



Scottish Children's Reporter Administration

ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION



ABOUT OUR REPORT

This report covers the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

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

As part of our continued commitment to the environment, we have not printed our Annual Report for many years now, however, you can still view all our information online, including a full set of our annual audited accounts, our Official Statistics and interactive statistical dashboard at www.scra.gov.uk.



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FOREWORD

by Principal Reporter/Chief Executive Officer, Neil Hunter

SCRA is committed to ensuring that Scotland's Children's Hearings System is as responsive and sensitive to the needs of children and young people as it possibly can be.

Scotland started to celebrate the Year of Young People in January 2018. At SCRA we want to ensure that throughout this year and beyond, we continue to focus on what improvements we can make to the services we provide to some of Scotland's most vulnerable children, young people and families. This Annual Report will give you a flavour of our work in the past 12 months...

Better Hearings work

We kick started programmes of work in every area of Scotland focussing on the 'Next Steps to Better Hearings' programme with all of our local partners and alongside children and young people who are Hearings-experienced. The response to Better Hearings has been truly impressive, with all of SCRA's partners in Area Support Teams and Local Authorities, helping to create energy, enthusiasm, direction, focus and commitment to delivering this evidence-based programme of change and improvement in their areas.

Proud Corporate Parents

We are proud, passionate Corporate Parents and the delivery of Better Hearings over the course of the next few years will be one of the most important ways we can demonstrate how serious we are about improvements in the Hearings System, about children and young people's rights

and about transforming the quality of experience they have within the Hearings System.

Committed and talented staff

SCRA's committed and talented staff have continued to deliver a high quality service within the Hearings System. We have maintained and in many areas improved our performance. Decision making and scheduling of Hearings for the most vulnerable and at risk children and young people in Scotland continues, with the lowest levels of delay we have seen for many years.

Decision making

Our staff work diligently and quickly to ensure children and young people are offered the full protection of the law where this is required – but also take great care and as much time as necessary, to ensure our decision making is right, based on the most thorough of evidence and always in the best interests of, and to secure the best outcome, for each child and young person.

Equalities and Inclusion

SCRA aspires to be a leader in terms of our behaviour and attitudes to equalities, diversity and inclusion. During 2017/18, in an innovative approach to support the mainstreaming of equalities, our Equalities Network supported the appointment and development of Equalities Ambassadors.



Staff from across a range of roles volunteered to become Ambassadors to support and promote equality and inclusion across all aspects of our business. Their work is already starting to make a real difference across the organisation.

Digital programme

Our organisation, alongside our core partner Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS), is in the midst of a three year digital transformation programme. 2017/18 represents the first year of this significant investment in infrastructure, application and core systems that will support the Hearings System over the coming decades.

Working in partnership

CHS and SCRA staff have worked in close partnership to get the programme running in this critical first phase which will help deliver new generation technology in our day to day work. It will also improve communication with children and young people, enable new effective ways of working across our service

and a robust platform for future investment, putting us on the front foot to benefit from future developments in digital technology that will be so important to our sustainable, responsive future needs.

New developments

In 2017/18, SCRA continues to be at the forefront of developments and initiatives in the wider children and young people's services in Scotland. We have contributed positively to the national child protection improvement programme, the Youth Justice Improvement Board, the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership amongst others, and continued to support the development and strengthening of Getting it Right for Every Child involved in the Hearings System.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Hunter', written in a cursive style.

YEAR AT A GLANCE

APRIL

Publication of Corporate Parenting Plan 2017-20

Launch of Corporate Parenting website

New film for parents/ carers with learning difficulties produced

MAY

New mandatory training for all Reporters on Corporate Parenting rolled out

Physical punishment of children consultation launched

SCRA Business Plan 2017/18 published

JUNE

Publication of Criminal Advice and Remittals research report

Ministerial visit to our Glasgow Locality

LGBT Youth Scotland present at our Management Development event

JULY

New Customer Care Guide for Arranging and Attending Hearings published

SCRA supports launch of Justice Vision and Priorities Plan

Staff take part in Permanently Progressing research workshops

AUGUST

Updated suite of fact sheets with information and data produced

Awareness raising sessions for Equalities Ambassadors held

New information guidance document for guide dogs in Hearings produced

SEPTEMBER

Our Perth Hearings centre takes part in Doors Open Day

Publication of new research report 'An exploration of ethnic minority communities'

