offence trends) arising from these delays, including implications for official statistics and potential external scrutiny. ○ Ongoing operational pressures in Highlands and Islands (and to a lesser extent Central) affecting performance. ○ of improving performance trends across several indicators, which should also be highlighted to the Board. • Programme Deep Dive (Item 9) ○ Positive progress in programme delivery, including Non-Disclosure implementation and Family Centred Scheduling. ○ Assurance regarding progress in developing a portfolio management approach, including its role in improving prioritisation, alignment and oversight of programme activity. • Corporate Plan 2027–30 Development (Item 8) ○ Assurance on the proposed approach to development of the Corporate Plan, including planned Board engagement and involvement. • Participation Rights / QA Activity (Item 7.1) ○ Ongoing concerns regarding limited improvement in participation rights recording and practice. ○ The need for further work and strengthened focus in this area, including assurance on planned improvement activity.		
	Date of the next meeting 31 August 2026, 10.30-1pm, at Bell Street, Glasgow		

SCRA Board

17 June 2026

Item 7.4 Governance Improvement Plan

Report Classification: Open

For: Approval

Board Sponsor: Cathie Cowan, Board Chair

Authors: Pamela Armstrong, Governance Officer, Cathie Cowan, Board Chair

Executive Summary

The Board Chair supported by Board Members and the Executive Management Team is committed to strengthening Board Effectiveness. In a recent Internal Audit report (2025/2026) into *Board Effectiveness*, the findings highlighted an improvement - i.e., substantial rating in both 'current design' (sound system of internal controls designed to achieve system objectives) and 'operational effectiveness' (controls that are in place are being consistently applied).

This report demonstrates the Board's ongoing commitment to good governance supported by the Governance Officer. The report provides an anonymised overview of the collective skills, knowledge, and experience of the SCRA Board, drawing on self-assessment returns completed by Board Members in March 2026 using the updated and approved Board Skills Matrix Competency Framework. The returns have informed the appended governance improvement plan.

Recommendation

The Board is invited to:

- **approve** the Governance Improvement Plan attached at Appendix 1 informed by in year Board development conversations and the identified areas of strength and those areas requiring development

Key Issues to be discussed/considered

Purpose

The updated and approved board skills matrix is intended to:

- support the Board in meeting its responsibilities under Scottish Government *On-Board* guidance

- provide assurance that the Board has an appropriate balance of skills and experience to fulfil its role and responsibilities to govern effectively
- inform succession planning and future Board recruitment

Methodology

Board Members completed a structured self-assessment against the SCRA Board Skills Competency Framework. The framework reflects key governance domains set out in Scottish Government *On-Board* guidance, including:

- Governance, risk, and financial stewardship
- Leadership, culture, and workforce oversight
- Strategic thinking and policy awareness
- Rights-based and child-centred decision-making
- Digital, data, and information governance

Responses were analysed thematically to identify patterns of strength, capability concentration, and development need. Individual responses have been anonymised and aggregated. The report focuses on collective capability, rather than individual performance, and supports continuous improvement and good governance.

Overview of the Board's Skills Profile

The analysis illustrated in the Heat Skills Summary set out below indicates that the Board has strong capability across a number of key areas expected of an effective public body board, including:

- Leadership and culture stewardship, supporting positive organisational culture and ethical leadership
- Child-centred and rights-based practice, aligned to SCRA's statutory role
- Strategic insight and long-term perspective, supporting effective planning and decision-making
- Policy awareness and system leadership, particularly within public and third-sector contexts
- Professional governance behaviours, including constructive challenge and collective responsibility

These strengths align well with Scottish Government expectations of Board effectiveness and support confidence in the Board's current ability to discharge its role and responsibilities. These strengths correlate with the findings of the recent Internal Audit report into Board Effectiveness. The analysis also highlights areas where capability is present but less evenly distributed, or where further development would strengthen overall Board resilience. These include:

- Financial stewardship and audit & assurance
- Digital transformation oversight and data governance
- Legal and statutory understanding, particularly for newer members

In addition, the analysis identified a clear skills gap in relation to commercial and private-sector insight. Strengthening this area would enhance the diversity of perspectives available to the Board.

Competency Area	RAG	Summary Position
Strategic Insight & Foresight	●	Strong shared strategic capability
Leadership & Culture Stewardship	●	Clear collective strength
HR & Organisational Development	●	Strong workforce governance
Change & Transformation Leadership	●	Confident oversight of change
Children's Rights & Safeguarding	●	Significant depth and expertise
Policy Formation & Implementation	●	Strong public and third-sector experience
Communication & Constructive Challenge	●	Effective governance behaviours
Legal & Statutory Understanding	●	Competent with development needs
Risk, Audit & Assurance	●	Expertise present but limited breadth
Financial Stewardship	●	Variable confidence across the Board
Digital Transformation	●	Mixed capability
Data Governance & Insight	●	Development opportunity
Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility	●	Baseline awareness across the Board
Commercial / Private-Sector Insight	●	Board-wide gap

The appended Governance Improvement Plan attached at Appendix 1 is intended to ensure the board has the right mix of skills, experience, and expertise to govern effectively.

Implications:

Service

The report is intended to ensure the board has the right level of diversity - skills, experience, and expertise to effectively govern, notably in setting strategic direction and holding the Executive Management Team to account for service delivery including system wide performance.

Financial

No direct financial implications.

Workforce

The outcome of the self-assessment has informed the current board succession planning arrangements and recruitment process and notably addresses the gap to support digital transformation and information governance. The attached Improvement Plan also support board members ongoing induction and development.

Infrastructure including Digital

No direct infrastructure implications.

Information Governance

No direct implications, however, the skills self-assessment has identified a gap in digital governance and transformation and with a significant digital programme planned this will be addressed in board member recruitment.

Risk Assessment/Management

The report mitigates risks and addresses gaps in the board's skills, experience and expertise and supports a targeted recruitment process, notably in digital transformation and information governance including cyber security.

Relevance to Board Corporate/Strategic Objectives

The improvement plan supports each of the Board's Corporate Objectives, notably:

- Planning for the future
- Investing in developing and maintaining effective governance systems including risk management
- Valuing and developing our staff

- Committing to service improvement and sustainability through our care, connect and protect strategic programmes
- Delivering best value using our resources
- Working in Partnership

Equality Declaration

The authors can confirm that due regard has been given to the Equality Act 2010 and compliance with the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of SCRA's decision making process.

Further to evaluation it is noted: paper is not relevant to Equality & Diversity

Involvement, Engagement, and/or Consultation

The updated Board Skills Matrix - Competency Framework has been informed by Board Members and the Executive Management Team.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Governance Improvement Plan

Appendix 2 - Skills Matrix Competency Framework

Governance Improvement Plan

Board Function	Corporate Objective	Board Skills Matrix Domains	Improvement Action
Setting Strategic Direction	Planning for the future	Strategic Insight & Foresight Legal & Statutory Understanding Children's Rights & Safeguarding Policy Formation & Implementation	Overview: SCRA's Corporate Plan provides a route map methodology to help visualise our 'north star.' Developing this Plan enables the Board to fulfil its 'setting strategic direction' role and responsibilities. The Board in setting strategic direction needs to be cognisant with both the statutory and legislative authorising and operating environments to support policy formation and oversight of policy implementation. In year improvement actions: The Board with reference to the approved 'Framework' will use its development sessions to better understand the legislative and statutory operating and authorising environments in response to the CCJA Act, 'Promise' Act, and consequential Hearing System Redesign. The Board in this session will also receive an update on the Corporate Plan 2027/2030 development to ensure Board Members input into setting the strategic direction of SCRA. Board Chair/Governance Officer with Principal Reporter/Chief Executive (PR/CEO) will organise dedicated board session to: • better understand the changing statutory and legislative operating landscape with invite to sponsorship team colleagues to participate • receive update on the developing Corporate Plan 2027/2030 by ... Pamela insert next board development day??

Board Function	Corporate Objective	Board Skills Matrix Domains	Improvement Action
Holding the Accountable Officer and the Executive Team to account	Committing to service improvement and sustainability through our care, connect and protect strategic programmes Delivering best value using our resources	Financial Stewardship Digital Transformation Change & Transformation	Overview: SCRA's portfolio approach aligns service including change and digital and estate transformation, workforce preparedness, and financial capacity/capability in response to future scenarios informed by the significant legislative agenda. In year improvement actions: The Board through its revised Committee structure will schedule a number of 'deep dives' to chart progress against significant change programmes notably in SCRA's digital and estate response. • Committee Chairs supported by Governance Officer will review and refresh Committee Workplans to ensure SCRA's programmes of transformation and preparedness - e.g., practice, workforce, estate, digital align with financial strategy are fit for purpose and present updated Workplans to Board Committees for approval Aug to Oct 2026 • planned internal audit - Locality Performance Review with findings reported to the Audit & Assurance Committee and actions escalated to Board and relevant Committees to provide assurance and to support the Board's commitment to good governance
Managing Risks	Investing in developing and maintaining effective governance systems including risk management	Risk, Audit & Assurance Data Governance & Oversight	Overview: SCRA has recently received feedback from internal audit on Board Effectiveness - the findings showed improvement with substantial ratings in both 'current design' (sound system of internal controls designed to achieve system objectives) and 'operational effectiveness' (controls that are in place are being consistently applied).

Board Function	Corporate Objective	Board Skills Matrix Domains	Improvement Action
Managing Risks (CONT)	Investing in developing and maintaining effective governance systems including risk management	Risk, Audit & Assurance Data Governance & Oversight	In year improvement actions: The Board through its Board Development sessions will schedule a number of dedicated sessions to raise awareness and support Board Members CPD. Board Chair/Governance Officer with PR/CEO will organise dedicated board session during 2026 to: • revisit risk management policy and appetite to risk • plan a dedicated session on cyber security, data protection, confidentiality, and information governance by • Board and Committee Chairs to participate in corporate governance internal audit review scheduled for ... with findings reported to the Audit & Assurance Committee and actions escalated to Board to provide assurance and to support the Board's commitment to good governance
Engaging Stakeholders e.g., (internally - staff and externally through the EMT and with Government and other Authorities)	Working in Partnership	Children's Rights & Safeguarding Commercial & Private Sector Insight	Overview: SCRA is committed to working in partnership with evidence outlined in SCRA's Annual Reports. This way of working will be increasingly more important in supporting the Government's priority to deliver public sector reform. In year improvement actions: Board Chair/Governance Officer with PR/CEO will: • support a deep dive during 2026 (using Board Development sessions) to consider Board specific engagement with the new Minister, partners and children and young people, this would include Corporate Parenting responsibilities
Board Function	Corporate Objective	Board Skills Matrix Domains	Improvement Action

Engaging Stakeholders e.g., (internally - staff and externally through the EMT and with Government and other Authorities) (CONT)	Working in Partnership	Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Commercial & Private Sector Insight	- planned internal audit to review partnership engagement with findings reported to the Audit & Assurance Committee and actions escalated to Board and relevant Committees to provide assurance and to support the Board's commitment to good governance - in addition, an outstanding case sampling action (CV4 - Article 12 recording the Child's views on CSAS) will provide assurance on the Board's commitment to seeking and responding to the views of children and young people, this will be reported in year to the Planning & Performance Committee and escalated as appropriate to the Board
Influencing culture	Valuing and developing our staff	Leadership & Cultural Stewardship Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Communication & Constructive Challenge HR & OD	Overview: SCRA is committed to a culture that embraces compassionate leadership, and through the Workforce Governance Committee will oversee EDI and workforce related governance including staff wellbeing, training, and development. In addition, the Board Chair is committed to supporting Board Member's CPD and exploring personal development through the appraisal and objective setting process. In year improvement actions: Board Chair/Governance Officer and Head of HR will: - in supporting good succession planning principles finalise the Board Member Induction Pack - final draft to the Workforce Governance Committee in August 2026 - organise a session on Board responsibilities with specific focus on applying constructive challenge - consider 360 Board Member appraisal process

In conclusion, the Governance Improvement Plan sets out the Board's response to the findings of the Board's Skills Matrix. It is intended to be an evolving process of improvement to support the principles of good governance. In addition, the Board has taken into account 'Board Enablers,' notably:

- diversity, experience, and skills
- roles and responsibilities
- values, behaviours, and relationships

whilst operating within an agreed Framework Document. The Framework Document sets out SCRA's accountability and relationship between SCRA and the Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Government (SG) Accountable Officer and the SG Portfolio Accountable Officer.

