

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mainstreaming Report 2020/2021



Foreword

If SCRA's annual 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mainstreaming Report 2020/21' signals anything it is the work of our organisation regarding culture change, organisational improvement, awareness and visibility of equality, inclusion and diversity issues. We are embarking on multiple programmes of work to make our organisation a place where acceptance and promotion of inclusion, fairness, respect and social justice are the norms in our day-to-day work and organisational life – as well as positive, embracing compliance with our legal duties as an employer and statutory service provider.

Our mission and duty are to protect and support Scotland's children, making high quality decisions, upholding their rights and working collaboratively as compassionate and inclusive Corporate Parents to enable the most positive and personalised experience of each Children's Hearing. At the end of 2019, the publication of 'The Promise', following on the Independent Care Review, challenged us further to address the inequality, stigma and discrimination faced by children in the care system in Scotland, to work with others to improve life outcomes for these children and uphold their rights. There is much to do to embed the commitments of 'The Promise' into what we do and this year's programme focuses on supporting a more trauma-informed workforce, recognising the contribution of our work in helping children overcome adversity and negate the lifelong consequences of these experiences. There is a renewed focus on children's and human rights in our role within the Hearings 'System' and a commitment to ensuring personalised approaches for every child in providing a service and discharging our legal duties. Our role as Corporate Parents is at the heart of our approach in promoting inclusivity, transparency and participation, and we believe that this year's Mainstreaming Report not only highlights the significant amount of work that has happened over the past year, but also richly reflects our commitment to improve the quality of our service.

SCRA's ambition is to become a diverse and socially inclusive employer of choice. We benefit greatly from the creativity and talents of all our staff. Our work this year focuses on our commitment to a Fairer Scotland where we work in partnership with our workforce and their representatives, and we contribute to reducing social and economic inequality through our reward structures and service procurement arrangements. We will focus this year on the indisputable digital divide, which has become evident in Scotland, and on ways we can improve how our workforce and children and families connect with us, by providing thoughtful and pro-active support.

We have made significant progress over the course of the past three years towards fulfilling our Equality Outcomes that were established in 2017. We recognise that there is much more still to do. The impact of the global coronavirus pandemic has placed huge strains on our workforce and on the lives of children with whom we work. Our focus on well-being, safety and protection is more important now than it has ever been. Our programmes for our people focus on reducing the stigma surrounding mental ill-health and offering ever-increasing and resonant support for them in the course of their daily work as well as for personal issues which may impact their mental health. We seek to nurture a culture of inclusion where we can all be ourselves, ask for help and support, and an environment where it is safe – and encouraged – to challenge constructively.

We commit to do more to ensure we better represent the communities we serve, through more targeted and bespoke approaches to recruitment and selection, with a specific focus on increasing the number of applicants who are disabled and/or from a minority ethnic background. We take our contribution to delivering a fairer, more inclusive, respectful and

diverse Scotland seriously through both our words and actions. We sincerely hope that this year's 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mainstreaming Report 2020/21', our Equality Outcomes 2021-22 and our forthcoming holistic 'Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy' reflect our commitment, our passion and our determination.

Best wishes,

Neil Hunter
Principal Reporter/CEO

Michelle Miller
Chair SCRA Board/Equalities Network

Contents

1	Introduction	5
2	About SCRA	6
3	Why Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Matters	7
3.1	Our Aspirations	
3.2	Our Commitments	
4	Mainstreaming Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	8
4.1	Specific Duties: Mainstreaming Equality	
4.2	Our reporting history under the Specific Duties	
4.3	Progress to achieve our Equality Outcomes 2020-2023	
4.4	Key achievements from 1 April 2020	
5	Leadership, Governance and Business Planning	11
5.1	SCRA Equalities Network	
5.2	SCRA Inclusion Ambassadors	
5.3	Corporate Parenting	
5.4	Policies and Procedures	
5.5	Integrated Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments	
5.6	Fairer Scotland Duty	
5.7	Workforce Well-Being	
5.8	The Fair Work Agreement	
5.9	Employee Engagement and Employee Networks	
5.10	Employee Experience Survey	
5.11	Carers	
5.12	Disability Confident Employer	
5.13	Inclusive and Accessible Property	
5.14	Equalities Monitoring Campaign	
5.15	Inclusive Recruitment	
5.16	Learning and Development	
5.17	Women into Leadership Network	
5.18	Monitoring Legislation and Good Practice	
5.19	Professional Memberships	
5.20	Membership of Professional Networks	
6	Next steps – Streamlining our Approach: SCRA’s Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2021 and Equality Outcomes 2021-2022	29
7	SCRA’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Outcomes 2020-2021	30
8	SCRA’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Outcomes 2021-2022	32

1. Introduction

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

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

The protected characteristics are:

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

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

This report:

- Builds on our Mainstreaming Reports of 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 to provide an overview of key achievements and mainstreaming progress made within SCRA since their publication.
- Provides detail of our progress in relation to our Equality Outcomes 2020/2021 and our work with our staff, partners and the children, young people and their families whom we serve.

2. About SCRA

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

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

Our core role includes:

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

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

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

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

3. Why Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Matters

Creating an equal, diverse and inclusive SCRA will help us better serve children, young people and their families in Scotland, uncover new ways of working and keep our people engaged and motivated to do their best for the communities we serve.

What does being inclusive mean for everyone in SCRA?

- An environment where we can all be ourselves.
- Working with talented people from a wide range of backgrounds.
- An environment where we can all perform to the best of our abilities.
- Working in a supportive and flexible environment led by inclusive and effective leaders.
- A culture where we can raise ideas and challenge one another in a respectful way to arrive at the best decisions.
- A place where we understand and respect each other's differences.

Being inclusive not only makes SCRA a great place to work, it ensures that we are delivering the best possible service to children and their families – that is accessible to all, meets their individual needs and upholds their rights.

3.1 Our Aspirations

SCRA aspires to be an industry leader in our behaviours and attitudes to equality, diversity and inclusion.

3.2 Our Commitment

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

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

4. Mainstreaming Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Mainstreaming is a specific requirement for public bodies in relation to implementing the Equality Duty. In simple terms, it means integrating equality into the day to day working of the organisation, considering equality as part of everything we do.

Mainstreaming the Equality Duty has a number of benefits including:

- Equality becomes part of the structures, behaviours and culture of the organisation
- SCRA knows, and can demonstrate, how in carrying out its functions it is promoting equality
- Mainstreaming equality contributes to continuous improvement and improved performance

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

4.1 Specific Duties: Mainstreaming Equality

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

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

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

SCRA has produced an Equality Mainstreaming Report annually since 2019 and will continue to report annually, demonstrating our commitment to mainstreaming and embedding our equality, diversity and inclusion responsibilities.

4.2 Our reporting history under the Specific Duties

SCRA published our first Mainstreaming Report in April 2013, which included our first Equality Outcomes. Subsequent reports were published in 2015 and 2017. SCRA published a second set of Equality Outcomes to achieve by April 2021 and reported on

our work to progress achievement of Equality Outcomes and mainstreaming equalities. Full information about the development of our Equality Outcomes 2017-2021 is in our April 2017 Equality Outcomes, Progress and Mainstreaming Report.

A revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Outcomes 2018-2021 was published in May 2018 to reflect the broader scope of our work, however, the Equality Outcomes remained unchanged. We reported on our work to progress achievement of the Equality Outcomes in our April 2019 Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report. Our Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report published in March 2020 provides a final update on our Equality Outcomes 2017-2021.

In March 2020, to better align and embed our equality, diversity and inclusion work with our other strategic corporate objectives and strategies, SCRA published a revised Equalities and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2023. This included our Equality Outcomes 2020-2021.