Updated Sign Language guidance re-launched

OCTOBER

Annual staff survey issued to all staff

First Digital Delivery Programme briefing issued

Updated social media guidance for staff launched

NOVEMBER

Staff take part in Nil By Mouth training session on sectarianism

New leaflet for professional witnesses produced

SCRA submits consultation response to the Draft Police Act

DECEMBER

Five sub groups of our Equalities Network meet for the first time

Annual review and update of our Business Continuity Plan

JANUARY

Publication of our first annual report for young people

SCRA joins the world of Instagram to improve communication with young people

Re-launch of our new look Your Rights flyer and poster

FEBRUARY

Latest edition of Healthy Being – our staff e-zine is published

Filming for a new Pre-Hearing visit film for young people takes place

The Equalities section on our staff intranet is revamped

We showed our support to Care Day and attended the 'Carelidh' in Glasgow.

MARCH

SCRA supports Stand Up For Siblings movement

We marked International Women's Day with some leadership opportunities for staff

SCRA welcomed the news that the age of criminal responsibility was set to rise from eight to 12



SCRA's progress and achievements in 2017/18

Throughout the year, our focus has been on delivering the core outcomes as outlined in our Business Plan 2017/18.

Our three key outcomes were:

A progressive, user focused service

Anticipating the needs, expectations and priorities of all children, young people and their families that come into contact with us.

High quality decisions

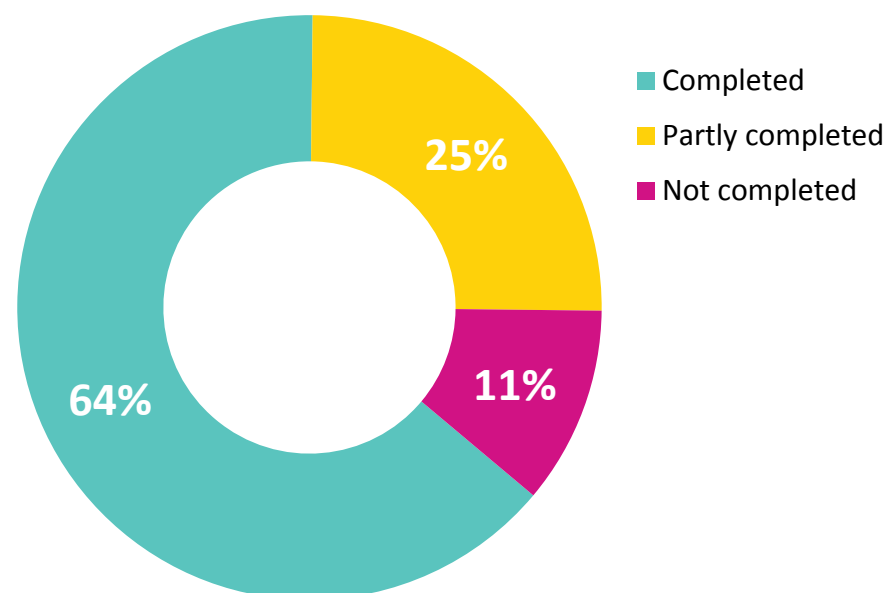
Ensuring that we consistently achieve the stretching professional standards that we set for ourselves.

Effective collaboration

Enhancing alignment of our activity with that of other agencies with whom we work to jointly progress core areas of service delivery.

We successfully completed a high proportion of the actions in our Business Plan during 2017/18.

More detail is available [here](#).



Our performance and targets

Our performance for 2017/18 reflects the continued work undertaken in recent years to improve services to children, young people and families.

Overall, five of the 10 targets within our 2017/18 Business Plan were met with three rated as amber (nearly meeting the target) and two as red (target missed).