Board Skills Matrix Guidance

The Board Skills Matrix is designed to support:

- Assessment of individual and collective capability
- Identification of strengths and development needs
- Succession planning and recruitment
- Alignment with Scottish Government *On-Board* guidance

Rating Scale

- 1 - Limited
- 2 - Developing
- 3 - Competent
- 4 - Strong
- 5 - Expert

Competency Domains

1. Corporate Governance & Decision-Making
2. Child-Centred Practice & Rights-Based Leadership
3. Collaborative System Leadership
4. Organisational Leadership & People Capability
5. Digital, Information & Data Capability
6. Professional Skills & Personal Effectiveness
7. Sector, Community & Commercial Insight

Appendix 2

SCRA Board

17 June 2026

Agenda item 8 Chief Executive's Report

Report Classification: *Open*

For: Information

Executive Sponsor: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive

Author: Neil Hunter, Principal Reporter/Chief Executive

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the PR/CEO's activities as well as general areas of interest, not covered elsewhere in the Board agenda. It includes updates on national forums, Scottish Government liaison, ongoing work in multi-agency partnerships and internal workforce development initiatives. The report updates on progress against the 2025 staff survey action plan and priorities.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to:

- Note the content of the report.

Key Issues to be Discussed/Considered

To note the PR/CE's recent communication to SCRA staff on media coverage of Public Services Reform and Ministerial statements on headcount reduction. To review and consider SCRA's overall position on Public Services Reform and support the PR/CE and senior teams approach

Implications

- Service: None
- Financial: None
- Workforce: to note the incoming Scottish Governments public statements on Public Service Reform and workforce reductions
- Infrastructure (including digital): to note successful mitigation of Microsoft global deprecations to SharePoint
- Information Governance: To note successful delivery of the Automated Redaction Manager as part of CSAS upgrades

Risk Assessment/Management

Public Services Reform now needs to be assessed as a strategic risk for SCRA – particularly if Ministers take an across the board and generic approach

Relevance to Corporate/Strategic Objectives

The areas covered in this report contribute to delivery of SCRA's strategic priorities, including:

- Public Service Reform ,service transformation and redesign.

- Partnership working and system improvement.
- Staff Survey, engagement and delivery

Equality Declaration

Paper is not relevant to Equality & Diversity

Involvement, Engagement and/or Consultation

The following engagement activities are referenced within the report:

- Joint agency working through Youth Justice Improvement Board and Locality-based partnerships.
- Consultation and planning via the National Partnership Forum and UNISON representation.
- Direct engagement with managers and staff

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Chief Executive Report

1. Staff Partnership

1.1 SCRA and UNISON met on 14 May as part of the National Partnership Forum. We welcomed Stephen MacGill as our new Branch Secretary and said a warm and heartfelt goodbye to Monica Sweeney. There were a number of important issues discussed :-

- Following the successful conclusion of the Review of the Childrens Reporter Job Description, UNISON and SCRA agreed a programme of work over the next 5 years to review a number of operational roles. This is in line with the most recent Scottish Government Pay Policy which recommends that roles and job descriptions are reviewed ever 5-7 years. Some roles in SCRA have been reviewed in recent years and within the SG suggested timeframe, whilst others have not been reviewed in the last 10-15 years, including Locality Support Managers, Locality Reporter Managers and others. For other roles such as Assistant Reporters their roles have been subject to recent review – but the nature of some of the duties and tasks has changed relatively rapidly. The proposed ordering of a timetable of work is therefore a mix of those where review is long outstanding, alongside those where there have been rapid developments. Reporting on progress and conclusions will have a clear line of oversight to the Workforce Governance Committee as well as National Partnership Forum.
- Rising fuel costs and staff cost of living were discussed. UNISON have made a number of proposals given the steep rise in fuel costs and the future anticipated home energy costs to try and mitigate the impact on SCRA staff, particularly those in lower paid roles. It was agreed to establish a subgroup of the National Partnership Forum to examine these proposals in more detail and to look at the widest range of helpful interventions in the context of SCRA's role as an employer concerned about staff wellbeing. The Head of HR has recently communicated with managers across the service on behalf of SCRA and UNISON raising these issues but being clear about the necessity of sensitive, operationally informed, localised management.
- A joint UNISON/SCRA event for LSM's and LRM's took place on 13 May. This event had been planned to support partnership working between local managers and stewards across the country. The focus was on a series of case studies and scenarios which are known to throw up challenges for both managers and stewards – including flexible work applications, managing agile working, performance and capability issues. The NPF found that the event had been helpful, with real scenarios supporting practical discussion between managers and UNISON representatives. The NPF reflected

positively on the event, noting its value in reinforcing partnership working and resolving issues at the lowest appropriate level where possible. The event had generated useful learning, including around policy understanding and areas where further partnership work may be beneficial.

2. Strategic Partnerships

2.1 The election period has seen a relative downturn in partnership activity. However SCRA continues to be extensively engaged across child care, protection and youth justice partnerships in Scotland which is set out in extensive detail as part of our Policy and Influencing Report, (agenda item 11.2). A very wide range of consultation responses were undertaken in the run up to the Children's (Care, Care Experience and Service Planning)(Scotland) Act 2026, being approved by Parliament in areas such as Throughcare and Aftercare, Secure Care, Kinship and Fostering.

2.2 The Youth Justice Improvement Board met on 3rd June and received detailed updates on:-

- Whole System Approach group - Chaired by SCRA and Social Work Scotland
- Children's Rights Improvement Group
- Children in Police Custody Group - Chaired by SCRA and Children and Young People's Centre for Justice
- Data Group – Chaired by SCRA
- Community Confidence Group

2.3 As well as chairing or co-chairing a number of these groups, SCRA is represented on all of them and continues to have a key leadership and influencing role. The Whole System Approach Group (WSA) is focussing on preparing guidance which will assist with the Children's Care and Justice Act implementation in areas such as Deprivation of Liberty, National Standards for Working with Children in Conflict with the Law as well as reviewing arrangements that support Early and Effective Intervention. The Children in Police Custody Group was pleased that the new Act has an enabling section (s.59) that will [allow for arrested children to be taken to somewhere other than a police station](#). The group plans a number of pilots and tests of change alongside Police Scotland and in support of the 2030 vision for custody arrangements.ⁱ

3. Microsoft Software Deprecation and Redaction Upgrade / Replacement

3.1 The Board was updated in January on the Q4 2025/26 programme of work, which was partly driven by a global Microsoft software deprecation affecting SharePoint - a key component of SCRA's CSAS platform. This change had significant implications for the production of Hearing Information Packs (HIPs), which are central to the preparation of hearing papers by SCRA staff. In response, SCRA implemented a suite

of 'Power Apps' software to replace the affected SharePoint functionality. This ensured business continuity ahead of the April deprecation deadline, while also improving the creation and management of HIPs. In parallel but closely dependant, SCRA took a strategic decision to introduce a new solution for document redaction where non-disclosure measures apply, either under Rule 16 or through decisions made by a Children's Hearing or the Court. Board Members will be aware of the longstanding challenges associated with delivering accurate and efficient redaction within CSAS.

3.2 The deployment of the third-party tool, Automated Redaction Manager (ARM), represents a significant step forward in speed, accuracy, security and overall effectiveness. Feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive. Implementation of ARM has also enabled a review and redesign of our core non-disclosure processes, including the potential removal of the current "second check" system. This reflects increased confidence in the accuracy and reliability of the new tooling. These changes have been overseen by a cross-organisational group chaired by the Head of Practice and Policy in their role as Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO). All changes have been subject to rigorous national and local testing and formally signed off, with strong involvement from Senior Operational Managers.

3.3 While delivery was led by the digital team, success depended on collaboration across the organisation. Deployment was completed across all operational localities within the quarter, supported by extensive training, on-the-ground support and 'floor walking' delivered by the Organisational Development team. Following established change management principles, risks were managed effectively throughout. While disruption to operational teams was a key concern, careful forward planning ensured priority services were maintained, with lower-priority activity stepped down where necessary at both local and national levels. This represents a significant organisational achievement, demonstrating strong cross-functional collaboration and delivery capability. It provides a robust and sustainable solution to several complex challenges, and positions SCRA to operate more efficiently, securely and effectively going forward.

4. Staff Survey action plan update

4.1 I issued my regular Team Brief in early June and covered the 2025 staff survey results and the action plan and priorities that flowed from the survey.

4.2 The Board will recall that we saw some good progress on areas such as morale, confidence in the future, working in a supportive team, communication and more modest progress on areas such as workload, pay and reward. I am reporting that we are making good progress on the staff survey action plan and are prioritising areas such as:-

- Operational resilience and capacity by ensuring new investment across Localities, delivering more consistent ratio's and skills mix across teams and developing flexible operational resource for rapid deployment to teams

undergoing high levels of demand or resource constraints. Most localities will be starting to see and to feel the impact of this new investment in their teams and localities.

- We are now in year 2 of our 2 year pay deal agreed with UNISON. We have fully implemented the grading related outcomes of the Children's Reporter job description review. We are as an organisation committed to keeping our focus pay and reward for SCRA staff and we will await the new incoming Scottish Government's pay policy at some point towards the end of the calendar year.
- We are developing plans to commence a programme of job description review over the next few years (see above) to ensure all of our core operational roles are contemporary and fully reflect the value staff add to our work.
- We have increased the number of staff in permanent contracts wherever we have been able to across SCRA – giving a much better sense of long term employment security for many staff – which is exactly what we want to achieve – a serious and committed organisation – responding to the ever changing needs of children and young people, evolving, changing and improving with a skilled and dedicated workforce.
- Continued focus on our maximising attendance strategy and sustainably supporting staff back to work as soon as possible. Staff absence came up a lot in this years staff survey – particularly because the pressure and uncertainty it can lead to in teams. Where there are ongoing issues of attendance or performance we are aiming to maximise support and more rapidly enable resolution.
- To continue with our work on effective management of change and delivery of our [SCRA Change Management Strategy](#). I think we have been making a lot of progress on this particular area – applying the principles and practice of our strategy, getting better at communication, sequencing and pacing of change
- Deploying our enhanced trauma support initiatives to staff who have encountered vicarious work related trauma and psychological/emotional distress – we will continue to develop the offering over 2026
- Continue to strengthen our partnership work with UNISON, early engagement and consultative approaches.
- Continue our investment in learning and development – we now have regular reports coming to the senior team providing rich data on learning and professional development activities in the organisation. We are seeing real progress in an area that we have been purposely trying to prioritise – so that everyone feels a sense of opportunity.

- Continue our programme of office and hearing facility improvements, modernising our working environments to reflect new needs and demands. Our Dundee full office refurbishment will be completed over the course of the summer/early Autumn. This will be another massive step forward in terms of design, utility and quality. We are moving ahead with the next phases of implementation of Hearing Centre design standards – with work commencing soon in Dumbarton and other plans very much taking shape for future delivery.
- We have continued to work to improve visibility, understanding, trust and dialogue with the senior team – huge thanks to South East Locality for hosting us in May – we had a really interesting day with colleagues and a great afternoon discussion on a wide range of issues and topics.

5. Public Services Reform

5.1 The new Scottish Government is setting out its priorities for the next period. The prominence of ‘Public Service Reform’ (PSR) to the new administrations delivery has been expressed by the appointment of a Cabinet level post to oversee delivery.. Inevitably much reporting of this has focussed on significant ‘headcount reduction’ and public sector job losses and shrinkage. I recently wrote to the SCRA workforce to provide as much reassurance as I could about how SCRA are have and are approaching PSR:-

- We agree with the fundamental tenets of effectiveness and efficiency in public services – this won't be new to the SCRA Board, it is central to our Corporate Plan for which we have now entered the third year and we have been working away in the background on this for some time and we can demonstrate a fair bit of progress over the last 2 years
- We support the reduction in bureaucracy, duplication and transactional tasks. This is core to our change programme and our future operating model. We will continue to recycle any efficiencies back into front facing, child, young person and family related activities – the kind of activities SCRA staff are all now rolling out across Scotland
- We believe in shared services – SCRA has been a pioneer of shared services with CHS over many years -payroll, finance, digital to name but a few. In particular PSR has strong focus on shared digital developments to help services become more efficient and effective. Our programme of joint investment with CHS is making real progress in areas like rota management, hearing scheduling and information exchange between 2 statutory partners – real reform in action
- Our distinct need for independence and for separation of legal duties means that shared services and organisational mergers involving public bodies such as ours have limitations – we think we are at a good balance point now

- With 2 major pieces of legislation on the horizon – one very imminent and another before 2030 – SCRA are seeking (and have been successful in securing) new investment in our vital public service – we are currently growing our headcount – not reducing it and reinforcing job security, operational stability and confidence in the future is central to what SCRA is focussing on. This is the very clear backcloth to our recent budget approvals - this continues to be the organisations priority.
- Without the necessary operational capacity and capabilities we fear the new legislation will not meet its objectives and what was agreed by Parliament cannot be fully implemented.