This report provides an update on our achievements in relation to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2023 and our Equality Outcomes 2020-2023. It highlights how we continue to embed equality, diversity and inclusion into and across our daily working practices and activities and provides an update on how we gather and use our workforce equality data.

4.3 Progress to achieve our Equality Outcomes 2020-2023

The Equality Outcomes we set in March 2020 were evidence-based and developed in consultation with our Equalities Network (including our Network of Inclusion Ambassadors), Executive Management Team, Board, UNISON, our partners, staff and a wider public consultation exercise.

They were finalised and approved by our Equalities Network, Executive Management Team and Board. Our Equalities Outcomes 2020-2021 were ambitious and applied to all relevant protected characteristics, including the 'tenth' protected characteristic of care experience adopted by SCRA in 2017.

Our Equality Outcomes 2020-2023 are:

1. Children, young people and their families are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. They understand and are able to access our services in ways that suit their individual needs.
 - i. Our staff will continue to treat all children, young people and their families with dignity and respect.
 - ii. Our services will be procured, designed, shaped and delivered to meet the needs of children, young people and their families.
2. We will build an inclusive culture which values and develops our people, providing them with the tools and support they need to be skilled, confident, valued respected and cared for to maximise their potential.
 - i. Our leaders will foster a culture where our people feel included, valued, respected and cared for.

- ii. Our staff will feel supported, respected and cared for.
- 3. We will actively tackle under-representation and create a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.
 - i. We will make our workforce more diverse through our recruitment and selection processes.

We created an action plan of 14 key milestones to be achieved by the end of March 2021 – our progress is presented in this report. More detailed information of our Equalities Outcomes 2020-2021 is provided in Appendix 1.

We recognise that despite aligning our equality, diversity and inclusion work with our other strategic corporate strategies and objectives, a key challenge for the future is the ongoing embedding of activity so that it continues to have a positive impact on our people and on the children, young people and their families whom we serve. We have, therefore, adopted a new approach to our equality, diversity and inclusion work (outlined in Section 6 of this report) and we have also revised our Locality planning process to ensure that our national equality, diversity and inclusion objectives are embedded locally and that progress continues to be reported and tracked by managers across SCRA.

4.4 Key achievements from 1 April 2020

In the reporting period 2020-2021, SCRA has been impacted significantly by the international COVID-19 pandemic and consequent national ‘lockdowns’. This has influenced our ability to carry out some of our intended Equality Outcomes. Nevertheless, we have achieved a number of the Outcomes we set for 2020-2021 to promote and embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all that we do. Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly hindered the achievement of some of our Equality Outcomes in 2020-2021, it also provided an opportunity to positively influence and progress the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda within SCRA and wider Children’s Hearings delivery.

5. Leadership, Governance and Business Planning

This chapter will outline the progress SCRA has made on achieving its Equality Outcomes 2020-2021 and presents all activity pertaining to equality, diversity and inclusion since 1 April 2020.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic our organisational focus was in continuing to deliver a service to the most vulnerable children, whilst ensuring their rights and participation was a key focus. The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 impacted significantly on Children’s Hearings proceedings, our working practices and our workforce. This necessitated that our attention focus on the immediate and significant equality and human rights impacts of our organisational response to the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 rather than on the delivery of our Equalities Outcomes 2020-2021 in its entirety.

5.1 SCRA Equalities Network

SCRA Equalities Network (a subgroup of our Executive Management Team) is a strategic network of staff from a range of grades (including our Principal Reporter/CEO) and is chaired by the Board Chair. The Equalities Network is administered and coordinated by SCRA’s Inclusion and Diversity Manager.

During the reporting period the Equalities Network met twice (in August 2020 and February 2021) to monitor, record progress and discuss work to mainstream equality across the organisation. This was significantly less than the seven meetings in 2019-2020 due to the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on our operations, staff availability and organisational priorities.

5.2 SCRA Inclusion Ambassadors

SCRA benefits from a group of Inclusion Ambassadors – dedicated front line staff from across Scotland who volunteer to support their colleagues and promote equality, diversity and inclusion across our day-to-day activities.

The Inclusion Ambassadors all sit on one of six Subgroups of the Equalities Network, with each representing, developing and delivering work relating to the Subgroups’ specific protected characteristics:

- Age, family and caring
- Disability
- Gender/sex and gender re-assignment
- Religion/belief and race/ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Care experience

Each Subgroup is chaired by a member of the national Equalities Network.

5.3 Corporate Parenting

We continue to embed equality, diversity and inclusion as a theme across our Corporate Parenting duties and our corporate planning process. Our 2020 Equalities Mainstreaming Report outlined our corporate objective of delivering the public sector Equality Duty across all areas of our business areas to mainstream our equality outcomes consistently across Scotland. Our future approach goes further by embedding our equality, diversity and inclusion work with children and parents' rights and our Corporate Parenting responsibilities through a new Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy. This new streamlined inclusive approach demonstrates our commitment to ensuring equality becomes a fundamental part of everything we do and is considered within the wider 'rights' agenda (the UNCRC and ECHR) both of which are essential components of being a good Corporate Parent.

SCRA rolled out a new computer system – Core Systems and Applications Solution (CSAS) – at the end of 2020. CSAS has fields to collect the protected characteristic information for children referred to SCRA to ensure that we provide a sensitive needs-based service to all. These include: age; sex; gender identity; disability; race/ethnicity; and religion/faith. The recording options are those set by the Census with the view that as recording across the protected characteristics improves, SCRA will have robust data on the children referred which will be comparable to the Census data from the wider population. This is still in its infancy and guidance for staff will be provided in 2021-2022 on what information to record, our responsibilities to ensure the information recorded is correct and the importance of recording this information in terms of service delivery, service improvement and data improvement.

SCRA recognises equality for staff, children who have experience of the care system as a 'tenth' protected characteristic. SCRA continues to value its Modern Apprenticeship Programme in providing not only the organisation with valuable care experience but in providing young people with care experience employment and training opportunities. In January 2021, we celebrated our tenth anniversary of our Modern Apprenticeship scheme and we were delighted to mark the occasion with the appointment of our 13th Modern Apprentice.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to be involved in many of the activities and/or awareness raising campaigns in which we have previously participated, as many of these were either postponed or cancelled, or our staff were focusing on the operational pressure of ensuring that the most vulnerable children benefited from our services. COVID-19 brought significant change to how SCRA delivered its service to children and families, which became not only our operational focus, but the focus of our equality and inclusion work due to the significant potential for discrimination – the detail of which is discussed throughout this report.

5.4 Policies and Procedures

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

In May 2020, SCRA published its Corporate Parenting Plan 2020-2023, which outlined our commitment to our corporate objectives and aim to care, connect and protect. This emphasises our focus on inclusive service delivery to ensure that children are treated fairly and with respect, regardless of their background, needs or abilities, as well as the importance of connection, participation and upholding human rights.

SCRA launched a number of revised HR policies in the reporting period - a revised Supervision Framework, a revised Recruitment and Selection Policy and procedures, revised Organisational Change Policy, revised Discipline, Grievance and Investigation Guidelines and a new Probationary Policy. All policy reviews were undertaken in partnership with UNISON and Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessments (EHRIsAs) completed. The review of the Supervision Framework included a renewed focus on staff well-being as well as an increase in the frequency of supervision to a minimum of five sessions per annum to ensure meaningful and supportive conversations between managers and their staff. At the same time, due to COVID-19, it was agreed that for 2020/2021 the requirement for the annual Performance Appraisal would be suspended. The start of August 2020 saw the launch of our revised Recruitment and Selection Policy and associated procedures to better enable SCRA to attract and select high quality and committed staff through a consistent, effective and fair process. The policy was developed in partnership and involved extensive consultation and benchmarking with external agencies as well as the Equalities Network, UNISON and the HR Subgroup. The revised policy will support the diversity of our workforce (including the consideration of taking positive action to encourage under-represented groups to apply for vacancies) as well as ensuring a fair and equitable recruitment process to ensure no applicant is treated unfairly due to their background.