Of those met, performance in 'percentage of initial Hearings proceeding to disposal' is particularly important for children, young people, and families as this ensures, where possible, decisions about compulsory measures are made at the earliest possible opportunity. The 79.6% outcome for this measure was 2.3 percentage points (pp) above 2016/17.

Hearing scheduling has continued to see improvements, with a 0.4pp increase in the year to 75.7% leading to the indicator being rated as amber and missing the target by less than 1pp.

The 'percentage of decisions on referrals within 50 working days' indicator decreased by 1.9 percentage points (pp) to 76.2% from 2016/17 and was rated as amber. Despite the decrease, performance continues to ensure that children and young people are receiving a timely service from SCRA.

Three further targets were missed in the year:

Staff absence levels for short term absence were 0.2pp above the 2% target and was rated as amber. Long term absence, at 3.7%, was 1.7pp above the 2% target and was rated as red. SCRA continues to put policies and procedures in place to ensure that staff are supported to return to work, where appropriate, at the earliest possible date.

The capital budget was underspent by 27% (below the 5% variance target) and rated as red. This excludes digital project budgets and spends. This was mainly due to the deferral of work on a Hearing Centre.

SCRA's performance against targets can be seen in detail in Table 7.3 of the [Statistical Analysis 2017/18](#).

Our Practice

2017/18 was a busy year covering the full range of providing Practice support and advice to Localities, developing Practice Direction and materials, creating and delivering Practice training, managing appeals to the higher courts and working with partner agencies at national level.

Practice Direction in relation to Local Authority Duties was published, and Practice Direction in relation to Receipt and Registration of Referrals (including jurisdiction issues) was updated. A significant number of Practice Notes were published, some making existing information more accessible and others addressing new topics.

The resources on submissions were expanded to include submissions in relation to significant contact, case management and judicial control of questioning vulnerable witnesses. A leaflet for skilled/expert witnesses was published to help ensure these witnesses are aware of their role and responsibilities.

A full schedule of Core Practice training was delivered including three deliveries of the three-day Advocacy Skills module. A new two-day module for Reporters with experience of conducting proofs was developed and delivered four times during the year. The module builds Reporter confidence in preparing and presenting proofs and includes use of case analysis.

A further delivery of Domestic Abuse training in partnership with Scottish Women's Aid took place to ensure newer Reporters received the training. To support Reporters with the implementation of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 in January, we developed briefing and training materials on the Act which were used by Localities in local training for Reporters.

Mandatory training for all Reporters in relation to Corporate Parenting and the Role of the Reporter at the Hearing was developed in partnership with the Quality and Performance Team. The training enabled delivery of key messages about Corporate Parenting and its impact on SCRA while reinforcing good practice by Reporters in their role at a Hearing. The training was delivered during October and November, with 21 full-day events across seven different locations.

There was further significant development of two new modules - joint investigative interviews/vulnerable witnesses and enhanced advocacy skills - both for Reporters with experience of conducting proofs. They will be delivered in 2018.

In addition, national training was regularly delivered to various partner agencies including police, procurators fiscal and joint investigative interviewers.

Eighteen appeals to the higher courts were concluded during the year and one judicial review, although judgements are still awaited in some of these. Particular issues under consideration included the interpretation of 'significant involvement' and the circumstances in which a Children's Hearing has jurisdiction. Law Reports were published to support Reporter awareness and knowledge of developments in the case law.

During 2017/18 we continued to deliver our quality assurance case sampling programme, reporting on specific areas of practice to our Audit and Risk Committee.

Our People

Supporting our workforce formed a significant part of our work in 2017/18. Actions included assessing the size and shape of the workforce in response to the 2017/18 financial settlement and engaging with staff on issues affecting them which informed, in part, the development of our new workforce plan.

During the year, we refined SCRA's succession planning approach and provided management training to future managers as part of our succession plan.

We also completed a review of the IT capacity and capability within the organisation to ensure SCRA can meet the challenging objectives of the IT Operational and Digital Strategy plans. As part of a technology refresh programme we reviewed remote and flexible working and the impacts on the workforce to ensure staff are working securely, effectively and efficiently.