5.2 SCRA will always seek opportunities to reduce our costs where we can – such as what we spend on our estate – particularly those bits of our property that are not as effectively used as others and we have been doing thinking and planning on this in the background (see agenda item 10.2– Property Annual Report). Another area is the cost and value we get from goods and services that we purchase. We have excellent Procurement and Business Development Teams that help us every day with this, to ensure good access to really high quality environments for children and young people as close as possible to their own communities and to make sure that the organisations we contract with share our principles and values.

5.3 Keeping the Promise and delivering on Hearings System Redesign, implementing new legislation are the principal drivers of SCRA’s public services reform at the moment – improving experiences and outcomes, protection and support for children and young people must be where we put our effort in over the next few years. SCRA has long argued that the Joint Redesign Board should act as our Service Reform ‘cluster’ and will continue to argue that this be agreed by partners and formally acknowledged by Ministers.

5.4 Going into this next phase we are confident that SCRA can really demonstrate good value and critical importance in our work as well a strong and enduring commitment to modernisation and improvement. There has not been a year in recent decades where SCRA has not had to face financial challenges. Each year we are asked to minimise our expenditure to the lowest level possible. Despite this we have used the limited resources we have had at our disposal to invest in our service, invest in change, deliver improvements and most of all make partnerships and collaboration work for the whole Childrens Hearings System. We need to move into this next phase with confidence and a sense of a positive track record with more achievements to come.

5.5 However, we need both the Senior Team and the Board to have a renewed, unified sense of purpose about the budget we have assessed that we need, the headcount and workforce we have determined is necessary to deliver on Ministerial ambition and Parliaments will.

SCRA BOARD

17 June 2026



Item 10.1 Financial Forecast Outturn 2026/27

Report Classification: Open

For: Information

Executive Sponsor: Ross Mackenzie, Head of Finance and Resources

Author: Ross Mackenzie, Head of Finance and Resources

Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of SCRA's financial position for financial year to 31 May 2026 and a forecast (based on April results) for the year ending 31 March 2027. A modest revenue underspend is currently forecast, with budget holders continuing to be discouraged from targeting savings where this comes at the expense of service delivery. Currently, capital plans are on target. Frequent and open dialogue continues with Scottish Government (SG) to ensure the in-year budget pressure is resolved timeously, as in previous years.

Recommendation

The Board is invited to:

- Note the revenue and capital positions for the year to 31 May 2026 and forecasts based on April actuals.

Key Issues to be discussed/considered

Further detail on the year to date (YTD) position and forecast is contained in Appendix 1 but there are no significant concerns at this point regarding funding availability, underspend, overspend or achievability of SCRA's planning objectives.

Implications:

Service

N/A

Financial

The forecast indicates that all current activity is within financial plans.

Workforce

N/A

Infrastructure including Digital

There remains a risk that sufficient 2026/27 capital grant in aid is not confirmed timeously (or at all) to fully deliver on the property and digital programmes approved by the Board in March 2026. Dialogue is ongoing with SG Sponsor and SG Finance teams, and budget holders remain prepared to alter their plans accordingly.

Information Governance

N/A

Risk Assessment/Management

Regular budget monitoring and reporting, and dialogue with SG, are key mitigations against the financial sustainability risk on SCRA's Strategic Risk Register.

Relevance to Corporate/Strategic Objectives

Spend and forecasts are broadly in line with the Board-approved budget which supported SCRA's corporate and strategic objectives.

Equality Declaration

The author can confirm that due regard has been given to the Equality Act 2010 and compliance with the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of SCRA's decision making process.

Further to evaluation it is noted:

Paper is not relevant to Equality & Diversity

Involvement, Engagement and/or Consultation

Budget holders

Executive Management Team members

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Background and further detail

1 Background

- 1.1 The Scottish Government (SG) allocated SCRA revenue funding of £24.605m for 2026/27 in its budget published on 13 January 2026. However, Deputy Director of Children's Rights, Protection and Justice Brian Taylor acknowledged in his budget allocation and monitoring (BAM) letter of 25 March 2026 to the Principal Reporter that "the Education and Skills Portfolio aim is to mitigate budget pressures for SCRA through the Autumn or Spring Budget Revision processes, working with you and taking into account any efficiency savings delivered by SCRA and informed by accurate forecasts of need from the body".
- 1.2 The financial strategy approved by the Board on 25 September 2025 stated a resource need of £36.493m for 2026/27. On 18 March 2026, with assurances from both Brian Taylor and the Director of Children and Families Andrew Watson, the Board correspondingly approved a net revenue budget of this value. SG Sponsor Team and SG Finance have been regularly assured by SCRA since September 2025 that this is the required budget envelope, and neither SG Sponsor Team nor SG Finance have indicated at any stage that this would be problematical to meet through in-year budget revisions.
- 1.3 While SCRA will endeavour to make in-year savings to mitigate some of the pressure, the remaining budget pressure will be resolved, as in previous years, in two tranches: Autumn Budget Revision (ABR) in August 2026 and Spring Budget Revision (SBR) in early 2027.
- 1.4 SG allocated SCRA £2.147m of capital funding for 2026/27. The Board approved a £4.0m capital budget in March 2026 on the basis that "removing or delaying items in the capital programmes would significantly impact SCRA's ability to deliver a reliable and high-quality service to participants in the hearings system, to meet the expectations of Public Service Reform and to continue to deliver on Keeping the Promise". SCRA and Sponsor Team continue to work closely with SG Finance to address the £1.853m gap.

2 Revenue

- 2.1 The table below summarises the position to May 2026 by expense head. Previous year's actuals are provisional until audited. Depreciation is a non-cash charge and is excluded from the expenditure tables throughout. "Liability reductions" comprises payments in respect of unfunded pensions, and that portion of property rents that are not accounted for as interest payments (capital financing).

Previous Full Year Actual £000	Expense Head	Budget Year to May £000	Actual Year to May £000	Variance Year to May £000	Full Year Budget £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Forecast Variance £000	Forecast Variance %
27,045	Staff Costs	4,937	4,884	(53)	29,626	29,466	(160)	-0.5%
2,289	Property Costs	399	738	339	2,391	2,391	0	0.0%
186	Travel Costs	38	13	(25)	230	230	0	0.0%
3,352	Other Operating Charges	603	326	(277)	3,620	3,673	53	1.5%
247	Capital Financing	39	0	(39)	233	233	0	0.0%
(207)	Other Income	(61)	(31)	30	(366)	(366)	0	0.0%
32,912	Sub-total	5,955	5,930	(25)	35,734	35,627	(107)	-0.3%
940	Liability reductions	126	205	79	759	759	0	0.0%
(33,905)	Grant In Aid	(6,082)	(9,800)	(3,718)	(36,493)	(36,493)	0	0.0%
(53)	Net Total for SCRA	(1)	(3,665)	(3,664)	0	(107)	(107)	

2.2 Year to date revenue expenditure is £25k under budget. On staff, this is due to costs associated with Children (Care and Justice) Act (CCJA) implementation being back-ended, and vacancies. Many ICT costs are billed in arrears, and non-domestic rates within the Property line have been largely paid for the full year in advance.

2.3 The table below summarises the position to May 2026 by budget centre, excluding depreciation and liability reductions.

Previous Full Year Actual £000	Cost centre	Budget Year to May £000	Actual Year to May £000	Variance Year to May £000	Full Year Budget £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Forecast Variance £000	Forecast Variance %
255	Communications	55	55	0	329	327	(2)	(0.6%)
12,615	East and Central Scotland Area	2,197	2,238	41	13,183	13,246	63	0.5%
266	Executive	49	48	(1)	294	295	1	0.3%
9,395	North West Scotland Area	1,746	1,656	(90)	10,481	10,200	(281)	(2.7%)
1,778	Practice and Policy	339	319	(20)	2,031	2,095	64	3.2%
8,603	Support Services	1,569	1,614	45	9,416	9,462	46	0.5%
32,912	Net Total for SCRA	5,955	5,930	(25)	35,734	35,625	(109)	(0.3%)

2.4 The forecast spend by locality is detailed below.

Locality	Forecast Variance to March 2027 £000	Variance %
East & Central Scotland Office	11	1.7
Tayside And Fife Locality	(46)	(1.6)
South East Locality	52	2.3
Central Locality	5	0.2
Lanarkshire Dumfries & Galloway Locality	71	2.3
Ayrshire Locality	(31)	(1.5)
North West Area Office (includes CCJA)	(48)	(4.4)
Highlands Moray and Eilean Siar Locality	(89)	(5.6)
Grampian and Northern Isles Locality	(16)	(1.0)
North Strathclyde Locality	(6)	(0.2)
Glasgow Locality	(121)	(4.0)
	(218)	(0.9)

- 2.5 At this early stage in the financial year, forecasts submitted by local managers are tentative. Budgets were set assuming a national average of 5.1% vacancies throughout the year, arising from natural staff turnover rather than any deliberate attempt to make monetary savings. This figure is low compared to historic evidence, although higher than the prevailing vacancy rate as at 31 March 2026 of 4.4%. Therefore, there remains a risk that vacancies remain low, and staffing budget heads towards overspend. EMT members will monitor spend and recruitment carefully on this front.
- 2.6 Currently SCRA is forecasting to spend out on the £785k set aside for headcount increases arising directly from CCJA implementation, but this will drop if implementation date is pushed back from the working assumption of Q4 (January to March 2027).
- 2.7 Dialogue between SG Finance, Sponsor Team and SCRA remains frequent and transparent to ensure SCRA secures the resource required at ABR and SBR to meet its needs. Efficiency savings and scrutiny on spend are likely to be higher on the agenda than before, given the new SG cabinet appointments.

3 Capital

- 3.1 Capital spend to May 2026 is £617k, being £25k within the Digital programme (mission 2) and £592k within the Property programme (principally Dundee), although some of this spend will have been accrued at 25/26 year end. A more accurate picture will be presented at September's Board meeting. Both the Head of Property and Head of Digital currently forecast to spend out on their budgets, but both have contingency plans should capital resource from SG not meet the budget set by the Board.

SCRA BOARD REPORT

June 2026

Item 11.2 Influencing Report 1st June 2025 to 1st June 2026

Report Classification: Open

For: assurance and information

Executive Sponsor: Alistair Hogg, Head of Practice and Policy

Author: Melissa Hunt, Policy and Public Affairs Manager

Executive Summary

This is SCRA's annual report on the influencing work that takes place with Scottish and UK Governments in relation to statutory and other consultation exercises and the wider national influencing that occurs across the organisation.

Recommendation

The Board is invited to:

- Note the Influencing Report 1st June 2025 to 1st June 2026

Key Issues to be discussed/considered

This report is informative. It is a narrative of the work done across SCRA during the last 12 months, to make this visible, relevant and current for Board members. It does not cover work which is explained to Board in other reporting.

Implications:

There may be implications beyond this report. If such implications are clear, then they will be stated. However, implications may not be clear and are likely to be dependent on one or more areas of work, which may not be explicitly covered in this report. If this might be the case it is highlighted in this report.

Service:

Where there may be clear or anticipated impacts to our service delivery, they will be included in this report. As above, such impacts may not be clear or anticipated and may evolve as part of ongoing work.

All intended impacts will be captured and addressed as part of SCRA's ongoing statutory approach to impact assessment across the organisation – and will include direct / indirect impact as well as positive / negative impact. Where negative impacts are identified then mitigations will be developed. All of our work on impact will consider benefits and risk to SCRA, as well as dependencies across the work.

Financial:

Any clear or anticipated financial impacts will be highlighted in this report. The nature of the work covered and the narrative approach of the report may mean that this is less likely to be relevant in this report.

Workforce:

Any clear or anticipated workforce impacts will be highlighted in this report. The nature of the work covered and the narrative approach of the report may mean that this is less likely to be relevant in this report.

Infrastructure including Digital:

Any clear or anticipated infrastructure impacts will be highlighted in this report. The nature of the work covered and the narrative approach of the report may mean that this is less likely to be relevant in this report.

Information Governance:

There are no clear information governance issues or concerns with this report. The information narrated is information in the public domain – either through meeting or ongoing discussions or as a result of publication. It would be rare for sensitive information to be relevant to this report. If that did occur any sensitive information would be included in a separate appendix to the main body of the report.

Risk Assessment/Management:

Any information in this report which should be addressed through the risk register will be highlighted. If this occurs then it will be raised with the Governance Officer and the Head of Practice and Policy and the Principal Reporter in advance of the Board considering this report.

Relevance to Corporate/Strategic Objectives:

This report is introduced through its links to the current Programme for Government; SCRA's strategic plans and through an evidence based approach, focused on relevant research.