To support the 2020 implementation of the Dignity at Work Policy, a mandatory e-learning course on bullying and harassment is now available for all staff and this continues to be part of our mandatory induction training for all new staff.

In response to COVID-19 and the resultant restrictions, SCRA launched its Recovery Plan in August 2020 to support flexible and agile working in recognition of the additional pressures staff were, and continue to be, under. This plan acknowledged the fluidity and the national inconsistency of the restrictions across the country and enables managers to support staff in returning to the workplace and/or remain at home as and when the restrictions change. This plan remains a working document and is still in place at the time of reporting in recognition that there will likely be some form of restrictions throughout 2021.

Whilst in previous years SCRA marked a number of inclusive campaigns by launching new policies to coincide with these dates. The impact of COVID-19 on operations and working practice has limited our operational ability and organisational responsiveness to pertinent dates in our Diversity Calendar. In February 2021, SCRA hosted a Purple Quiz to mark **Purple Friday** to celebrate and raise funds for LGBT Youth Scotland.

To mark **International Week of the Deaf** in September 2020, SCRA launched 'Hearing Loss: Briefing Sheet for SCRA Managers' to raise awareness amongst managers about hearing loss and deafness to enable them to better support people with hearing loss and reduce the stigma of hearing loss in the workplace. This was launched in advance of SCRA's British Sign Language Action Plan (which supports the commitments of the British Sign Language National Plan) which was published in March 2021 to mark **Sign Language Week**.

Upon the re-starting of face-to-face Hearings in July 2020 and in recognition of the impact on our service delivery for children attending Hearings and the temporary removal of sensory toolkits, toys and books from waiting rooms, our Disability Subgroup developed mini sensory takeaway kits which were piloted in Glasgow, Hamilton and Kilmarnock. Following the successful pilot, this scheme was rolled out nationally and will be continued as face-to-face Hearings resume in 2021.

5.5 Integrated Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments

SCRA has a statutory duty to assess the equality impact of applying its policies, practices, systems and processes. SCRA interprets this duty widely to include the full range of SCRA's policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services – essentially everything we do – and we welcome this as a mechanism to continually improve our service delivery, working environment and workforce diversity.

Our new Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) process and supporting guidance were launched to all staff in June 2020. Our holistic approach to the development/revision of our policies, processes and procedures ensures the promotion and safeguarding of the rights of the child (UNCRC), the protection of parents' rights (ECHR) and our legislative responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. In addition, it ensures we consider the socio-economic implications (the Fairer Scotland Duty) in all that we do, so that we do not discriminate based on socio-economic status and that the impact of poverty (financial and opportunity) is minimised in our service delivery and working policies and practices.

In the 2019-2020 reporting period we established an Equality Review Group to promote and encourage consistency and provide quality assurance to the use of EHRIAs across the work of SCRA. The Equality Review Group officially launched in April 2020 and comprised seven staff from across the organisation – all trained in the EHRIA process. The remit of this group is to review all the EHRIAs submitted to ensure all equalities and human rights impacts have been adequately considered and mitigated.

From the introduction of the approach in June 2020 to the end of the reporting period, 16 EHRIAs were completed and reviewed by the Equality Review Group. Of these, the majority were able to proceed without revision. The EHRIAs that did not give adequate consideration and mitigation to impact on human rights articles and our equalities responsibilities were: SCRA's approach to Virtual Hearing; the electronic transfer of Hearing Papers; and the CSAS Training Plan. Whilst acknowledging the unprecedented and emergency nature of the changes required to ensure that Scotland's most vulnerable children were protected and in line with the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, the EHRIA for Virtual Hearings and the electronic transfer of Hearing Papers highlighted the negative impacts of the approaches in terms of our Public Sector Equality Duty and human rights. The Equalities Review Group was also concerned over the impact of the CSAS Training Plan on staff in relation to our Public Sector Equality Duty. Upon feedback from the Equalities Review Group additional consideration was given to these approaches and they were approved to proceed with changes and with the expectation of further review. Further details of these EHRIAs as well as the Equality Review Group's decisions and recommendations are publicly available on SCRA's website.

The outcomes of all EHRIAs are published on SCRA's internal intranet Connect and are publicly available on our website www.scra.gov.uk.

5.6 Fairer Scotland Duty

The socio-economic duty was included as provision in the Equality Act 2010 and implemented by the Scottish Government on 1 April 2018. The Duty, known as the Fairer Scotland Duty, is one of a number of duties placed on the public sector to tackle socio-economic disadvantage, child poverty, equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. The Duty requires relevant public authorities to do more to tackle inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring their strategic decision making takes account of those experiencing it. SCRA is not currently listed as a public authority that is required to report on the Fairer Scotland Duty, however, we consider the understanding of the impact of socio-economic disadvantage and inequality to be integral to our service delivery.

The importance of the Fairer Scotland Duty has never been more significant in light of COVID-19. The response to COVID-19 has necessitated a focus on the impact of socio-economic deprivation on digital poverty and the resultant digital divide. It has become increasingly clear that the link between poverty and digital exclusion is significant and inhibitive to participation. At a time where Children's Hearings are delivered virtually and staff are working from home, our understanding of and approaches to tackling the digital divide are of paramount importance in our aim to reduce inequality and ensure inclusive and participative practices, both for children and families and our workforce.

SCRA attended a virtual event for **World Social Justice Day** (11 February 2021) which examined the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on issues pertaining to social justice, including housing, the justice system, financial austerity, welfare and social mobility. The wide-ranging impact of COVID-19 on the many facets of life has influenced the development of SCRA's new Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy in

recognition that equality, inclusion and diversity in Children's Hearings cannot be considered in isolation from children and families' other spheres of life.

Our holistic integrated EHRIA process incorporate consideration of socio-economic factors and demonstrate our commitment to tackling inequalities and protecting human rights. Our Equalities Outcomes 2021-2022 seeks to explore the impact of digital poverty through listening to experiences of children, families and staff; learning from the response to COVID-19 from other agencies across the UK, such as the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service; and examining our Digital Strategy using our EHRIA approach. Furthermore, our new Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy will further seek to address the impact of the Fairer Scotland Duty on children and families and our workforce.

5.7 Workforce Well-Being

SCRA has a strategic aim to develop effective, confident and resilient staff through promoting high standards of health and well-being amongst its workforce. We recognise that any of us could go through a period where we struggle with our physical and emotional health. By choosing to be open about mental health, we are encouraging our people to become part of a movement that's changing the conversation around mental health to ensure that no one is made to feel isolated or alone for experiencing mental ill-health. We want everyone who works at SCRA to feel they can be open about their mental health and ask for support if they need it.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent restrictions were significant on the individual and collective well-being of our workforce. It was clear from the outset that our workforce equalities and inclusion focus should be firmly on supporting the mental health and well-being of our staff during this unprecedented time as they were having to cope with the uncertainty, anxiety and worry of the virus and the impact it was having on their work and personal lives whilst also adapting to new ways of working, home schooling and additional caring responsibilities. In recognition, SCRA created an FAQs page on the internal intranet Connect, which provides details of support and guidance. This has been welcomed by staff from across the organisation.

Embedding Well-Being

Well-being is a standing agenda item for all Locality meetings and has been embedded in our new Operational Strategy and Locality planning approach. This reaffirms our commitment that well-being becomes part of our everyday conversation in supervision meetings, team meetings and in our corporate governance to create an open and supportive organisational culture. Additionally, our revised Supervision Framework launched in May 2020 emphasises the importance of staff well-being and stipulates a minimum of five supervision sessions per annum to ensure these conversations take place.