In addition, our Human Resources Business Partners continued to support Locality Management Teams in managing their local workforce and implemented a process of local workforce planning. This led to us filling 53 vacancies in 2017/18.

Our management development programme to help grow our own talent, is an ongoing focus. In 2017/18, we continued to develop our management standards and core competencies linking these to managers' objectives within the appraisal process and our management development programme.

We also had a renewed focus on training for all staff and a number of courses ran over the year, including dementia awareness training for staff to support an ageing workforce, managing stress at work training delivered by the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH), mindfulness training and coaching.

The training was part of our continuing focus on health and wellbeing. In 2017/18, we reviewed the Maximising Attendance Strategy in partnership with UNISON and we implemented enhancements to our e-HR system, Itrent, including performance management, learning and development and sickness absence.

In addition, we maintained our Bronze Healthy Working Lives Award, gained our Level 2 Disability Confident Award, re-opened the Cycle to Work Scheme to encourage staff to purchase good quality cycles, offered the flu vaccination to all staff and introduced a Volunteering Policy for staff.

Equalities and Inclusion

During 2017/18, our Equalities Network has been particularly active delivering the equalities outcomes and embedding inclusive practice within and across our work.

The Network broadened the scope and detail of our approach and sought to reflect our wider responsibilities in terms of children's rights and wellbeing, Corporate Parenting and the Better Hearings agenda. Linking our efforts in this way will help to integrate equalities and inclusion in and across our practice, policies and procedures, raise their profile within the organisation and promote greater diversity in our workforce.

SCRA aspires to be a leader in terms of our behaviour and attitudes to equalities, diversity and inclusion. During 2017/18, in an innovative approach to support the mainstreaming of equalities, the Equalities Network supported the appointment and development of Equalities Ambassadors. Ambassadors are staff from across a range of roles who volunteered to support and promote equality and inclusion across all aspects of our business.

Ambassadors received training on the Equality Act 2010 and awareness raising in relation to the protected characteristic(s) they champion. Streamed into five sub groups of the Network, Ambassadors have planned and will deliver a programme of activity across all nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.

A significant strand of our work throughout 2017/18 has been awareness raising, including:

- An awareness raising session on equalities and inclusion was delivered to SCRA's Board and all managers.
- A series of leadership events have taken place where the risks of unconscious bias were highlighted, along with group sessions designed to challenge the status quo and encourage flexible mindsets.
- Our Equalities Ambassadors received training in the Equality Act 2010 and the protected characteristics that they champion.

- 18 staff attended Hate Crime awareness training delivered by charity Nil by Mouth.
- Following consultation with People 1st Scotland, we developed a number of Easy Read letters (these were being piloted in 2018/19).
- We piloted a reasonable adjustment poster and supporting guidance for staff in our South East Locality
- We actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion through our various communication channels such as our staff intranet and our team brief.

In May 2017, three women attended the Women into Leadership Annual Conference in Edinburgh. Case studies of women in leadership roles within SCRA have also been made available to all staff and opportunities for formalising mentoring are being explored.

In March 2018, we published our Gender, Race and Disability Pay Gap report, our Women into leadership Action Plan and SCRA's Employee Statistics Report.

Our Equalities Network's focus in 2017/18 has continued to be on operational and frontline service delivery. Each meeting of the Network has taken a protected characteristic or related issue as a theme and examined the impacts on, and issues for, children, young people and their families, staff within SCRA and our partner agencies. This has been assisted by seeking out inputs from external organisations and from locality staff, as the Network has met in different locality offices around Scotland.

Some highlights include:

- A meeting in Stirling with a presentation from Barnardo's on Child Sexual Exploitation. This led to further joint working with Barnardo's and SCRA's Practice Team and the delivery of an awareness raising session with our senior practitioners.
- A meeting in Glasgow with a presentation from Glasgow South Social Work Department specialising in supporting the Roma community.
- A meeting in Edinburgh with a presentation from a deaf Board Member shadowing our Chair of the Equalities Network.