Equality Declaration:

The author can confirm that due regard has been given to the Equality Act 2010 and compliance with the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of SCRA's decision making process. Human Rights legislation has also been considered. An impact assessment is completed in relation to this finished report and is included alongside it for the Board to note, and consider.

Involvement, Engagement and/or Consultation:

This report is a collaborative endeavour. It requires Head Office and Senior Operational Managers and their staff to communicate their work, its influence and the influence they hope to have in the work going forward.

The Policy and Public Affairs Manager has written this report, supported by the Head of Practice and Policy and the Principal Reporter. Staff across Head Office and relevant Operational Teams have provided input to the report section on wider engagement and influencing.

SCRA's responses to statutory consultation exercises are planned and delivered in a bespoke way – so that the people who require to be involved are proportionate to the ask of the consultation. Some consultations give the opportunity for everyone to be involved; others are more focused and specific.

Appendices

Influencing Report 2026
Impact & Influencing Report for OHOV
Briefing on mandatory reporting of sexual abuse
Briefing on Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Act 2026

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Influencing Report: 1st June 2025 to 1st June 2026

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1	Introduction
1.1	Report background - In March 2011, the Practice and Policy Team produced a report for the Board outlining the key areas where SCRA had been able to be influential and apply its professional expertise, data and research to particular issues at a national level. The report was previously written twice a year and is now written annually. This is the twenty sixth Influencing Report and loosely covers the period 1st June 2025 to 1st June 2026. We will be doing some work on the format and content of this report following this Board meeting, to explore whether it is possible to include local influencing work alongside our national influencing. A version of this report is also being produced for Our Hearings, Our Voice. This was done for the first time last year and is being repeated (and is included as an appendix). Embedded documents are not included in the report – if there are documents or presentations or other items that you would like to see, please contact Melissa.Hunt@scra.gov.uk to be sent a copy.
1.2	There are hyperlinks in this document - to external documents which may be of interest (including legislation and draft legislation) and to internal documents, published externally or internally. Some hyperlinks may be to web pages where there are multiple documents of potential interest. Where there are links to legislation these links are to a Bill or an Act, not to associated policy memoranda or regulations (unless these other documents are of specific interest). Where there is an area of policy that is likely to require SCRA consideration in the next 12 months that will be highlighted. If it is clear how SCRA will engage with the Policy area that will be included in the report, either as part of our assessment of legislation or as part of our wider engagement work. If thinking is still required or is ongoing that will be referenced in a footnote.

1.3	At the time of writing Scotland has just elected a new Government, and Government responsibility, Ministerial portfolios and priorities are still being decided. A Programme for the new Government will follow, and will show the direction the new Government will take. The SNP are the largest party in Holyrood, and their manifesto commitments we detailed. In summary, those most relevant to our work in SCRA were: • A Fair Scotland keeps the Promise. • A Fair Scotland has a fundamental commitment to human rights, respect and inclusion. • A Healthy Scotland values our caring workforce. • A Skilled Scotland enables our children to learn and to flourish. • A Secure Scotland means our kids are kept safe. • A Secure Scotland addresses violence against women and girls. • A Secure Scotland supports victims of crime. • A Secure Scotland ensures access to justice. P24 The areas of focus of the SNP manifesto – Fair, Prosperous, Healthy, Skilled, Sustainable, Secure are also existing areas of focus for SCRA. However, there is a very mixed Parliament for the new term, and the manifesto commitments of other parties will also feature as part of the work delivered across committees and parliamentary focus / scrutiny. The SNP does not have a majority and will require to build cross party consensus to deliver.
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1.4	SCRA’s strategic plans – SCRA’s policy work is embedded across our plans and imbued throughout the work. Areas of action or intention where policy is more front and centre were set out previously (SCRA/MONTH04) p5). As we are midway through this planning cycle, the previous areas of focus remain relevant to this report – although some areas of focus have moved on considerably in the last 12 months. SCRA Corporate Plan 2024-2027 The Best Experience – Care • Trauma based practice embedded in our service – our people, policy and practice. <i>SCRA ‘Trauma Trainers’ have delivered training to all SCRA staff, to the Trauma Skilled level. Next steps in SCRA’s trauma training are being developed.</i> • Recognition of the legal status that UNCRC now holds by ensuring we are trained and prepared to meet these requirements and be able to respond when required. <i>SCRA have delivered system changes and training in relation to the views of children during a Reporter investigation, a ‘rights’ audit has been done on two occasions and SCRA are planning the first reporting in relation to the UNCRC (Incorporation)(Scotland) Act 2024.</i> • 16 and 17 year olds coming to the Hearings System will be enabled to fully exercise their rights to attend, participate and access the support they require. <i>Scoping work is being done in relation to this.</i> • Legislative proposals that have taken account of our views for the change that is needed to deliver a better system to children and young people. <i>The Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Act takes account of the SCRA positions that we expressed throughout its development.</i> Clear communications – Connect • Using evidence-based data and research to understand, inform and influence our operational delivery, our practice and the wider policy agenda. <i>SCRA’s research on AI (Research - SCRA – A Double Edged Sword and the Visual for children) illustrates how research thinking can underpin the approach we take to future development – as well as the different ways in which we can communicate information to different audiences effectively.</i> The Best Service – Protect • Mature partnerships and collective leadership in the Hearings System will continue to be nurtured to deliver meaningful improvements for the benefit of children, young people and families. <i>New Children’s Hearings Management Guidance has been delivered through partnership working between SCRA and Children’s Hearings Scotland (CHS), this will be delivered nationally (but is not currently available online).</i> People who care, connect and protect • A positive ‘one team’ culture where people are encouraged to engage, innovate and lead together. <i>Work is ongoing to develop SCRA’s approach to Portfolio Management – which will provide the underlying structures to enable a one team culture. Delivery of the new non disclosure and hearing information pack was a piece of work where a one team approach developed and was effective.</i> • Our people feeling valued, supported, skilled, and proud of the key role that they play. <i>SCRA’s staff survey results give the annual temperature check of this.</i>
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1.5	<u>Corporate Parenting Plan - 2024-2027</u> • More 16 and 17 year olds are referred to the Reporter providing them with the protection and support of the Children's Hearings System. <i>This will be delivered through implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024.</i>
1.6	<u>Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024–2027</u> • Children are empowered to be human rights defenders. <i>This is a long term ambition – to ensure children understand the children's hearings system and are supported to engage fully with it. The work is cross sector and not just the work of SCRA.</i> • SCRA will use human rights/children's rights as a frame in our work. <i>SCRA's Theory of Change will be developed, following the 2025/26 rights audit.</i> • SCRA staff across the organisation will be trauma informed and rights aware. SCRA staff will work in a compassionate, trauma informed and rights respecting way. <i>SCRA have recruited a Corporate Parenting Manager, who will focus on delivering trauma informed practice. We have partnered with the Resilience Learning Partnership to enhance our work. SCRA's Trauma Trainers continue to be involved and invested in this work.</i> • People who are affected by the work of SCRA will know what rights they have and what they can do if they feel like their rights have not been considered. <i>Ongoing work has this focus (the rights statement in relation to outcome letters, the re-vamp of victim letters, website content development, family centred scheduling).</i> • SCRA will have robust, evidence based and lived experience based approaches to difficult areas of work, where people's rights can be affected. <i>Our research team are taking this approach across their work; digital developments are being developed with people with lived experience and project work is also using co-production to develop and deliver work.</i>
1.7	Research Evidence Base - The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration recognises the value, benefits and impact of research and evidence, and are committed to developing the evidence-based to inform child welfare and justice policies within Scotland. The approach to evidence-based policy adopted at SCRA recognises that evidence is generated from a wide range of sources, including: the production of annual statistics; literature reviews; primary research undertaken with stakeholders within the children's hearings system, including children and families; practice experience; consultations undertaken with staff members on forthcoming changes to legislation; and participation work with hearings-experienced children. Through gathering evidence in all of these ways, we are able to better inform our policy and practice positions by triangulating the knowledge, experiences and skills of our Children's Reporters, with the experiences and preferences of children, families and partner agencies, and learning from the wider evidence base.

1.8	We have taken a decision to minimise publication of consultation responses across different online platforms. If an SCRA response will be published by Government or by a partner then we will not publish it as well.
1.9	Key messages from our consultation responses are disseminated internally within SCRA using an appropriate communication channel, determined by the Head of Practice and Policy and Public Affairs Manager, based on the content and engagement involved in any consultation exercise. Some consultation responses are more relevant to staff than others, and might become more relevant if they develop into new legislation or a new national policy approach. Every SCRA consultation response is produced following detailed planning about gathering necessary and relevant views in relation to the response, and following input from staff that is proportionate to the consultation. We are currently preparing for the implementation of two significant pieces of legislation which will have direct and extensive impacts on the work of our staff. As a result the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 and the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Act will require careful planning and preparation in relation to sequencing, training, technical solutions and overall delivery and will require to be a core focus of activity over a prolonged period of time. We are also committed to delivery of the Promise, by 2030.

2	Consultation Responses
2.1	In this section we give an update on recent consultation responses. Some of these responses have previously been covered in more detail, and are included here to conclude SCRA’s work in relation to them. The work in relation to other included consultations is ongoing. Consultations are included in chronological order, starting with the ‘oldest’.
2.2	Media reporting on child homicide victims: Consultation Media reporting on child homicide victims: consultation analysis - gov.scot September 2024 SCRA response The Scottish Government does not intend to bring forward legislation in this area. Instead, non legislative work will be done around media guidance; training; specialist support materials for families and further bespoke support for affected families.
2.3	'Moving on' from care into adulthood Consultation 'Moving On' from care into adulthood: consultation analysis - gov.scot October 2024 SCRA’s response - Response 605784832 to 'Moving on' from care into adulthood consultation - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space As a result of this consultation Scottish Government are: • Exploring an online platform which is intended to improve knowledge of available services for young people with care experience. • Committed to reviewing and refreshing the government guidance on continuing care and aftercare. • Ensuring that young people with additional needs – including unaccompanied asylum seeking children – get the tailored support they need to thrive. • Improving transitions from children’s to adult services. Work in this area to keep the Promise will be ongoing, and SCRA will continue to monitor developments.

2.4	Developing a universal definition of care experience: consultation Developing a universal definition of care experience: consultation analysis - gov.scot January 2025 SCRA's response - Response 66408475 to Developing a universal definition of 'care experience' - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space The analysis of consultation responses refers to the work of Our Hearings, Our Voice (the Articulate animation) and the Language Leaders. Children's Hearings Scotland 'Language in the Hearing Room' guide was referenced. SCRA's thinking about a working definition is quoted: "Whilst we do not think we need to spend time, money and effort on creating legislation to provide a universal definition, we do think that a working definition would be helpful – particularly to those support services which are accessed through eligibility" – SCRA, P14. Two new key provisions were included in the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Act – advocacy provisions for children, young people and adults with care experience and provisions requiring Scottish Ministers to publish guidance in relation to the language of care – which will include a universal definition of 'care experience'.
2.5	Equality (Race & Disability) Bill Mandatory pay gap Reporting Consultation Consultation outcome – Equality (Race and Disability) Bill: mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting – government response June 2025 This was a Westminster consultation, and relates to development of the Equality Act 2010. This is not a devolved power area. UK government intends to take forward all but one of the consultation proposals – they do not plan to mandate additional reporting requirements for public bodies, as a result of the additional complexities and burdens which arise in relation to publishing this information. However, organisations are being encouraged to go further and develop this increased reporting approach. Scottish government will be able to take a separate decision about whether to make ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting mandatory.
2.6	Future of Foster Care: consultation Future of foster care: consultation analysis - final report - gov.scot January 2025 The analysis does not consider children's hearings or statutory decision making. SCRA responded to this consultation by letter. 'In a small number of instances where a response received via email or in a PDF document contained information that did not align with specific questions, analysts exercised judgment about the most relevant place to include this material for analysis purposes.' Analysis P7.