Health and Well-Being Group

To reflect our commitment to the health and well-being of our workforce, SCRA's Health and Well-being Group has met regularly throughout the reporting period to focus on the mental health and well-being of staff. It ensures we promote, secure and

continuously improve the tools and supports we make available to staff in this vital area of their working lives. The group is a Subgroup of our National Partnership Forum and is chaired by the Principal Reporter/CEO. It comprises staff from across a range of roles and localities to ensure that initiatives are widely promoted throughout the organisation.

Under normal circumstances a quarterly e-zine 'Healthy Being' discussing health and well-being issues is published internally, however, due to the operational pressures of COVID-19 this was temporarily suspended – the last issue published in March 2020. In recognition of the impact of COVID-19 and as we started to implement our Recovery Plan, SCRA believed it was vital to keep health and well-being at the forefront of our approaches. In August 2020, we launched a recruitment campaign for additional members to join the Health and Well-being Group and/or act as Locality Champions for health and well-being. As a result, the group acquired five new members which has introduced new ideas and ways of thinking alongside reinvigorating the group during a challenging time.

Well-Being Investment and Communications

SCRA's commitment to increasing the number of trained Mindfulness Champions and Mental Health First Aiders across the organisation was temporarily suspended in 2020. However, our People Plan 2021-2022 re-commits to increasing the number of trained employees to ensure future accessibility of this informal local support mechanism.

Throughout the pandemic, the SCRA Board and Executive Management Team have communicated regularly with staff to encourage them to look after their mental health and well-being in an open, transparent and supportive way.

In 2020, SCRA created a dedicated well-being page on our staff intranet Connect to ensure that staff were able to stay informed, value their well-being and look after their own mental health and be supportive of others during the significant period of anxiety and uncertainty. This included links to external information and HELP Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), Optimise (an online health and well-being resource provided by SCRA's EAP, Optima Health) and guided mindfulness sessions recorded by one of SCRA's Mindfulness Champions.

Mental Health at Work Commitment and Standards

At the end of the 2019-2020 reporting period, a new Mental Health Group was created, with a specific focus on delivering the Mental Health at Work Commitment and Standards. This group met in January 2021 and reaffirmed its dedication to the Mental Health at Work Commitment and Standards. This provides a framework for employers who recognise the importance of promoting staff well-being and good mental health; setting out six clear standards to better equip employers to create an environment where employees can thrive:

- Prioritise mental health in the workplace by developing and delivering a systematic programme of activity
- Proactively ensure that work design and organisational culture drive positive mental health outcomes
- Promote an open culture around mental health

- Increase organisational confidence and capability
- Provide mental health tools and support
- Increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting

Mental Health Awareness

In recognition of the significant mental health and well-being impact of COVID-19, SCRA has focused on mental health awareness during the reporting period. We have marked Mental Health Week 2020, World Mental Health Day 2020 and Time to Talk Day 2021.

Mental Health Awareness Week (May 2020): The theme for the Mental Health Foundation’s Mental Health Awareness Week in 2020 was ‘kindness’. SCRA’s Mental Wealth Group planned a week of activities to include daily spotlight topics and case studies from staff who had lived experience of ill-health. Day one focused on the importance of kindness – towards others and oneself. The remainder of the week focused on being kind to ourselves through exercise, nutrition, sleep and staying connected. The candid case studies from staff who had struggled with their mental health were very well received and two were used by the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) in latter publicity campaigns.

World Mental Health Day (8 October 2020): This year World Mental Health Day fell on a Saturday, but the Mental Wealth Group believed it was important that the organisation acknowledged it due to the importance of looking after our mental health in the context of ongoing pandemic restrictions, the transition from our CMS to CSAS systems and in recognition of everyone’s effort to the organisation’s Recovery Plan. Our Principal Reporter/CEO said in his Team Brief prior to World Mental Health Day: “For lots of varied reasons we need to recommit to our own health and collective wellbeing now more than ever.” To mark the date, SCRA updated its well-being section on our intranet, encouraged staff to take a break and/or listen to one of our guided mindfulness sessions, emphasised the importance of taking annual leave to ‘switch off’ and to encourage staff to ‘check in’ with others and to speak openly and honestly about how they were feeling. We also used this opportunity to publicise SCRA’s access to a new online platform Silvercloud (a digital tool launched by the Scottish Government to support mental health and provide early intervention during the pandemic).

Time to Talk Day (4 February 2021): To emphasise the importance of continuing to look after our health and well-being during lockdown restrictions, SCRA’s Mental Wealth Group organised a week-long focus on mental health and well-being to celebrate Time to Talk Day, a ‘See Me’ national campaign that aims to encourage people to talk about mental health. This year the theme was ‘the power of a small conversation’. The Mental Wealth Group shared daily information, resources, articles and top tips to support staff in looking after their mental health and well-being on the following: better well-being; stress; the power of a small conversation; and how to stay calm during a pandemic. The week commenced with our Principal Reporter/CEO talking about the importance of looking after our mental health. On Time to Talk Day itself staff were encouraged to check in with others, have a virtual coffee with colleagues,

have a virtual informal catch up with their team and/or if chairing a virtual meeting having a 'check in' with others in the meeting to see how they are doing.

Festive Well-Being Support Package

In addition to the significant focus on the awareness raising of mental health and well-being – both by publicising awareness raising campaigns and in our management communications to staff – SCRA's Health and Well-being Group approved a package of additional well-being supports over the festive period. This included encouraging all staff to take a proper break over the lunchtime period and to get outside in daylight hours, a non-cash voucher for a well-being related purchase/activity and a well-being day off from work over the festive period to allow everyone to take time to focus on their own mental health and well-being.

Susan Deery, Head of HR said: *"It has been an unprecedented year and we have asked a lot of staff over the past eight months. Everyone has been working in an extremely challenging environment and we know this can impact on people's resilience and wellbeing. That's why we wanted to put together a wellbeing package over the festive period for every member of staff. We hope everyone is able to take advantage of this and hope it enables people to rest and re-energise."*

Wellness Action Plans

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on organisational capability and the pressure on operational staff, work to deliver the implementation of a new individual Wellness Action Plan was delayed. SCRA has re-committed to the introduction of Wellness Action Plan's in 2021-2022 which will form individually agreed plans between an individual and their line manager that considers what actions and supports are needed so that the member of staff can stay well at work, emotionally and physically. These will be reviewed in supervision and will move with the employee if they transfer to new roles within SCRA.

Trauma Informed Workplace

SCRA is committed to becoming a trauma-informed workplace. Following the training of managers on secondary trauma and trauma awareness in the 2019-2020 reporting period, it had been anticipated that trauma awareness training would be rolled out to all staff in 2020-2021 in recognition that many of our staff will be witness to, read or hear stories of significant trauma that has happened to children and families they work with. Their exposure to such information potentially makes them vicariously vulnerable to trauma and could also trigger a response to trauma from their own past. Our trauma awareness training will provide our staff with information and tools to recognise and manage this the impact of trauma – both for themselves and for their colleagues. In recognition of continuing social distancing measures, we have been working with NHS Education for Scotland to provide trauma awareness e-learning which will be rolled out in 2021-2022.

In recognition of the impact of vicarious trauma of our workforce, particularly whilst they are working from home and do not have their usual peer support or other avenues of informal support that come from being in the office, SCRA has piloted

vicarious trauma counselling through our Employee Assistance Provider, Optima Health. This has been well received and rolled out nationally in March 2021.

Our Equalities Outcomes 2021-2022 seek to further understand the impact of trauma on our workforce by exploring the potential use of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) questionnaire with staff to better understand the trauma-needs of our workforce to enable us to pro-actively tailor our support and training.