Property

SCRA is responsible for providing suitable and sufficient facilities to accommodate Children's Hearings. Property is central to the delivery of our services and is one of the organisation's key areas of expenditure.

As in previous years, economic and budgetary pressures remain and require us to constantly review how effectively and efficiently we manage our property assets. We are constantly looking at ways to reduce our costs wherever possible (without detriment to service or experience) and prioritise delivery of services across our estate. We continue to review SCRA's estate and surplus property is made available either for sale or lease.

In recent years SCRA's capital expenditure programme has concentrated on improving and maintain existing facilities. Major external upgrading projects were carried out to our buildings in Stranraer and Fraserburgh to improve the integrity of the building fabric and prevent deterioration of these buildings.

In Glasgow, some refurbishment work was undertaken to staff facilities as part of a rolling programme to provide an improved environment throughout the building. Internal alterations were completed within our Glenrothes office to provide additional working space for Locality staff.

Work was also carried out in our Edinburgh office to provide a larger third hearing room, making it accessible and improving the layout to allow the room to be flexibly used for large meetings and as a training facility. The roll out of the new style Hearing and waiting rooms in our facilities has continued. This year, for the first time, an interior designer was employed to further improve the design of the new facilities. In consultation with local children and young people, 3 option ranges were prepared to allow Locality teams to select an entire palette of colour and furniture for their building. New style Hearing rooms have been provided in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dumbarton, Greenock and Glenrothes. The new and refurbished properties provided during 2017/18 create more welcoming Hearing centres that have child-friendly furniture and layouts.

We continue to seek opportunities to reduce our running costs by leasing out surplus space. Whilst this is increasingly difficult, we completed the letting of vacant space in Lerwick and renewed the lease of space in Lochgilphead for a further five years. Terms have also been agreed to lease vacant space within our Dalkeith premises.

Working in Partnership

SCRA is a core member of the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) which is a Scottish Government led, multi-agency group set up to work together to develop and deliver change for improvement to the Children's Hearings System. The work of the CHIP formed a key element of our partnership commitments in 2017/18.

SCRA has continued to work with Police Scotland and has been actively involved in delivering training to the Police Risk and Concern Hubs established across the country. SCRA continues to be involved in dialogue with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service to improve both our service delivery and the experience of our service delivery for children, young people and families.

Working with Police Scotland, we also developed and published a protocol on the disposal of productions.

During 2017/18, SCRA continued to co-chair the Hearings Management Group with Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) and is an active member of the Tri-Partite group with CHS and Social Work Scotland. SCRA has been developing links with Community Justice Scotland as well.

SCRA fully embraces the current climate of legislative change and is developing informed and considered responses to The Protection of Vulnerable Groups and the Disclosure of Criminal Information consultation and the Family Law Bill Consultation. SCRA's response to both these consultation exercises is based, in part, on multi-agency roundtable discussions.

SCRA was actively involved in the development of the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Bill. This included a Practice Reporter working part-time in the Scottish Government's Bill Team for significant periods during the development of the Bill. SCRA welcomed the news that Scotland will move to have an age of Criminal Responsibility which is in line with the rest of mainland Europe and United Nations standards.

The Child Protection Review recommendations continue to be developed through an active working group.

SCRA has been actively involved in the development of a National Practice Model for Advocacy in Scotland, by being a member of the Expert Reference group with oversight of the joint work of Who Cares? Scotland and

The Lines Between (a research consultancy); who have submitted proposals for a National Practice Model for Advocacy in Children's Hearings and a national Service Delivery Model.

In partnership with Victim Support Scotland and their Witness Support Service they now offer support to vulnerable witnesses within Children's Hearings related court proceedings.

SCRA played a key role in the development and launch of a new partnership 'Stand Up For Siblings' which is a collaboration between a number of child welfare, children's rights and legal organisations and academics within Scotland.

The impetus for Stand Up For Siblings was a piece of research which was previously published by Dr Gillian Henderson from SCRA and Dr Christine Jones from the University of Strathclyde. A research briefing on 'Supporting Sibling Relationships of Children in Permanent Foster and Adoptive Families' is available to view [here](#).