2.7	Mandatory Reporting of child sexual abuse June 2025 Child Protection Committees across Scotland were asked to discuss views in relation to mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in the summer of 2025. Mandatory reporting featured as a measure in the Crime and Policing Bill from the UK Government (now the Crime and Policing Act 2026, Part 5, Chapter 2). The Act relates to reporting in England – but Child Protection Committees Scotland were clear that mandatory reporting was a positive step for Scotland as well. SCRA produced a briefing for managers, which is included in the appendix.
2.8	Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 (Rules of Procedure in Children’s Hearings) Amendment Rules 2026 October 2025 Scottish government consulted on this in Autumn 2025; the new rules were made in January 2026 and came into force on 1st April 2026. The new rules are the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 (Rules of Procedure in Children’s Hearings) Amendment Rules 2026. SCRA’s Practice Note on the UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Act 2024 was amended to reflect the rule changes. In response to the consultation, SCRA agreed that Children’s Reporters should receive written intimation of a compatibility question, notify relevant authorities and receive any written notice or submission. However, the decision making in relation to a compatibility questions sits with the children’s hearing as a tribunal (and not with the Reporter). We stated that who is able to raise any proceedings in relation to compatibility should be clearly stated, and that it should be possible to raise a compatibility question at any hearing stage, prior to a final substantive decision being made by the children’s hearing. SCRA also gave the view that that the new rules should be clear that a compatibility question can be raised in writing (in advance) or verbally, at a children’s hearing. This is a good online summary of the changes, which goes into additional detail - Policy Wire Children’s hearings rules on UNCRC updated from 1 Apr 2026.
2.9	Legal Aid Reform Discussion Paper November 2025 We supported the proposal to change the eligibility criteria for Assistance By Way of Representation (ABWOR) for all children involved in the children’s hearings system (so for a child referred to the hearing but also for a 17 year old parent of a child referred, or a sibling who is a participation individual). We agreed with the raise in the initial limit of authorised expenditure to £550 and we also agreed with the extension of a grant of ABWOR to cover from an instigation hearing to a hearing where a full CSO is made. SCRA will need to update Practice Direction about Legal Aid as and when these changes come into force. We will keep a watching brief on this.

2.10	Vision for Kinship Care February 2026 Responses to this consultation are not yet available online. SCRA responded to this consultation from the point of view of our work – statutory decision making for children and families. Our key message was that: ‘The concept of kinship may have cultural and societal variations, according to race / ethnicity and lived experience, but in all its aspects has core values of care, community and common humanity that are all part of our understanding of ‘family’. Kinship care is not a simple solution and is not a linear decision. Kinship care can occur naturally and can vary in its intensity and its offer in a very organic way – which can never be matched by a ‘system’ response. Although kinship care remains an important decision option for different decision makers. Kinship care can be an emergency short term response or a longer solution. It is right that it is all these things.’ We were also clear that there can be risk to children living in kin care – as in any form of care – so these children need to be visible. This can be hard if extended families do not live in Scotland – and may also mean that kin care is not considered to be an option for some children. This may not be fair for some communities. SCRA fully supported the Kinship Care Advice Service for Scotland (KCASS).
2.11	Police Scotland Consultations March 2026 May 2026 SCRA responded to Police Scotland consultations on: Children in Conflict with the Law National Guidance in March 2026, which focused on areas of the guidance which didn’t seem to align with wider messaging around the whole system approach or with the changes in language being promoted across children’s services. We suggested some amendment to some sections – including the definition and possible future ramifications of a compulsory supervision order, jointly reported decision making for younger children; the role of SCRA; referral practice and the operation of the children’s hearings system. and Stop and Search Code of Practice Review in May 2026. This is an operational Police document – our main suggestions were around using ‘children’ to refer to everyone under the age of 18; additional specific considerations may need to be set out for people who are neurodivergent, for certain religious observations and also, perhaps, for gender. We also suggested that a child friendly complaints process (in line with SPSO guidance) could be helpful.

2.12	<u>The Future of Secure Care and the single point of contact (SPOC) for victims in the children's hearings system</u> April 2026 This was a wide ranging Scottish Government consultation which considered: • nationalisation of secure care in Scotland • national co-ordination of secure care • funding and commissioning models • expanding or re-defining the concept of secure accommodation / secure care • revising the criteria for secure care or restrictions • flex secure • community based hubs • multi disciplinary teams • secure transport standards • a single point of contact (SPOC) for victims affected by harmful behaviour of children (across the justice system – wider than children's hearings) SCRA's response is not yet published online and can be provided in full, if requested. SCRA staff from research, practice and victim information had been actively involved in workshops and discussions focussed on the SPOC before the consultation. This was a difficult consultation to respond to – as the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 and the Children (Care, Care Experience and Service Planning) (Scotland) Act 2026, when implemented, will have an impact on areas where further consultation questions are being asked. In summary, SCRA felt that: • The conversation around secure care needs to develop – secure care keeps a child safe. • We said that the current criteria for secure care should stay, but there may be a good argument for developing some new 'edge of secure care' criteria. • We expressed concern about the potential overlap between justice and health in relation to mental health conditions and said that we do not think the children's hearing can or should be a back stop to appropriate care under the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015. The children's hearing can be a parallel form of care for a child – when a compulsory supervision order is required in addition to any care or treatment determined under relevant mental health provisions. We were not sure that the concept of integrating secure care and mental health was the right one. • We asked that consideration is given to 'crisis care'. • We were not sure how 'flex secure' could work – how it could be challenged or appealed or how it would align with children's rights. • We are not sure how adaptable levels of restriction could work. • Some children are always likely to require the safety offered by secure care. • We asked about equitable access to care, given Scotland's geography and the current location of secure care centres and mental health in patient wards for children. • We said Scotland needs to think about secure as two things, a therapeutic environment as well as a control environment. We were clear that the use of secure care through the children's hearings system is never punitive – but that children may often get the impression that it is. • We spoke about the need for enduring relationships for children and the specific difficulties children who have experience of the care system can face on their journey to adulthood. We also spoke about how children are best placed to explain the supports that work for them, at different stages of their lives. • We felt there was a role for the National Social Work Agency in this space / work.
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	• We commented on current secure care transport provision – which is based across the UK. • The questions on the SPOC seemed to infer some slightly different ideas / positions than those which had been developed in the workshops SCRA staff attended. We held the view that the SPOC should work across systems and partners and needed to avoid duplication. • We were clear that we felt our Victim Information Service continues to have a role, and that victims should be provided with a choice. There will need to be clear communication between the SPOC and our service. • We observed that services for victims across the country are not consistent and provide a challenge for a sign poster. • The training requirements for the SPOC will depend on the scope and responsibilities of the role. We are not sure that this has been determined yet. • The information sharing environment for the SPOC is a complex one and will require focused efforts. SCRA Staff will continue to be involved with this work as it develops.
2.13	Growing up in the online world: a national consultation - GOV.UK Our recent response to this consultation was led by Dr Annie Taylor in our Research Team and uses the evidence base of our recent research ‘A Double edged Sword’ (Research - SCRA). In our response letter SCRA highlighted the considerable time we have devoted to thinking about and looking at children’s online lives – and that resulted in us being able to answer the questions posed by the consultation – as there is no evidence base. We think further research is needed, beyond asking questions in a consultation. Based on our work we proposed areas of focus for Government: 1. A children’s rights approach to the online world 2. Decisions about children’s digital lives must be evidence-based and monitored for unintended consequences 3. Children and families should be integral to decision-making about their digital lives 4. Consent and transparency should be considered in depth Our letter to the UK Government team is available on request.
2.14	CURRENTLY we are considering a response to current consultation about new Sentencing Guidelines from the Scottish Sentencing Council in relation to Domestic Abuse sentencing Public consultation - draft domestic abuse guideline - Scottish Sentencing Council - Citizen Space.

3	Legislation & Committee Work
3.1	This section of the report covers a number of different things: • Scottish Parliamentary Committee work that SCRA has been involved in • Scottish Legislation that is currently being considered by the Scottish Parliament as part of a live parliamentary process • Scottish Legislation that has been agreed and is in the process of being implemented. • UK Legislation where SCRA has an active ongoing interest. Some Acts of the Scottish Parliament can take many years for full implementation to occur. SCRA are involved in legislation at all stages of the legislative process. We respond to requests from Parliamentary Committees for written evidence when these occur and we will also provide evidence in person to Committee. We also maintain dialogue with different Bill teams across Scottish Government, to ensure that our views are heard / position is clear and known - on areas of legislative change which will affect our work or the work across the children's hearing system. We can contact Bill teams formally but we also have more frequent and less formal conversations around areas of challenge or difficulty – to ensure that wicked and complex issues are fully understood and dealt with accordingly. For this work to be successful, the relationships that SCRA staff have with colleagues across the sector are crucial. These conversations occur throughout the process of developing legislation and will also occur during the implementation of any new Act. Our wider work in section 4 of this report will often be linked to legislation covered in this section. We have tried to ensure that where this is the case we have pointed out the links.
3.2	Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee Extensive briefing notes were developed for this Committee session on 25th June 2025 – which considered two public petitions - Youth Violence (PE1947) and Rape Charges (Under 16's) (PE2064). Alistair Hogg – Head of Practice and Policy gave evidence to the Committee alongside the Right Honourable Dorothy Bain, KC, Lord Advocate and Stephanie Ross, Principal Procurator Fiscal Depute in the Policy Unit, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. The written report of the session is here - Official Report. The session is also on Parliamentary TV here - Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee Scottish Parliament TV. Alistair Hogg explained the importance of the approach taken by the children's hearings system and the way in which the Lord Advocate's Guidelines ensure that the behaviour of children is addressed in the right 'system'. Close working between COPFS and the Children's Reporter is open and transparent. Mr Hogg also spoke about the changes to information sharing with the victims of children, which will come into force with the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 and SCRA research with victims of children (which was ongoing at the time).

3.3	Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 This Act is in force and the report from the Age of Criminal Responsibility Advisory Group, on a further change to the Age was presented to the Minister on 16th December 2024, after its 3 year review period. The report can be read here - The-Report-from-the-Age-of-Criminal-Responsibility-Advisory-Group-on-the-review-of-the-Age-of-Criminal-Responsibility-Scotland-1.pdf. The Review of Age of Criminal Responsibility report from the Advisory group was laid before the Scottish Parliament in December 2025 - Letter from the Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise, 17 December 2025. The Minister committed to further development and consultation – in the new parliamentary term. We will need to see if this becomes part of the new Programme for Government. A further raising of the age of criminal responsibility would have significant impacts across our work and might be actively considered in the new Parliament. Action in England and Wales to look at the age of criminal responsibility may nudge further action in Scotland (Police Professional Government opens door to raising age of criminal responsibility and Cutting youth crime, changing young lives - GOV.UK).
3.4	The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 This Act is now in full force (Section 8 of the Act was repealed by the Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform (Scotland) Act 2025 and was never enacted).
3.5	The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 This Act is now in full force.
3.6	United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 This Act is in full force, with the first statutory report as required under the Act due this year (2026). On 1 April 2026 the Rules of Procedure in Children’s Hearings were amended to set out a procedure when someone at a children’s hearing wants to raise a compatibility question. This is a question raised in civil proceedings about whether words in legislation are incompatible with the UNCRC requirements, or whether a public authority has acted in a way that is incompatible with those requirements. We amended our Practice Note on the act to reflect this change (please ask if you would like a copy of this note). Case law is evolving in relation to Act and children’s rights. Most significantly the recent outcome of the judicial review 2026csoh15-petition-of-x-for-judicial-review.pdf, which concerned a 17 yr old who was a ‘participation individual’ in his younger sister’s hearing. The judicial review decided that a children’s hearing has to also consider the best interests of children affected by the hearing decision – when those children are not the subjects of the hearing.

3.7	Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform (Scotland) Act 2025 This Bill was passed on 17 September 2025 and became an Act on 30 October 2025. The Act is in 6 parts: Part 1 – creates a Victims and Witnesses Commissioner for Scotland Part 2 – embeds trauma informed practice in civil and criminal courts Part 3 – increases special measures availability Part 4 – changes criminal jury size, rules re: majority verdicts and removes not proven Part 5 – creates new sexual offences court Part 6 – provides automatic lifelong anonymity for victims of sexual offences, automatic right to independent legal representation for complainers in sexual offence cases when application made to introduce character evidence, powers to pilot rape trials in front of a single judge. This Act is in relation to criminal proceedings, but we will keep a watching brief, to see if we need to communicate anything to staff. It might be that new ways of working are transferable or are adopted by civil proceedings and we may want to consider any learning relevant for us.
3.8	Care Reform (Scotland) Act 2025 The Bill became an Act on 22 July 2025. The key change from this legislation is the establishment of the National Chief Social Work Advisor and National Social Work Agency. We will keep a watching brief, to see if we need to become further involved or we need to communicate relevant changes to staff.
3.9	Criminal Justice Modernisation and Abusive Domestic Behaviour Reviews (Scotland) Act 2025 The Bill was passed on 7 October 2025 and became an Act on 19 November 2025. The provisions of this legislation do not expressly refer to the work of the Children’s Reporter or section 67(2)(j) grounds (offence grounds) in the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. This could cause some procedural issues in relation to the use of evidence stored in the digital evidence sharing capability (DESC). A Children’s Reporter may need to produce the ‘evidence’ rather than an image of the evidence stored in DESC – and as a result will not benefit from the improvements being made to criminal proceedings. Locality Reporter Managers may need to be briefed on Abusive Domestic Behaviour Reviews, as they may be approached to be part of a review. A briefing on this will be developed. We will need to keep a watching brief on this.