Our holistic bidirectional approach to health and well-being ensures that culture change in respect of mental health and well-being is addressed both at the top and the bottom of the organisation. The regular and supportive communications from our Principal Reporter/CEO and the Chair of the Board alongside significant investment and organisational focus on mental health throughout the reporting period demonstrates our strategic commitment to looking after the well-being of our workforce.

5.8 The Fair Work Agreement

SCRA is committed to implementing the Fair Work agreement confirming the application of Fair Work principles across Civil Service bodies in the Scottish Administration.

SCRA is recognised as an accredited living wage employer, respects the right of UNISON to engage in legal industrial action and continues to employ Modern Apprentices. As an employer we have always committed to flexible working wherever possible and our strategic well-being approach underlines our commitment to all staff achieving a positive and healthy working life, never more pertinent than it was during the reporting period.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has significant impacts on our ways of working and has seen employees working from home in a much more flexible way than before. Throughout the pandemic SCRA has been committed to supporting staff in adopting fair and flexible working practices in a way that meets their individual needs. SCRA's commitment to the Fair Work practices prior to the pandemic and our Flexible Working Policy set us in good stead for the COVID-19 restrictions. Our response to the pandemic ensured all staff were able to work from home and a laptop to enable home working was provided to the majority of those who did not already have one. Those not in receipt of appropriate IT to support home working were placed on paid Special Leave. SCRA did not furlough any staff during 2020-2021.

In recognition of the significant personal and professional demands on staff during this unprecedented time, our Flexi Time Policy was suspended and staff agreed suitable working arrangements and patterns with their managers. During this period of lockdown staff did not have to complete timesheets nor did they have to adhere to SCRA's core working hours. This agile approach allowed SCRA to continue to provide an essential service whilst also ensuring staff were able to manage their personal responsibilities. SCRA will take our learning from this period in revising our Flexible Working Policy in 2021-2022 to better promote a good working life, a healthy work/life balance and a more agile workforce.

SCRA's Recovery Plan was produced in consultation with UNISON and safety representatives and in line with public health guidance to ensure all workplaces were COVID-secure.

5.9 Employee Engagement and Employee Networks

In previous years, SCRA has been active in engaging its workforce in equality, diversity and inclusion related activities and events. However, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a focus on our operational commitments to ensuring the most vulnerable children were protected. In terms of employee engagement and the ongoing work of existing networks within SCRA, our focus on staff well-being took precedence to ensure that our staff were protected from additional harm.

The majority of our Equalities Network Subgroups were suspended and only the essential skeleton work to support and deliver on SCRA's Equalities Outcomes 2020-2021 was undertaken to reduce workload pressures.

5.10 Employee Experience Survey

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

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated pressures facing staff at work and at home our 2020 staff survey focused on SCRA's response on the topics of: home working; well-being; recovery process; future ways of working; and CSAS. 49.8% of SCRA staff completed the survey.

Neil Hunter, Principal Reporter/CEO, reported on the findings of the survey in his organisation-wide Team Brief in January 2021, stating: *"It is really clear to me from the survey that the combined impact of COVID, the resultant rapidity of disruption and change in our operations and the transition to CSAS have undoubtedly caused significant pressure and stress across our organisation. The staff survey results point to a service and a staff group who have been working under hugely difficult circumstances with the combined influence of perpetual change and in a highly unstable operating environment is evident."*

The findings of the survey have been used to inform strategic organisational planning for 2021-2022, including the Equalities Outcomes 2021-2022.

5.11 Carers

SCRA is committed to helping our people have a good working life and work/life balance. We recognise the links between home and work and the part we all play in ensuring that we create an environment where our people can do their best work whilst managing their caring responsibilities.

Our response to COVID-19 illustrates and reaffirms SCRA's commitment to the importance we place on the balancing home and work for our employees. COVID-19 saw many of our staff working from home whilst caring for and home schooling their children and/or caring for other vulnerable family members/friends who were required to shield or who were self-isolating. Our flexible and agile approach to work enabled staff to carry out their caring commitments without fear of reproach which we believe has been essential in ensuring good relations and maintaining morale and motivation during this challenging time.

At the time of writing, Scotland is still in the midst of constantly changing restrictions and this is likely to continue for the majority of 2021. SCRA remains committed to supporting employees with caring responsibilities throughout this time and we will learn from our approach to ensure best practice in future.

5.12 Disability Confident Employer

In 2016, SCRA became a Disability Confident Employer, which was further reaccredited in 2019. The Disability Confident Employment Scheme is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions.

SCRA is now aiming to become a Disability Confident Leader to promote this work further. We anticipate our application for Disability Confident Leader will be submitted in the 2021-2022 reporting period, reiterating our commitment to diversifying our workforce and retaining people with disabilities and/or health conditions.

5.13 Inclusive and Accessible Property

Details of the Hearing centres owned or leased by us are published in our external website for children and their families to access in advance of their planned visit to our hearing centre and other SCRA buildings. We are continually looking at our estate to identify potential improvements to improve accessibility for staff and children and families who attend Children's Hearings.

As part of our corporate parenting duties and our ongoing commitment to improving Hearing rooms for children, we continue to roll out a Hearing room improvement programme to upgrade facilities for children attending hearings. During the reporting period and building upon our existing property portfolio improvements, the following upgrades were undertaken in 2020-2021: Ayr; Cumbernauld; Glasgow; Paisley; Selkirk; and Thurso.

Despite our property programme being largely on hold for the reporting period, we are committed to providing more inclusive and participative facilities for Children's Hearings.

5.14 Equalities Monitoring Campaign

As per our Equalities Outcomes 2019-2020, we had intended to launch our third Equalities Monitoring Campaign to improve our recording of protected characteristic

data of staff. However, this was postponed due to operational pressures of COVID-19. We remain committed to better understanding our workforce and will conduct an Equalities Monitoring Campaign during 2021-2022.

At present, SCRA monitors all protected characteristics except care experience for all staff and applicants: age, sex, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, religion/belief and ethnicity. In recognition of our tenth protected characteristic, SCRA aims to also collect monitoring data from staff as to whether they have care experience. We continue to acknowledge that robust and accurate equality evidence, properly understood and analysed, is at the root of effective compliance with the general equality duty. Our Employee Information Statistics will be published alongside this report on 31 March 2021.

5.15 Inclusive Recruitment

SCRA is committed to inclusive recruitment practices. Our revised Recruitment and Selection Policy and procedures were launched in August 2020 reaffirming our commitment. The revised policy:

- Ensures objectively conducted recruitment procedures based on suitability against job criteria and our values.
- Promotes inclusion and diversity in our workforce by emphasising that we will make appropriate reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process to ensure applicants with any protected characteristics are not substantially disadvantaged.
- Encourages applications from individuals seeking work on a part time or job share basis by promoting that vacancies are suitable for flexible working unless otherwise stated in advertisements.
- Allows for the consideration of taking appropriate positive action to enable or encourage applications from people with a protected characteristic who are under- represented in the organisation.

In addition, in the reporting period SCRA commenced targeted recruitment of some under-represented groups LGBTQI+, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities through investment in vacancy advertisements with LGBT Jobs (www.LGBTjobs.co.uk). LGBT Jobs is the leading LGBTQI+ job board to assist organisations to attract a broad range of candidates to their vacancies to create a more inclusive and diverse workforce. Vacancies advertised on LGBT Jobs are also advertised on www.BMEjobs.co.uk and www.disabilityjob.co.uk. SCRA aims to increase our visibility on these sites to attract a more diverse range of candidates. Our Equalities Outcomes 2021-2022 aim to further identify and explore opportunities to ensure our recruitment is more inclusive to encourage a more diverse workforce.

5.16 Learning and Development

We have continued to raise awareness of the public sector equality duty through our staff intranet, our National Reporter in-house e-zine and Team Briefs issued by our Principal Reporter/Chief Executive Officer. All staff have access to a diversity calendar

and guidance and materials to promote and raise awareness around religion or faith, disability, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, gender equality and other protected characteristics.