SCRA helped organise the launch event on 9 March and SCRA's Press and Communications Team developed a website which was unveiled at the event at the Scottish Universities Insight Institute. The First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has given her support to Stand Up For Siblings and a pre-recorded message was shown to delegates at the launch event.

Participation and Engagement

It has been a busy and productive time for SCRA's commitments to Participation and Engagement both within SCRA and the Children's Hearings System. During 2017/2018, SCRA's commitment to improving and supporting the participation of children and young people attending Children's Hearings has continued.

SCRA has continued to focus on broadening our communications and support to include information and assistance being made available to those involved in the Children's Hearings System, including parents, carers, professionals and relevant organisations. The Participation Officer has delivered a national training programme on the Children's Hearings System and SCRA's supporting communications products to multiple partners to promote their understanding of, and subsequent support to children, young people and families attending Children's Hearings during the entirety of 2017/2018.

A new 'Pre-Hearing Visits' film was developed in 2017 and will be launched in 2018, complementing the ongoing work of the Pre-Hearing Visits Champions and the successful Pre-Hearing Visits packs. SCRA also trialled numerous initiatives to promote the completion of the 'All About Me' forms for children and young people, including a speech bubble sticker pilot which was launched in April 2017.

In terms of property development, following on from the success of the past three years, SCRA again received funding from the Scottish Government in April 2017 to make large-scale national improvements. During 2017/2018 SCRA's Participation Officer, Property Officer, Modern Apprentices and Reporters worked in partnership with an interior design company to lead on the development of a Hearings-suite portfolio and the implementation of six new child and young person-friendly Hearing rooms across Scotland.

In August 2017, funding was acquired for the 'Our Hearings, Our Voice' Board from the Scottish Government after two years of multi-agency commitment. The Development Worker for 'Our Hearings, Our Voice' Board was appointed in January 2018. Since the appointment and during January to March 2018, the Development

Worker has been working in partnership with relevant agencies and SCRA's current and former Modern Apprentices in preparation to recruit the young board members.

2017/2018 formed the second part of the Modern Apprentices' term, and in November 2017 SCRA's Stirling Modern Apprentice completed her qualification, in February 2018 SCRA's Inverness Modern Apprentice completed her qualification and in March 2018 SCRA's second Stirling Modern Apprentice completed her qualification. Two of the three remain employed in the organisation and one has moved on to an external position with a partner organisation.

SCRA's Corporate Parenting commitments and plan was developed in spring 2017, alongside a website for young people. Since that time, and during 2017/2018, SCRA has committed to the plan and year two achievements include a new Communications Commitment, created in partnership with Hearings-experienced young people, and was launched in September 2017. To read the Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2017/18, click [here](#).

Our Research

SCRA completed three research projects in 2017/18. The first was: 'Decision making on continuation of Compulsory Supervision Orders past young people's 16th birthdays'. This research was carried out to support the work of the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) in considering how more 16 and 17 year-olds could be provided with protection through the Children's Hearings System. The research report was published in August 2017.

The increasing ethnic diversity among Scotland's children raises the question of how effectively SCRA and its partner organisations can identify risks and effectively intervene to protect children of all ethnic backgrounds.

SCRA's Equalities Network commissioned the research: 'An exploration of ethnic minority communities' understanding and awareness of child protection and the Children's Hearings System in Scotland'; to gain understanding of the barriers that families from ethnic minority communities face in engaging with services and how these can be overcome. The research report was published by SCRA in September 2017, and the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) has begun work with third sector organisations who work with ethnic minority communities to take forward its findings.

A collaboration between SCRA, Strathclyde University and Robert Gordon University resulted in one of the first studies on the effect of birth order on statutory intervention and permanence for looked after siblings: 'Sibling birth order, use of statutory measures and patterns of placement for children in public care: Implications for international child protection systems and research'. The findings were published in October 2017 in the Children and Youth Services Review 82, pp321-328.