3.10 [Children \(Care and Justice\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024 \(CCJA\)](#)

Scottish Parliamentary elections have temporarily paused implementation of this legislation. We hope that this will now get back on track for full implementation by March 2027. Implementation of provisions from this Act will also need to be considered alongside any implementation plan for the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) Act 2026.

The key aspects of this Act that still need to be implemented are significant for the children's hearings system.

Part 1 of the CCJA 2024 is about changing the age of a child – so that a child is anyone under 18, in line with UNCRC and so that all 16 & 17 year olds can be referred to the Principal Reporter as a result of care and protection concerns as well as behaviour which is in conflict with the law.

Part 1 also introduces a new duty for the children's hearing to have due regard to the effects of trauma on a child, and new measures in compulsory supervision orders (CSOs) in relation to providing additional protection for victims; alters the information which can be given to victims and establishes a new 'single point of contact' (SPOC) for victims.

Part 1 also changes the tests for secure accommodation and movement restriction conditions (MRCs).

Part 2 of CCJA 2024 is focused on criminal justice proceedings, but still has relevance for SCRA's work in the children's hearings system. Section 17 re-affirms the approach of advice from the children's hearing and a reference or remit from the criminal court, when the court decides that the children's hearing could be the 'best' disposal for a child. This part also makes clear that a 'detained' child is to be treated as a 'looked after' child (section 24).

Part 3 of CCJA 2024 delivers change to the provision of secure transport. It introduces standards for the secure transportation of children; a duty on providers to meet the standards and a reporting requirement as well.

Part 4 introduces regulation around the approval of secure accommodation services and residential services providing care to children. It also clarifies the law around the cross-border placement of children and the regulation of cross-border placements.

Part 5 alters the age of a child in respect of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004, so that it applies to anyone under 18 and repeals the named person and child's plan sections part 4 and schedule 2 and part 5, schedule 3 from the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Part 6 covers UNCRC compatibility in criminal proceedings and part 7 makes clear that the act will be reviewed regularly.

SCRA is involved in the Implementation and Resourcing Group, the Part 1 Working Group; the Whole System Approach Workforce Development Group; the Early and Effective Intervention Working Group and the Police Custody Group in relation to the implementation of this Act.

SCRA has a CCJA Implementation Project Group looking at the Scottish Government's implementation plans and all the work SCRA needs to do in order to transition smoothly across to this new legislation. SCRA is in the process of updating its current letters for victims and is on track to deliver practice training for all relevant staff from November 2026 to March 2027.

3.11	Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Act 2026 This Bill was unanimously passed on 19th March 2026 and received Royal Assent on 15th May 2026. The Act is wide ranging and covers the experience of a child across Scotland’s ‘care’ systems. It is much broader than the children’s hearings system. The key areas of change across the Act are in relation to: <table border="1" data-bbox="185 488 1444 952"> <tr> <td data-bbox="185 488 810 952"> • Aftercare • Advocacy for care experienced persons • Review of permanence • Family group decision making • Kinship care assistance • Provision of accommodation • Continuing care • Corporate parenting • Profit limitation of children’s residential care services & cross border placement </td><td data-bbox="810 488 1444 952"> • Register of foster carers • Guidance on use of restraint and seclusion • Reports on deaths of care experienced persons • Peer support for adoption • Children’s Hearings • Place of safety for children who have been arrested • Children’s services planning • Reports and reviews </td></tr> </table> The key areas of change for SCRA are included in the briefing, added as part of the appendix to this report. SCRA are currently planning for the implementation of the Bill – as well as for any project work to develop and test ideas and approaches, which might be needed in advance of implementation.	• Aftercare • Advocacy for care experienced persons • Review of permanence • Family group decision making • Kinship care assistance • Provision of accommodation • Continuing care • Corporate parenting • Profit limitation of children’s residential care services & cross border placement	• Register of foster carers • Guidance on use of restraint and seclusion • Reports on deaths of care experienced persons • Peer support for adoption • Children’s Hearings • Place of safety for children who have been arrested • Children’s services planning • Reports and reviews
• Aftercare • Advocacy for care experienced persons • Review of permanence • Family group decision making • Kinship care assistance • Provision of accommodation • Continuing care • Corporate parenting • Profit limitation of children’s residential care services & cross border placement	• Register of foster carers • Guidance on use of restraint and seclusion • Reports on deaths of care experienced persons • Peer support for adoption • Children’s Hearings • Place of safety for children who have been arrested • Children’s services planning • Reports and reviews		
3.12	In this section we have decided to highlight some areas of developing legislation where SCRA has not had significant involvement to date, but where we are keeping a watching brief as there might be an impact across our work in the future. Disability Commissioner (Scotland) Bill was withdrawn on 30th September 2025. Prevention of Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill was withdrawn on 16th January 2026. Right to Addiction Recovery (Scotland) Bill this Bill fell on 9th October 2025 at stage 1. Regulation of Legal Services (Scotland) Bill was passed on 20th May 2025 and became an Act on 27th June 2025. The Regulation of Legal Services (Scotland) Act 2025 covers a range of relevant factors for people providing legal services. SCRA have been assured by Scottish Government colleagues that the services we provide are not covered by the provisions in this legislation. We will keep a watching brief on legislative developments in the new Parliament, to see if we need to become involved or we need to communicate relevant changes to staff.		

4	External and wider influencing work
4.1	Following on from our consultation and legislative work, this section of the report covers the national wider multi-agency or partnership work that staff across SCRA are involved in. Much of this work is a natural extension of or follow on from the involvement we have had with legislative or policy design at a previous stage. This report does not cover multi-agency or partnership work at local or locality level. At local level the model of partnership work replicates the national model – with a local frontline/ practice focus. All of the issues relevant to national discussion are also relevant to local delivery of the work. This report does not include our direct and ongoing work with partners – we have extensive contact with Children’s Hearings Scotland, Police Scotland and with Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service where we have influence as part of an ongoing conversation. The section is retrospective – but it also looks ahead to SCRA’s anticipated involvement in the work in the next 12 months, where that is possible. SCRA staff continue to be involved in and across a broad range of work is covered. As such, SCRA’s soft influencing reach is substantial. In addition, the approach that SCRA is taking to programmes and change is increasingly maturing and has been the subject of successful audit and independent assurance activity. The rigorous approach and the commitment of resources to deliver change improvements has had a positive impact and influence in terms of working with our partners at Scottish Government and other partners in the children’s hearings system. SCRA are confident that our approach enhances the organisation’s credibility, when it comes to improving the ways we work. The table below is loosely in alphabetical order.

	Group and attendance	Impact / influence we have had	Anticipated impact / influence in the next 12 months
4.2	ACR Data and Research Subgroup	Contribution to evidence gathering for the ACR review through report on Children-aged-12-to-15-years-offending.pdf .	Addendum 1) serious offences referred to the Reporter by 12-15 year olds has been published. Addendum 2) balancing rights of children who harm and those who are harmed is ready for publication.
4.3	Alcohol & Drug Early Intervention with young People Working Group - Melissa Hunt, Policy & Public Affairs Manager	This piece of work was under the National Mission Plan: 2022-2026 . The standards were published in November 2025 and are online - Standards for Young People Accessing Treatment or Support for Alcohol or Drugs	The standards and recommendations will now need to be fully considered, given the possibility of a child having a section 67(2) (k) (the child has misused alcohol) or (l) (the child has misused a drug (whether or not a controlled drug)) ground for referral. SCRA needs to consider what we need to do / can do in relation to these standards in our work.

4.4	Bairns' Hoose Indicators - Working Group Kristina Moodie, Research Officer	SCRA working in a 'data link' role to help co-produce national baseline data based around core indicators.	It is anticipated that there will be a functional consistent set of baseline indicators of data already collated that can be used in the evaluation phase of the project and to be used thereafter for all partners to assess strengths and gaps. As of May 2026 a more streamlined list of indicators has been created and the feasibility etc of these new indicators is due to be discussed.
4.5	British Sign Language – Maryanne McIntyre	We have a strong relationship with the British Deaf Association (Scotland) and routinely work with them to develop information materials in BSL and with sub-titles.	This is part of our ongoing commitment to make our information more accessible.
4.6	Children's Hearings Advocacy Expert Reference Group and working groups - Melissa Hunt, Policy & Public Affairs Manager and Jennifer Orren, Participation Lead and Maryanne McIntyre, Press & Communications Manager	SCRA have been involved for many years in this wider work, which began by looking at the way in which section 122 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 could be introduced in a meaningful and effective way. This sector of the children's hearings system workforce is vibrant and innovative and offers children a support which can work. SCRA works to ensure that the focus of the work is always within the ethos and legislative framework of the children's hearing and associated legislation and that the approaches being taken are recognised by everyone and are consistent.	SCRA continue to provide data to the Advocacy ERG and to provide SCRA's voice in working groups set up to consider wider communications / training or the provision of non instructed advocacy. SCRA's Comms Team will continue to manage the National Children's Hearings Advocacy webpage.
4.7	Child Protection Committees, Scotland (CPC Scotland) – Alistair Hogg is an associate member	Attendance and sometimes presenting to this group, which is made up of all CPC chairs and CP Lead Officers from across Scotland.	Continued support for this engaging and influential group.
4.8	Child Trafficking Strategy Group - gov.scot – Roma Bruce Davies and Melissa Hunt	SCRA sits on this Scottish Government strategy group, to ensure that the unique ethos and approach of the children's hearings system is recognised across discussions as and when necessary.	This area of work is likely to be under more of a spotlight as a result of the Public Inquiry into group-based child sexual abuse - gov.scot being led by Professor Alexis Jay.
4.9	Children and Families National Leadership Group –	The sub-group exists to strengthen the understanding and	Anticipated impact/influence in the next 12 months : Providing expertise

	GIRFEC sub-group, Helen Etchells.	implementation of ‘Getting it right for every child’ (GIRFEC) across children’s services. The sub-group work in partnership with the Scottish Government to lead and coordinate a programme of improvement activity which is integral to the consistent, high quality implementation of GIRFEC across children’s services including: • Workforce confidence • Refreshed GIRFEC narrative and policy alignment • Leadership and culture • Review and evaluation The sub-group reports to the National Leadership Group. Impact/influence to date : TOR agreed. • SCRA participation in regional GIRFEC learning events Refreshed GIRFEC narrative shared by FM to mark 20 years of GIRFEC.	and insights from the point of view of SCRA and the Children’s Hearing System in contributing to the work of the sub-group.
4.10	Children’s Hearings Champions Project Katy Lang, Project Manager.	The Children’s Hearing Champions Project is a joint project between SCRA and Police Scotland. It involves a co-located member of SCRA staff in 3 Police Hubs, introducing as a test for change a Children’s Hearing Champion model to Police Scotland in those Divisions. Critically, the project is a joint project and within it Police Scotland and SCRA are working closely together with a joint ambition to ensure that the right children are referred to the reporter at the right time in their own unique service journey.	The project activity has resulted in all officers and staff connected to the referral pathway receiving a 30 minute input to explain the hearing system, all hub staff in the 3 hubs receiving 90 minute inputs and those who have come forward to be Children’s Hearing Champions receiving a full day of training. Though still in relatively early stages, the project interim evaluation activity provides some optimism around qualitative results of the project activity and some data related observations, which continue to be monitored for evaluation. The project reached a key milestone in April 2026, when all project divisions exceeded the target 20 Champions having completed their full training day. In total, there are currently 82 Children’s Hearing Champions

			across the 3 Divisions. SCRA and Police Scotland are in active discussions to plan for the next phases of this joint project.
4.11	Children's Hearings Redesign Board Neil Hunter, Principal Reporter.	Children's Hearings Redesign Board - gov.scot This is co-chaired by Scottish Government and COSLA.	The Redesign Board is intended to deliver improvements across the work of the children's hearings system.
4.12	Children's Hearings Redesign Planning Group SCRA: Lisa Bennett and Roma Bruce Davies Partners: Scottish Government, Children's Hearings Scotland, Social Work Scotland, COSLA.	Working with partners in the Redesign Planning Group to agree the workstreams for the multiagency improvement work that sits as part of the overall work on the children's hearings system redesign. The workstreams agreed to date are: • Planning & Preparation for hearings • Referral Process • Data & Information • Culture Future planned workstreams are: • Language and communication • Grounds • Babies and infants in the hearings system SCRA has influenced which workstreams have been selected by contributing knowledge of the priority areas of focus, informed by internal SCRA programme work and the wider context around the redesign. SCRA has also influenced the shape of the work to be carried out within the workstreams by being actively involved in the scoping group work and by drafting and revising Project Initiation Documents. SCRA's influence has been focused on encouraging progress and momentum with the redesign work, whilst supporting partners to navigate challenges and barriers.	SCRA is a trusted partner within the Redesign Planning Group (and the Redesign Board that sits above it in the governance structure), and it is anticipated that SCRA will continue to influence the shape of the workstreams and the quality and progress of the outputs from the workstreams.