A mandatory e-learning course on bullying and harassment is now available for all staff and is part of our mandatory induction training for all new staff. Following the delay due to COVID-19 it is anticipated that trauma awareness training will be carried out in 2021-2022. This will provide our staff with information and tools to recognise and manage this the impact of trauma – both for themselves and for their colleagues.

Our People Plan 2021-2022 reaffirms SCRA's commitment to Succession Planning and equality and/or rights-related learning and development requirements will be a focus for the coming year.

5.17 Women into Leadership Network

Our Women into Leadership Network aims to support and encourage women across all localities and in all roles by inspiring and enabling them to take on and seek opportunities for development, maximise their potential, foster valuable connections, and facilitate success through personal and professional growth. During the reporting period the Network was suspended due to operational pressures of COVID-19. The Network comprises 33 women from a range of grades and locations.

SCRA also provides opportunities for staff to attend Women into Leadership events across Scotland. The opportunity to network in such a positive and supportive environment is of major benefit to those attending. SCRA funded eight female staff members to attend the Women into Leadership Virtual Event (23 and 24 February 2021); an annual conference that has established itself as a key event for all those interested in seeking leadership opportunities for women. The attendees' feedback will be used to inform the development of the Women into Leadership Network and any future events.

International Women's Day (8 March 2021): SCRA celebrated International Women's Day by publishing a number of inspiring case studies of female employees in SCRA detailing their career progression, some of which were shared externally on our website and social media channels. SCRA also participated in a virtual event covering a range of issues relating to women's equality in the workplace, with particular reference to the gender inequality that has been perpetuated by COVID-19. Events attended specifically examined the impact of flexible working practices, leadership and progression opportunities, caring responsibilities and imposter syndrome. The learning from this event will be used to influence the future development of SCRA's Women into Leadership Network.

5.18 Monitoring Legislation and Good Practice

We continue to monitor changes in legislation, and good practice in other organisations to ensure our processes and policies keep pace with developments. This became particularly prudent in light of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 which introduced emergency legislation across Scotland in response to the COVID-19

pandemic and consequent restrictions that significantly impacted our service delivery and workforce.

The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 covered the function of Children's Hearings, specifically: the extension of compulsory orders of supervision; relaxing the timescales associated with Children's Hearings; the introduction of virtual Children's Hearings proceedings; and the relaxation of the requirements of the constitution of the Children's Panel. The COVID-19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on every area of Scottish public policy and practice and SCRA acknowledges the impacts that it has had on children and families involved in Children's Hearings. SCRA specifically recognises the impact on equality and inclusion for children involved in the system as outlined by the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland (CYPCS) and the Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland in the 'Independent Children's Rights Impact Assessment on the Response to Covid-19 in Scotland' published in July 2020. During the reporting period, the COVID-19 pandemic and emergency legislation has been a significant challenge for SCRA and Children's Hearings. It has required SCRA and partners to adapt significantly in a very short period to ensure we protected Scotland's most vulnerable children. SCRA's Equality Outcomes 2021-2022 reflect the challenges posed to children's rights in the Hearings System and more generally by COVID-19 and the concerns of the CYPCS, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the Equality and Human Rights Committee of the Scottish Parliament on children's rights more generally and we are committed to working with other organisations and public bodies to address the inequalities perpetuated by the pandemic.

In 2020-2021, SCRA submitted a response to the Scottish Government's Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill. Unfortunately, the Bill was one of six placed on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst disappointing, SCRA continues to recognise the strong link between gender identity, emotional and psychological distress and mental ill-health, and a particular correlation with self-harm and suicide. Our Equality Outcomes 2021-2022 takes specific action in ensuring our service delivery is inclusive of those who do not identify as the sex they were born with at birth.

In June 2020, SCRA noted the Supreme Court judgement on the case of ABC (AP) (Appellant) v Principal Reporter and another (Respondents) (Scotland). The Supreme Court decided that the current opportunities for siblings to be involved in Children's Hearings about their brothers or sisters are compatible with Article 8 of the ECHR – the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence. The Scottish Parliament subsequently approved the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 (Rules of Procedure in Children's Hearings) Amendment Rules 2021 to give siblings proper opportunity to be heard during Hearings when decisions are made that may impact on their relationship. SCRA is a founding member of 'Stand Up for Siblings' which celebrated its third birthday on 9 March 2021 and we continue to be an active member of the partnership to protect and promote the rights of siblings in line with our corporate parenting responsibilities.

In July 2020, SCRA consulted with all staff on the Scottish Government's proposal to extend the jurisdiction of the Children's Hearings to 16- and 17-year-olds. Our response to the consultation outlined our support for the inclusion of children aged up

to 18 years to be referred to the Reporter. We believe this will better enable us to deliver The Promise and will bring the legislation in line with the UNCRC to protect the rights of all children.

In November 2020, Who Cares? Scotland published a policy briefing of SCRA funded research into the impact of privacy and confidentiality on children and families' participation in Children's Hearings. Amongst many other issues, this briefing highlighted the significant concern of children and families in relation to their right to digital and data privacy, particularly pertinent in the sphere of virtual Children's Hearings. Our new approach to rights, inclusion and corporate parenting will take these findings into account in future developments of our Digital Programme and our approach to virtual Hearings.

In September 2020, SCRA welcomed the introduction of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill which makes Scotland the first UK country to adopt the UNCRC into domestic law. Neil Hunter (PR/CEO) said: *"It truly is a momentous and exciting time for Scotland. We are looking forward to working with all our partners to make any necessary changes in the Children's Hearings System to strengthen children's rights...Statutory measures of intervention always impact on rights and responsibilities and must only be used after careful consideration and discussion with all voices being heard, but with a particular focus on the views of children and young people."*

The Equalities Outcomes 2021-2022 demonstrate our commitment to listening to those effected by the response to COVID-19 and learning from both theirs and the organisation's experiences during COVID-19. We recognise that there are many lessons to be learnt in terms of service delivery and supporting the workforce, both positive and negative, to influence and progress our equality, inclusion and diversity agenda across all areas of the business.

5.19 Professional Memberships

Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

SCRA submitted evidence as part of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index in September 2019 with feedback due on the submission in March 2020, with SCRA resubmitting evidence biennially to improve our score and ranking. Until this is received SCRA is unable to benchmark its current working practices in relation to the Index and will review its reporting timetable once feedback has been received.

Customer Service Excellence Charter

SCRA had intended on progressing towards achieving our Customer Service Excellence Charter in 2020-2021. Whilst we are unable to commit to achieving this in 2021-2022 due to the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19, SCRA is committed to providing excellent customer service and will revisit the Charter at a later date.

LGBT Youth Charter

SCRA received LGBT Youth Charter Foundation Award in 2019. Due to the diverse geographical spread of SCRA, obtaining the Bronze Award is not possible, nevertheless, we are committed to continuous improvement and will continue to use the LGBT

Youth Charter Framework to drive forward improvements in service delivery and workplace practice for LGBTQI+ children, parents and employees.

Disability Confident Scheme

SCRA is committed to achieving Disability Confident Leader status. At the time of publication, we are completing our application, and this will be submitted in 2021-2022 with the aim of achieving Leader status during this same period.

Healthy Working Lives

SCRA has held the Healthy Working Lives Bronze Award for some years now. Whilst we recognise that we cannot progress to the Silver Award due to the structure of our property estate (e.g. the lack of canteens in every office) we continue to maintain our Bronze Award whilst also using the Healthy Working Lives Framework for continuous improvement.