SCRA's research: 'Complexity in the lives of looked after children and their families in Scotland: 2003 to 2016'; sought to answer the question - has child protection in Scotland become more complex over time, and if so, how? The research examined changes in complexity in society, the Hearings System and associated legislation and practice, and in the lives of looked after children aged under three years and their families. It concluded that child protection has become more complex and that the main contributory factors are the extent of

problems faced by parents and changes in legislation and practice. The [research report](#) was published in March 2018.

The main work of SCRA's research team in 2017/18 was that commissioned by the Scottish Government: 'Home Compulsory Supervision Orders (children and young people looked after at home with one or both parents) - effectiveness of decision making and outcomes'. The research is due to report later in 2018.

Information Governance

The main focus of activity for Information Governance in 2017/18 was preparing SCRA for the implementation of new data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.

Various activities were completed across the organisation, prior to implementation which took place in 2018/19, in order to improve our practice, raise awareness and demonstrate compliance.

These activities included:

The completion of a self-assessment/gap analysis of Information Governance practice across SCRA in order to identify strengths and areas for improvement. This formed the basis of an action plan (supported by a Communications Strategy) for SCRA to take forward and prepare for compliance with new data protection laws.

An Information Governance Framework was produced to identify all of the Information Governance related policies and procedures across SCRA, in relation to five broad themes of best practice – privacy, records management, information security, access to information and information sharing.

The joint Information Governance Group of Children's Hearings Scotland and SCRA produced a joint action plan to streamline their GDPR activities and enable a common approach to risks and challenges.

The Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) approved the development of a Children's Hearings System Code of Conduct for the collection, management and sharing of personal data relating to the system. This is necessary in order to demonstrate compliance with new data protection legislation and help build public trust in the way in which the system manages the personal data of children, young people and families.

SCRA's internal auditors completed a GDPR readiness review in early 2018 to assess SCRA's preparations and compliance with GDPR.

A Record of Processing Activities was developed to identify what information is held by the organisation, where it has come from, who it is shared with, who has access, how long it is held for etc. The Record is available on the SCRA website.

In addition, face to face GDPR awareness training was delivered to operational and head office staff.

Child-friendly privacy notices were developed alongside The Good Shepherd and Spark of Genius. New breach reporting procedures were developed in order to support the mandatory breach reporting requirements of GDPR.

New Data Processing Contracts were agreed with our third party data processors. New Information Sharing Agreements with key partners (including Children's Hearings Scotland, Crown Office and Procurators Fiscal Service, Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service and Children 1st) were developed to identify the roles and responsibilities for sharing information across the Children's Hearings System and the separate responsibilities of each organisation as a data controller. This work will continue throughout 2018 alongside Local Authorities and other partner agencies, to support the development of a new Code of Conduct for information sharing across the Children's Hearings System.

A new Data Protection Policy was developed to set out the responsibilities of SCRA (and all staff) as a data controller, as well as identifying the activities SCRA will undertake in order to evidence compliance with GDPR.

New Data Subjects Rights guidance and procedures on the management of data subjects rights were developed. Vital Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) were undertaken by the Core Systems and Application Solutions (CSAS) Digital Delivery Programme and the Our Hearings, Our Voice (children and young people's Board).

Each of SCRA's privacy notices were reviewed and updated – the new notices can be found on SCRA's website.

Technology

SCRA's IT department was re-organised in 2017, this was based on a new operating model that was developed to allow the team to meet the many strands of IT demand within the organisation, build internal IT resilience, and to support the digital programme and on-going aspirations of the organisation.

A significant piece of work for SCRA in 2017/18 which will continue over the next two to three years has been the digital programme. This three year transformational programme sees SCRA and Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) working in partnership to deliver upgraded, robust and joined up systems for staff and volunteers, to look at digital improvements and prospects across the sector and to create digital opportunities for children and young people to interact with the service to promote better participation and inclusion.

In 2017/18 following an intensive period of procurement activity, the main contract for the Digital Delivery Programme was awarded to Leidos Innovations UK Ltd. The contract is a unique collaborative approach using a mixture of Agile and Prince2 methodology.