		SCRA has also contributed data and work from internal discovery project work. SCRA contributed to the planning and resources within the project teams by allocating SCRA members of staff as representatives within the project teams.	
4.13	Children on a CSO Gill Short – Practice Manager.	Information for professionals available on the SCRA website Purpose of a CSO - for Professionals	This document has been published by SCRA and is intended to support professionals in their thinking around a statutory intervention in the form of a compulsory supervision order.
4.14	Children’s Rights Implementation Group (CRIG), Neill Mitchell, Practice Manager (one of the three implementation groups set up under the Youth Justice Improvement Board).	Ensuring the position of the reporter and hearings system is properly understood and reflected in the group’s work.	Ongoing. This group reports to the Youth Justice Improvement Board.
4.15	Community Confidence group – Neill Mitchell, Practice Manager, Alison Deighan, Practice Reporter	Contributing to the group’s work to enhance public understanding, trust, and engagement with youth justice in Scotland.	Ongoing.
4.16	Community Confidence Media Sub Group – Maryanne McIntyre	Information and awareness raising / confidence building.	We are a member of both groups which have been established to enhance public understanding, trust, and engagement with youth justice in Scotland.
4.17	Community of Practice for Siblings – Maryanne McIntyre attends and helps to organise. Also frequently attended by others from SCRA including Neil Hunter and Alistair Hogg.	Community of Practice for Siblings - SCRA is a core member of the planning group. We hosted an in-person event for members at our offices in Glasgow in October 2025.	A further in-person event is planned for October 2026. Colleagues from SCRA have also presented at several of the Community of Practice webinars and in-person events.
4.18	Stand Up For Siblings – Maryanne McIntyre	SCRA is one founding member of Stand up for Siblings.	We continue to be very much involved – and proud of our involvement - in Stand Up For Siblings which is a Scotland-wide partnership aimed at improving and changing legislation, policy and practice for brothers and sisters and sibling-like relationships.

4.19	Court – proposal for collaborative improvement work with SCTS and judiciary SCRA: Neil Hunter, Alistair Hogg and Helen Etchells (senior leadership stakeholder engagement) Roma Bruce Davies (Programme Manager) Katie Pacholek (Project Manager) Neill Mitchell, Practice Team	Work is in the early stages but there is an agreement in principle with partners at SCTS for collaborative work focused on improving management of children’s hearings proof applications at court and avoiding delay.	It is hoped that a collaborative project will be initiated and that partnership work will continue in this area that can lead to tangible differences in the management of children's hearings applications to court.
4.20	Court – work with Sheriffs Principal and SCTS on a new national Practice Note on our court proceedings to be jointly issued by the Sheriffs Principal SCRA reps: Roma Bruce Davies, Katie Pacholek, Jenny West, Neill Mitchell	As the draft Practice Note has not been shared with us yet, we have had limited opportunity to influence its content. However, we have emphasised the need to focus on implementation of the final document and the importance of strong leadership from the judiciary in that.	We will have an opportunity to comment on the draft when it is shared with us and will seek to ensure it addresses key issues. We will then work with the Sheriffs Principal on implementation.
4.21	Court communications materials	Materials to enhance understanding of and engagement with SCRA’s work at court, for children and carers.	We are working with the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service and Glasgow Sheriff Court to develop a new suite of information materials for children and their parents/carers.
4.22	Curriculum Review Katy Lang (Project Manager)	Katy Lang for SCRA remains a critical friend to the review of the Social Sciences curriculum, though the activity so far has involved review of a few documents as the process is ongoing.	Ongoing engagement and review.
4.23	Early engagement on grounds project Jenny West (Project Manager)	A pilot of this work within an agreed practice framework and with clear direction is due to start. It will gather information about this new way of working with children and their families, which will be used to inform national developments of the approach going forwards.	Ongoing links with family centred scheduling and with the planned legislative change of the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Act 2026.
4.24	Disability – contributing to national data improvement A central element is alignment with CELCIS and	This builds directly on CELCIS-led national work to develop and test enhanced disability indicators	The CELCIS approach represents a step change by: moving beyond a binary yes/no model

	partners on improving how disability is defined and recorded. CELCIS Disabled Children Statistics analysis .pdf	across multi-agency child protection systems. This work identifies that current approaches significantly under-represent disability due to inconsistent definitions and reliance on formal diagnosis.	• enabling multiple conditions to be recorded • recognising***“present but without medical diagnosis”** • supporting a needs-led, functional understanding of disability improving consistency through clearer definitions and guidance Testing demonstrated the impact, with 36.8% of children identified as disabled compared to 6.6% under previous methods, highlighting substantial hidden need. This work supports a national move towards more meaningful and usable equality data, aligned with key partners and delivered through engagement and digital scaffolding. It contributes to: • greater visibility of children’s needs at both an individual case level and national level • more consistent and comparable data across services • stronger evidence for decision-making and resource allocation • improved ability to meet Equality Act duties and rights-based commitments
4.25	Embedding change in equality data through digital scaffolding and partnership	This national learning is being translated into practice through digital scaffolding, combined with strong partnership working. The programme is explicitly designed around: • shared definitions and aligned data standards across agencies • data flowing from partners (social work, police, health), recognising that most equality data originates outside SCRA • digital scaffolding that supports accurate,	This reflects a clear shift: improving data quality is not only about guidance, but about system design, partner alignment, and embedding expectations into everyday practice. Digital scaffolding is due to be in place by summer 2026, at which point the programme will move into a partner-led test phase within a defined locality. This will involve working closely with key stakeholders to test how data flows in practice, assess consistency and quality of recording, and refine both the approach and guidance ahead of wider rollout.

		structured and consistent recording by practitioners a rights-based approach, where equality information is not extracted but shared through trust and relationships	Wider equality alignment Alongside disability, this work aligns with national approaches across other characteristics, including: - Race and ethnicity (Scottish Government guidance) - Sex - Language and accessibility needs (based on real service demand)
4.26	Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Steering Group – Alistair Hogg	Regular attendance and sometimes presenting to this group, which is made up of representatives from FGDM services around Scotland.	Supporting national quality standards, and potential for expansion of the offer of FGDM.
4.27	<u>Good Practice Guide for Solicitors in the Children's Hearings System: Top tips from children and adults on supporting children in their Hearings - Our Hearings, Our Voice</u> – Gordon Main and Sheriff Collette Gallagher.	The guide was approved by consensus amongst SCRA's Practice Team and other CHIP members.	SCRA need to continue to use this guide and make it relevant to our work – as part of training / information and awareness raising / good corporate parenting and our work to be trauma skilled. It is also a useful reference tool for additional Hearings redesign work.
4.28	Government Funded, VSS/Journey Associates led design process for SPOC (Single Point of Contact) for victims of children who have committed offences, Research team, Paul Harkness, Victim Information, Neill Mitchell, Practice Manager and Nicola Glass, Practice Reporter.	Able to bring detailed knowledge of how we currently provide information for Mapping As Is process and share insights from current research to influence design work.	Influence the final design and delivery of a SPOC service as part of the implementation of the Children(Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024.
4.29	Group led by Association for Fostering, Kinship and Adoption Scotland producing guides on good practice in permanence, Neill Mitchell, Practice Manager and Nicola Glass, Practice Reporter.	ensuring the position of the reporter and hearings system is properly understood and reflected in the group's guide, which has now been published.	The guides are available here - https://afkascotland.org/our-resources/good-practice-in-permanence-guides/
4.30	Hearings Scheduling partnership work with Children's Hearings Scotland, Shona Spence,	Working with CHS to look at ways to improve scheduling of hearings to support service provision to children and families and panel member	Work will continue with the rollout plan for the updated Hearings Management Guidance.

	Change Manager and Jenny West, Project Manager	capacity. Updating Hearings Management Guidance to reflect practice and technology developments. Influencing activity has focused on clarity about the constraints around scheduling including legal obligations and practical constraints. Influence has also included a focus on quality of service provision and the need to remain focused on the service that is provided to children and families.	
4.31	Influencing Focus – Improving Equality Data Through National Alignment Jenny West (Project Manager) and Sarah Wood (Learning and EDI Manager)	A key area of influence within this work is contributing to a wider system shift in how equality data is understood, shared and used across Scotland’s children’s services. This responds to a recognised national gap: equality data—particularly disability—is currently incomplete, inconsistent, and often not comparable across systems, limiting the ability to identify inequality, plan services, and meet statutory duties.	Through this programme, the focus is not only on improving organisational practice, but on supporting a more consistent, rights-based and collaborative national approach, working with partners across social work, police and health.
4.32	Lady Dorrian’s Review - Governance Group , Paul Harkness	The review was into the management of sexual offences in Scotland but also contained several recommendations relating to the Children’s Hearing System	Soft influencing role focused on raising the profile of our work and the children’s hearings system when that is required. Information may need to be shared internally with the Head of Practice and Policy or with wider staff from this group.
4.33	National Bairns’ Hoose Implementation Group – Alistair Hogg.	SCRA is a key partner in the development of Bairns’ Hoose projects across the country. We are involved in all local projects, and this national group provide oversight and an advisory/supportive role for those projects.	Supporting the development of the projects, and the gathering of data to allow a full evaluation of the Bairns’ Hoose standards. SCRA also manages the Bairns’ Hoose website.
4.34	National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategy Group (CSAE) – Alistair Hogg.	Ensuring the role of the Reporter and the hearing system is considered as part of any strategy or plan.	Ongoing.
4.35	National Oversight Group for Joint Investigative Interviewing – Alistair Hogg	The development of the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) has been hugely significant in improving	This national group will continue to strive for full implementation of the SCIM model, which is a key

		the process of Joint Investigative Interviews of children. SCRA are central to this, both in relation to child protection and also children who have caused harm. We provide evaluations for evidence that has been elicited using the SCIM approach.	component of Bairns' Hoose. With full rollout almost complete, the group is now focussed on quality improvement.
4.36	National Youth Justice Advisory Group , Gordon Bell, Practice Reporter.	Contributing to the group's work in relation to children in conflict with the law.	Ongoing.
4.37	Prevent... Multi agency Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, Paul Harkness	Police Scotland led multi agency group	Soft influencing role focused on raising the profile of our work and the children's hearings system when that is required. Information may need to be shared internally with the Head of Practice and Policy or with wider staff from this group. This group's work may now be taken over by the National Oversight Group mentioned above.
4.38	SG's Restorative Justice Strategic Group , Neill Mitchell, Practice Manager.	Ensuring the position of the reporter and hearings system is properly understood and reflected in the group's work	Ongoing.
4.39	Learning Leads Project Katy Lang (Project Manager)	The project involves working meetings of SCRA locality staff members and representatives of some of SCRA's key partners in the children's hearing system, with a view to developing training materials to support professionals to work with the system. The project commenced in January 2025. Since then they have completed work on 10 training products, 2 of which were new training videos used to Launch the new Learning Hub on www.scra.gov.uk .	A further 7 video products are in production and will be released on completion of the production process. The project – now in Wave 4 of content work – currently involves work on 2 further topics, bringing the content total by end June 2026 to 13 products. In addition the project oversees the live induction webinars for professionals, which has received over 1700 connection since commencing August 2024. The influence of the project is in supporting the interpretation and use of the children's hearing system, with both instant access and live opportunities for learning. The project also supports consistency of messaging and supports on a national basis the appetite for training which

			previously sat exclusively with SCRA localities.
4.40	Review of National Joint Investigative Interview Guidance – Coordination Group – Gordon Bell, Practice Reporter	Contributing to the review of the JII guidance to ensure that it properly reflects the role of the Reporter, children’s hearing and sheriff in our proceedings.	Ongoing until guidance is finalised and published.
4.41	SCRA/SG/SAIDOT joint working group on use of AI within the Children’s Hearings System	Ongoing gathering of research and consultation evidence on the ethics, rights and legalities of using AI within the Children’s Hearings System are directly fed into policy and practice relating to the use of ethical, transparent and inclusive AI within children’s services. SCRA have played an active role in testing of tools designed to promote transparency of AI usage within the public sector, including early adoption of the AI register.	Sharing of public views on acceptable usage of AI within the children’s hearings system should provide policy insights into how AI should be used and regulated within children’s services.
4.42	Scottish Contextual Safeguarding Core Group - Melissa Hunt	Contextual safeguarding is a developing area of academic study which is having a real and practical impact across service delivery. SCRA continue to sit on the core group, which is supported by Child Protection Committees Scotland.	Contextual safeguarding as an approach is developing across Scotland. Professor Carlene Firmin gave the 23rd Kilbrandon Lecture on November 27th 2025 and SCRA have a plan to actively engage managers and staff in developing the channels and methods we use to provide relevant and up to date information about the approach – as well as a research plan to consider the wider approach of contextual safeguarding within the hearings system. There is also a CYCJ podcast from their Creative Conversations series – which is a good introduction to the approach and its links to / differences from the children’s hearings system. The podcast also considers what we can do in Scotland to really deliver improvements through contextual safeguarding.
4.43	SG group on implementation of the provisions on FGM prevention orders in the	Ensuring the position of the reporter and hearings system is properly understood and reflected in the group’s work (although the work of	Ongoing.

	Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Act 2020 , Nicola Glass, practice Reporter	this group has been minimal over the last 12 months).	
4.44	Short Life Working Group revising pre-trial therapy guidance , Gordon Bell, Practice Reporter	Ensuring the position of the reporter and hearings system is properly understood and reflected in the group's work	Ongoing
4.45	Speech, Language and Communication Needs sub group - Melissa Hunt, Policy & Public Affairs Manager	SCRA sits on this sub group of the Children's Rights Implementation Group (CRIG) and the group meets quarterly, prior to the CRIG so it can feed into the CRIG discussions.	SCLN sits across all of the work in SCRA and needs consideration at all stages. It has been a key feature of our 'letters project' where the work of a speech and language specialist has been invaluable. Moving forward, it will continue to be a key focus for us around wider communications, online, other information provision and our more relational work with children and families. Most recently SALT has been involved in a review of our letters to victims of a child.
4.46	Subgroup of Child Protection Committees Scotland in relation to neglect , Alison Deighan, Practice Reporter	Ensuring the position of the reporter and hearings system is properly understood and reflected in the group's work	Ongoing
4.47	UNCRC Peer support network	This is a Scottish Government supported network, established to help public bodies with the requirements of UNCRC incorporation.	Different SCRA staff attend this group, in order to ensure that we don't miss learning from our partners and that we are fully prepared / aware of the requirements we have.
4.48	UNCRC - children's rights audit and SCRA reporting	SCRA produces an annual children's rights audit, asking staff questions to help develop thinking and work going forward.	The 2025 / 2026 rights audit also asked question of partners – the audit was cascaded to them from SCRA managers. A report on the audit is being developed and will inform the next steps in our work on children's rights.
4.49	Victim's Taskforce , Alistair Hogg / Paul Harkness	This group is largely focussed on the adult criminal justice system, but sometimes the hearing system needs to be considered too. Our	This group is largely populated by and designed to improve services within the Criminal Justice System. Nevertheless, since the needs of victims can be broadly similar

		presence ensures that we are not overlooked.	regardless of whether it's the CJS or CHS, there are opportunities for learning for us by attendance. SCRA sometimes pick up on current thinking within and across agencies with whom we work. And we get the opportunity to highlight things that we think we do well.
4.51	Victims Taskforce – Improving Communications Working Group , Paul Harkness	We share our own communications, and engage with partners to learn where we may bring about improvements, and influence positive change.	This group is largely populated by and designed to improve services within the Criminal Justice System. Nevertheless, since the needs of victims can be broadly similar regardless of whether it's the CJS or CHS, there are opportunities for learning for us by attendance. SCRA sometimes pick up on current thinking within and across agencies with whom we work. And we get the opportunity to highlight things that we think we do well.
4.52	Working Group on Scottish Priority Deliverable 1 on children and young people and terrorism (SG group) – Neill Mitchell, Practice Manager	The SPD 1 Working Group is a cross-policy group formed to assist the delivery of Scottish Priority Deliverable 1 – Children and Young People and Terrorism. It is comprised of Scottish Government officials and key partners with an interest in safeguarding Children and Young People (CYP) in Scotland. SPD 1 Objectives: • Better understand the increasing issue of children and young people involved in supporting terrorism, being investigated and convicted for TACT offences. • Identify opportunities for prevention, intervention and diversion.	Continuation of work of the past year: • Ensure the potential role of the Children's Hearings system in responding to minor terrorism related offences is understood by partners • Influence SG input to the UK Government on statutory guidance on Youth Diversion Orders for terrorism offences in the Crime and Policing Act 2026 ensuring they properly reflect the role of the Principal Reporter
4.53	Youth Justice Improvement Board (YJIB) – Neil Hunter and Alistair Hogg Neil Hunter also chairs the Whole Systems Approach sub-group	Significant SCRA involvement on this group, which provide governance, oversight and strategy for Scotland's approach to youth justice.	This group will play a key role in overseeing the implementation of the CCJA, as well as monitoring the progress of the actions from the Youth Justice Strategy.

SCRA BOARD

17 June 2026

Item 12.1 Strategic Risk Register

Report Classification: Open

For approval

Executive Sponsor: Ross Mackenzie, Head of Finance and Resources

Author: Ross Mackenzie, Head of Finance and Resources

Executive Summary

The strategic risk register is a key planning and governance control in SCRA that is regularly reviewed and updated by those charged with responsibilities for service delivery in SCRA.

Recommendation

Board members are invited to note the updates to the Strategic Risk Register and comment on the current risks.

Key Issues to be discussed/considered

The Strategic Risk Register as at 4 June 2026 is summarised at Appendix 1. Since March's Board meeting following feedback from Planning and Performance Committee, risk #240 concerning the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) Bill has been reframed, following the Bill's royal assent.

Controls and actions have been reviewed and updated: the percentage of controls rated green rather than amber has decreased from 78% (47 out of 60) to 77% (46 out of 60) and the percentage of actions rated green rather than amber has increased from 81% (63 out of 78) to 90% (73 out of 81). As before, no controls or actions are rated red. There are no changes to risk scores.

Implications:**Service**

The proposed changes will facilitate planning to mitigate potential risks to service delivery.

Financial

No direct financial implications, with risk #259 addressing the ongoing structural budget deficit. This risk has also been updated since March particularly in respect of the recent Scottish parliament elections.

Workforce

No direct workforce implications, although various risks in the Register relate to workforce.

Infrastructure including Digital

No direct infrastructure/digital implications, although various risks in the Register relate to infrastructure and digital.

Information Governance

N/A

Risk Assessment/Management

Regular review and updating of the Strategic Risk Register is essential to mitigating the risks SCRA faces and demonstrating that those charged with responsibilities in the Risk Management Policy are fulfilling the requirements of their role.

Relevance to Corporate/Strategic Objectives

The Strategic Risk Register supports the Corporate Plan objectives by mitigating risks to programmes and service delivery, and by supporting our staff.

Equality Declaration

Due regard has been given to the Equality Act 2010 and compliance with the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of SCRA's decision making process.

Further to evaluation it is noted: Paper is not relevant to Equality & Diversity

Involvement, Engagement and/or Consultation

EMT members and other owners of controls or actions (including function managers and the Digital Security and Governance Manager) have input into the register.

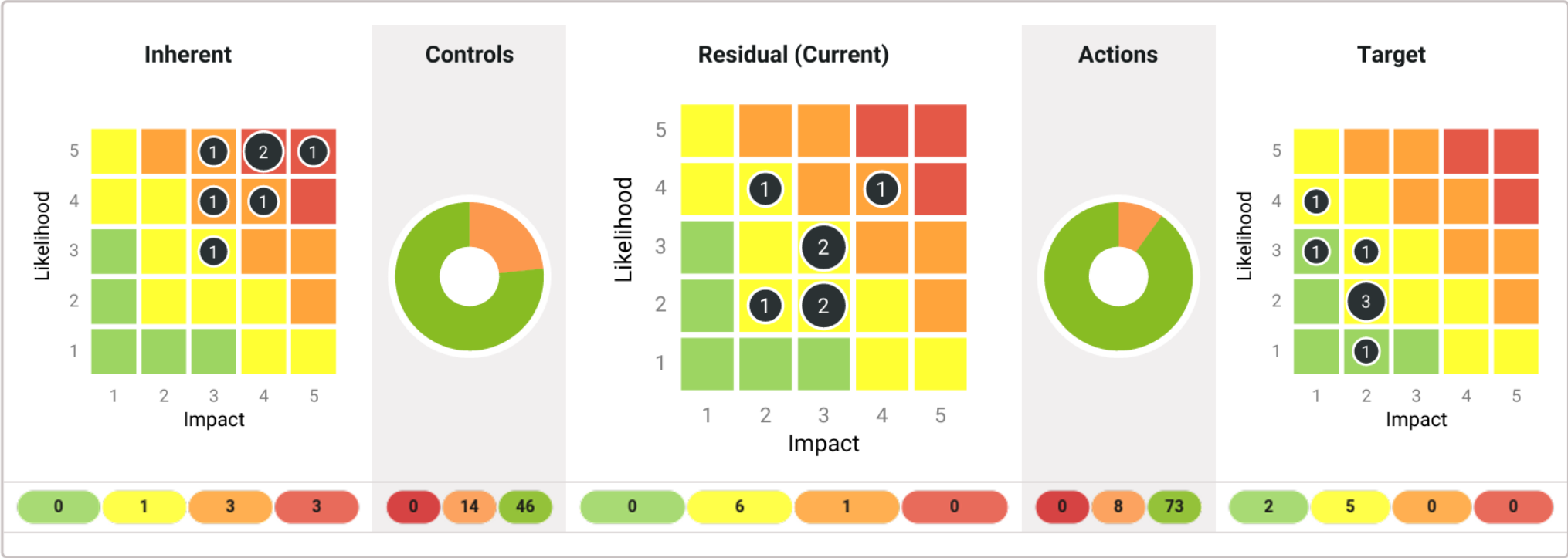
Appendices

Appendix 1 – Strategic Risk Register (summary)

 Risk Summary Report

Risk Register: Strategic Risk Register

Risk Status: New/Emerging, Open, Unassigned



Ref	Risk Category	Title	Risk Register	Risk Appetite	Inherent Risk Likelihood x Impact	Controls on Track	Residual Risk Likelihood x Impact	Movement in score	Actions on Track	Target Risk Likelihood x Impact
1	Strategic	[AAC] IT Security measures are insufficient to prevent a successful cyber-attack on SCRA case information which results in loss of data which cannot be recovered.	Strategic Risk Register	Cautious	5 x 4 20	1 Amber 6 Green	3 x 3 9	↔	1 Amber 12 Green	2 x 2 4
2	Strategic	[AAC] Joint future partnership between SCRA and CHS regards CSAS is not adequately defined and agreed.	Strategic Risk Register	Cautious	4 x 4 16	1 Amber 8 Green	2 x 3 6	↓ 3 x 3 = 9 19th Oct 2023	18 Green	2 x 2 4
153	Strategic	[PPC] Inability to spend CCJA-preparation capital and revenue allocations due to lack of specificity of the necessary adaptations to facilities and systems for referral of 16 and 17 year olds, with the result that sub-optimal solutions reduce the efficiency of staff and the quality of service when the legislation is implemented	Strategic Risk Register	Open	5 x 4 20	9 Green	3 x 3 9	↓ 4 x 3 = 12 18th Oct 2023	13 Green	3 x 2 6
240	Strategic	[PPC] Uncertainty about the implementation of Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) Act impacts our ability to plan and prepare adequately to meet our future needs	Strategic Risk Register	Minimalist	5 x 3 15	7 Amber 5 Green	4 x 2 8	* 10th Dec 2024	3 Amber 8 Green	4 x 1 4
258	Reputation	[PPC] Lack of progress/focus on environmental and sustainability plans/actions within 2024-2027 (Corporate Plan period) results in failure to meet stakeholders' expectations around reporting on and reducing SCRA's carbon footprint	Strategic Risk Register	Open	4 x 3 12	8 Green	2 x 2 4	* 2nd Jun 2025	10 Green	1 x 2 2
259	Financial	[AAC] Scottish Government's published budget for SCRA for 2026-27 does not meet SCRA's needs, resulting in uncertainty over the extent to which in-year funding can support SCRA's delivery on its corporate and business plan objectives	Strategic Risk Register	Open	5 x 5 25	5 Green	4 x 4 16	* 2nd Jun 2025	1 Amber 7 Green	3 x 1 3
281	Operational	[WGC] SCRA is unable to flexibly and quickly deploy resources to where they are required in order to deliver a national service, locally	Strategic Risk Register	Cautious	3 x 3 9	5 Amber 5 Green	2 x 3 6	* 5th Mar 2026	3 Amber 5 Green	2 x 2 4