Mental Health at Work Standards

Whilst SCRA's commitment to employee mental health and well-being has been a significant focus during the reporting period, and work towards achieving the Mental Health at Work Standards had been suspended. SCRA's Mental Wealth Group met in January 2021 and renewed our commitment and the Standards will be an organisational priority over 2021-2022.

5.20 Membership of Professional Networks

Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion

SCRA renewed membership of the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei). This membership continues to allow us access to their many workplace guides which we have used when developing our own equality, diversity and human rights policies, and in developing the role and remit of our staff networks and Inclusion Ambassadors. Our Inclusion and Diversity Manager participates in regular member events and meets regularly on SCRA's inclusion and diversity work.

Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) Equality Forum

We continue to be a member of the NDPB Equality Forum, a collaboration of Scottish public sector bodies who each have a responsibility for delivering the Public Sector Equality Duties. This forum draws expertise and resources from a range of partners to influence and support the development and implementation of policy and practice on equality, diversity and inclusion in Scotland.

First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls

SCRA continues to be a Circle member of the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls, regularly submitting responses to their monthly 'Spotlight' topics and participating in their 'Circle' events. This independent National Advisory Council advises the First Minister of Scotland on what is needed to tackle gender inequality in Scotland with the following aims: to raise awareness of gender inequality; champion positive policies and progress; and be a catalyst for change and driving improvements as a challenging voice for the First Minister and her team. They are coming to the end

of their initial three-year strategy for 2018-2021. The Council and the supporting Circle members are active across social media using the tag #GenerationEqual.

Cross-Justice Working Group: Race Data and Evidence

SCRA was invited to join a Scottish Government-led Cross-Justice Working Group on Race Data and Evidence at its inception in early 2020, contributing throughout the reporting period. This group is aligned with the 'Race Equality Framework for Scotland' and recognises that the Black Lives Matter movement as well as the differential impacts of COVID-19 on people from minority ethnic backgrounds has brought an increased focus on race inequality and the experience of people from minority ethnic backgrounds. The strategic aims of this group include identifying what is currently known about the experience of different ethnic groups within Scotland's justice system; and work to improve the collection and reporting of evidence on race within the sector. With success in these aims, it is anticipated that the Scottish Government will be in a position to develop a comprehensive and sustainable strategy that seeks to tackle race inequality in the Scottish justice system as well as contributing to the broader, systemic issues that perpetually see people from ethnic minorities held back in all areas of life. Additionally, there is a simultaneous Scottish Government-led Cross-Justice Working Group: Race Employment which looks to provide a strategic and cohesive approach to tackling barriers to employment across the justice system and support cross system learning. SCRA expects to learn from and improve our practices both in terms of data collection and employment.

Scottish Government British Sign Language-led Justice Advisory Group

SCRA is a member of the Scottish Government's BSL-led Justice Advisory Group which provides expertise and guidance to justice agencies. The group plays a key role in developing and delivering a programme of improvements to help justice agencies better meet the needs of BSL users.

Pride in Justice Forum

SCRA continues to participate in the Pride in Justice Forum alongside other public bodies to advance LGBTQI+ equality and rights across the justice sector.

6. Next Steps – Streamlining our Approach: SCRA’s Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2023 and Equality Outcomes 2021-2022

Our Equality Outcomes 2020-2023 were developed in consultation with the Executive Management Team, Equalities Network, Inclusion Ambassadors, UNISON, our partners and wider staff group and equality groups and the Board. We also launched a public consultation exercise and considered and reflected all responses in our outcomes. Our work plan for 2021-2022 recommits SCRA to the delivery of these Outcomes in line with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2023.

In agreement with the Scottish Government due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the publication of SCRA’s Corporate Plan and Equalities Outcomes 2020-2021 was delayed until May 2020. For the same reasons, our Equalities Outcomes 2020-2021 were significantly scaled back from our previous equality, diversity and inclusion ambitions (see Section 7). This report reflects on the 2020-2021 reporting period and reports on our achievements against the Outcomes.

In 2021, a new streamlined approach to SCRA’s human rights, inclusion and corporate parenting obligations and legislative responsibilities is to be adopted. SCRA’s new Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy will subsume the existing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2023 and the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2023 to provide strategic direction, accountability and governance in recognition of the significant overlap between the three strands. The new Strategy will be published in 2021.

The intention is that each strand – rights, inclusion and corporate parenting – will report on progress in line with all relevant legislation within an annual Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Report. This report will also set the outcomes and action plans for each strand for the coming year. This report will, therefore, be the final standalone Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mainstreaming Report.

Our Equality Outcomes 2021-2022 acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 on SCRA and wider Children’s Hearings and reflect our commitment to learning from our experiences as well as those of children and families. SCRA will build on the positives of 2020-2021, particularly the innovation and creativity shown in the delivery of Hearings and from our workforce. Our organisational priorities this year focus on inclusive service delivery, supporting the mental health and well-being of our workforce and workforce diversification. Our Equality Outcomes 2021-2022 are ambitious, forward-thinking and demonstrate SCRA’s absolute commitment to ensuring service delivery, the workforce and the organisational culture is inclusive, fair and welcoming.

7. SCRA's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Outcomes 2020-2021

Outcome 1:	Children, young people and their families are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. They understand and are able to access our services in ways that suit their individual needs.
Objective 1:	Our staff will continue to treat all children, young people and their families with dignity and respect.
Action	
1.1.1	Our HR policies will be revised to reflect all equalities and inclusion considerations (e.g. gender-neutral language).
1.1.2	Our new case management system (CSAS) will capture relevant protected characteristic data (e.g. gender identity, ethnicity, age, disability) to ensure services meet individual needs.
Objective 2:	Our services will be procured, designed, shaped and delivered to meet the needs of children, young people and their families.
Action	
1.2.1	We will engage with and listen to the views and experiences of local Young People's Champion Boards.
1.2.2	We will engage with and listen to the views and experiences of the national Our Hearings Our Voice.
1.2.3	We will engage with diverse groups, in particular from a care and minority ethnic background and people with disabilities to inform our understanding of their needs to ensure a positive experience and easy access to our services.
1.2.4	We will work in partnership with other organisations who are involved with children and their families to provide new insights and make our services as accessible as possible.
1.2.5	We will launch a new Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) toolkit and provide training to staff; and establish an Equality Review Group to oversee and provide quality assurance.
1.2.6	We will publish our Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments.
1.2.7	We will utilise outdoor space (where available) to establish sensory gardens.
1.2.8	Each locality will develop a Diversity and Inclusion section within their locality plans reflecting their responsibilities.
1.2.9	Complaints about our staff and/or services will be dealt with efficiently and respectfully and we will take action to address any equality and diversity related matters through our Equalities Network.

Outcome 2:	We will build an inclusive culture which values and develops our people, providing them with the tools and support they need to be skilled, confident, valued, respected and cared for to maximise their potential.
Objective 1:	Our leaders will foster a culture where our people feel included, valued, respected and cared for.
Action	
2.1.1	We will develop Inclusive Leadership Standards.
2.1.2	We will introduce guidance to support a consistent approach to recruitment (e.g. interview questions).
Objective 2:	Our staff will feel supported, respected and cared for.
Action	
2.2.1	We will create a culture of support within the workplace where our people can talk about mental health and well-being without stigma and are offered appropriate support.
2.2.2	We will launch a revised supervision and appraisal framework and ensure that all staff have regular supervision.
Outcome 3:	We will actively tackle under-representation and create a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.
Objective 1:	We will make our workforce more diverse through our recruitment and selection processes.
Action	
3.1.1	We will further develop our Modern Apprenticeship Programme to provide opportunities to other under-represented groups.