Staff have been actively involved in developing the requirements of the future generation systems throughout the whole process. A Digital Consultation Community and Digital Bank has been formed with operational staff and the volunteer community to support the programme.

OUR STATISTICS



'lack of parental care'

was the most common ground of referral

The **majority of referrals** were from the police

75%

13,240

children and young people referred

619

children and young people had Child Protection Orders granted

312

were for children under 2 years

Compulsory Supervision Orders

were in place at 31st March 2018

9,493

27%

of children and young people referred had a Reporter decision to arrange a Children's Hearing in the year



32,553

Children's Hearings were held

76%

of decisions on referrals were made within 50 working days

You can view our Official Statistics 2017/18 - including our interactive dashboard - on our website www.scra.gov.uk

Chair

Carole Wilkinson (re-appointed 2014)

Board Members

Bernadette Docherty (re-appointed 2014)

Catherine Robertson (re-appointed 2017)

Anela Anwar (appointed 2014)

Sam Anderson (appointed 2016)

Martin Toye (appointed 2016)

Suzanne Vestri (appointed 2016)

Douglas Yates (retired 2017)

James Edgar (appointed 2017)

SCRA operates under the direction of an eight person Board. As a Non-Departmental Public Body, SCRA's Board - although acting independently - is ultimately accountable to Scottish Ministers, and Board Members are appointed by Ministers.

The Board plays a significant role in setting the strategic direction of SCRA, and in challenging the organisation to ensure we deliver our plans.

More information about our Board, including a full Register of Board Members' Interests, can be found on our website at www.scra.gov.uk

by SCRA Chair, Michelle Miller

2018/19 promises to be another exciting, if challenging year, for SCRA and the wider Children's Hearings System. I took over my responsibilities of Chair of the Board in May 2018, after eight very successful years from my predecessor Carole Wilkinson, whose contribution has ensured SCRA is in a much more stable, confident and forward-looking place. I and my fellow Board Members thank Carole very much for that.

In 2018, SCRA is supporting the Year of Young People in Scotland. We are planning several internal events and will also support the programme across the country. Recognising the value, skills, energy and potential of young people in Scotland has been core to the ethos of the Children's Hearings System over the last 50 years, and this Year of Young People 2018 gives us further opportunities to refresh and build on this work.

Giving children and young people a clearer, stronger voice in how the Hearings System develops in response to their needs is one of my key priorities. In 2018/19, we, along with other partners, will launch 'Our Hearings, Our Voice' – a board of young people with experience of the Hearings System who will communicate directly with agencies and work with us to improve how we deliver services for them; how we become more child and young person-centred; and how we give meaningful effect to our national 'Better Hearings' programme across Scotland.

We will continue to engage positively with major national programmes such as the Independent Care Review and others. We will also continue our practical and public support for raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility and for the legislation to stop the physical punishment of children in Scotland.

SCRA's skilled and committed staff have always been our most important resource. They work hard every day to make the best possible decisions for children and young people who need care and protection. Their work is complex and time consuming – encompassing not only Children's Hearings, but also court proceedings, leading evidence and defending (where appropriate) challenges to Hearing decisions.

The SCRA Board and senior management will continue to support our staff group by engaging with the Scottish Government to secure the long-term resources we need to maximise both the efficiency and quality of this critical work.

The rights of children and young people are central to the work of SCRA. Balancing these rights against those of other people who have an interest in their welfare is one of the most difficult things our staff must do. Family life, privacy and protection are the key issues that are raised regularly in the Hearings System.

Privacy is closely related to security, and in 2018/19, we will be one of many public agencies coming to terms with new data protection regulations. We have been planning extensively in anticipation of the new challenges of this important legislation, which has helped us re-state our commitment to the security of children and young people's information.

Stepping into the role of SCRA Chair in 2018/19 is an exciting time for me and I look forward to working with all partners, staff and children and young people in sustaining our positive forward momentum.



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CHILDREN'S REPORTER

ADMINISTRATION