8. SCRA's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Outcomes 2021-2022

Outcome 1:	Children and families are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. They understand and are able to access our services in ways that suit their individual needs.
Objective 1:	Our staff will continue to treat all children and families with dignity and respect.
Action	
1.1.1	We will introduce a Rights Respecting Approach to ensure children and parents' rights are upheld in line with the UNCRC and the ECHR.
1.1.2	We will produce guidance on the recording – and the reason for recording – of relevant protected characteristic data (gender identity, ethnicity, age and disability) on our case management system (CSAS) to ensure we provide a needs-based sensitive service.
1.1.3	We will work with Scottish Trans Alliance to produce guidance for staff to ensure they are confident to respond appropriately and sensitively to issues pertaining to gender identity.
1.1.4	We will implement and promote our British Sign Language Plan.
1.1.5	We will develop a Communications Plan to promote better participation of children and families whose first language is not English.
1.1.6	We will use the LGBT Charter framework to continue to develop our services to ensure they are LGBT inclusive.
1.1.7	We will pilot Scottish Autism's Alert Card scheme (used by Police Scotland) to better support children and families with autism to identify to those involved in Children's Hearings that they have autism.
1.1.8	We will pilot the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme to better support children and families to identify to those involved in Children's Hearings that they have hidden disabilities.
1.1.9	We will review training for support and reception staff in the use of Hearing Loops in our Hearing Centres to establish if any staff training is required.
1.1.10	We will develop guidance for managers to better enable them to support staff with autism or other neurodiverse conditions.
1.1.11	We will adopt the approach used by the Additional Support Needs Tribunal and produce a 'social story' about attending Hearings that we will make available on SCRA's website for professionals to help them support children with additional support needs.
Objective 2:	Our services will be procured, designed, shaped and delivered to meet the needs of children and families.
Action	

1.2.1	We will develop and implement an overarching organisational Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Strategy with internal governance structures to streamline our Corporate Parenting, diversity and inclusion and participation activities with our Rights Respecting Approach. This will ensure clear delivery of a needs-based service to children and families, taking into account obligations outlined in The Promise and the 'Our Hearings, Our Voice' Calls to Action.
1.2.2	We will implement the Fairer Scotland Duty to consider how we can reduce inequalities of outcome due to socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decision-making.
1.2.3	We will develop and embed a Standard Operating Model to ensure national consistency of service provision so that, regardless of location, children and families across Scotland will receive a fair, equal and consistent service.
1.2.4	We will review and revise our approach to Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments (EHRIA) to ensure the process is robust, transparent and user friendly and fully incorporates our commitment to the Fairer Scotland Duty.
1.2.5	We will review the membership and governance of the Equality Review Group to promote enhanced leadership and quality assurance of the EHRIA process.
1.2.6	We will continue to conduct Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments (EHRIA) on any new/revised policies, practice or process to ensure children and families are not discriminated against and ensure their human rights are upheld.
1.2.7	We will learn from the national response to and experience of the COVID-19 pandemic to identify best practice to inform service improvement by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to the experiences of children and families who participated in virtual/hybrid Children's Hearings to identify a creative suite of solutions to make Hearings more accessible, participative and personalised. • Examining other statutory decision-making agencies' (e.g. COPFS, ASN Tribunals, Mental Health Tribunals, HMCTS) responses to the COVID-19 pandemic to identify best practice and potential solution for Children's Hearings.
1.2.8	We will work with the Digital Programme to revise our Digital Strategy in light of COVID-19 to ensure digital development within Children's Hearings takes into account equalities, rights and evidence.
1.2.9	We will develop an Inclusive Procurement Process, starting with the learning from the EHRIA of our current Procurement Policy.
1.2.10	We will conduct an EHRIA of our Property Standards to ascertain whether they are fully compliant with our equalities and human rights obligations and highlight areas for improvement in light of COVID-19 and the move to more flexible working in future.

Outcome 2:	We will build an inclusive culture which values and develops our people, providing them with the tools and support they need to be skilled, confident, valued, respected and cared for to maximise their potential.
-------------------	--

Objective 1:	Our leaders will foster a culture where our people feel included, valued, respected and cared for.
Action	
2.1.1	We will use the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion's (enei) Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) to assess our approach and progress on diversity and inclusion, providing a benchmark upon which we can measure improvement.
2.1.2	We will develop Inclusive Leadership Standards to underpin an inclusive organisational culture which values and develops our people, providing them with the tools and support they need to be skilled, confident, valued, respected and cared for in maximising their potential. The standards will reflect our leadership values and beliefs describing leadership characteristics and indicative behaviours in line with our organisational values and beliefs and will complement our current Management Standards.
2.1.3	We will investigate the enei Inclusive Leadership Assessment Tool (ILAt) and/or other methods of leadership assessment as a potential benchmarking and/or HR tool to ensure our leaders demonstrate and embody our Inclusive Leadership Standards.
Objective 2:	Our staff will feel supported, respected and cared for.
Action	
2.2.1	Drawing on our experience of the national response to COVID-19 and in recognition of the high value staff place in being able to work flexibly we will revise our Flexible Working Policy (to specifically incorporate agile working) to ensure that our staff are adequately supported, their caring responsibilities can be balanced with the demands of work and to ensure our service is responsive to future challenges.
2.2.2	In recognition of the shadow pandemic of COVID-19 (the increase in domestic abuse) we will, in consultation with Scottish Women's Aid, the Scottish Women's Rights Centre and Abused Men in Scotland (alongside other relevant organisations), develop a Domestic Abuse Policy.
2.2.3	We will work towards achieving our Disability Confident Leader Accreditation.
2.2.4	We will seek to achieve the Mental Health at Work Standards to strengthen and streamline our commitment to supporting good mental health in the workplace, encourage a culture where our people can talk about mental health and well-being, and bring together in a more meaningful way all our strands of support into one accessible forum.
2.2.5	We will develop a Well-being Strategy to continue to develop opportunities within the workplace for wellbeing activities that can be accessed by all staff fairly across the organisation and that will improve resilience and ability to manage competing and complex pressures in the workplace.
2.2.6	We will implement mental health charity Mind's Wellness Action Plans (WAPs) to provide a practical way for managers to support the mental health and well-being of their staff.

2.2.7	We will explore the potential of using the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) questionnaire with our staff to better understand the needs of the collective workforce in terms of well-being and trauma to ensure we are a trauma informed workplace.
2.2.8	We will continue to work towards achieving Carers Positive Engaged status to demonstrate our support for employees with caring responsibilities, particularly in light of the impact of COVID-19.
2.2.9	We will review the function, structure and membership of our Equalities Network, the subgroups of the Equalities Network and the role of the Inclusion Ambassadors to ensure our approach to inclusion and diversity is streamlined and appropriate governance structures are in place.
2.2.10	We will engage the members of the Women into Leadership Network in future plans for the Network and the impact of COVID-19 on both the functioning of the Network and the impact on women's development and leadership opportunities.
2.2.11	We will work to the principles of the Scottish Government's Fair Work in Public Bodies Principles which will see SCRA take action on our gender pay gap and continue to support and promote Scotland's Living Wage.

Outcome 3:	We will actively tackle under-representation and create a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.
Objective 1:	We will make our workforce more diverse through our recruitment and selection processes.
Action	
3.1.1	We will conduct an internal awareness raising campaign to encourage staff to record their protected characteristics data on their eHR file to enable us to identify areas of under-representation in our workforce to better target future recruitment campaigns.
3.1.2	In recognition of our 'tenth' protected characteristic of care experience, we will expand the data collected during our recruitment process and on our eHR system to include whether the (potential) employee has lived care experience.
3.1.3	We will take appropriate action to attract a diverse range of applicants for each of our vacant roles in seeking to create a more diverse workforce to reflect the communities we serve (to include revising recruitment materials, recruitment advertising and explore further opportunities for positive action for under-represented groups).
3.1.4	We will utilise the Scottish Government's Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit to assess our recruitment and selection processes to facilitate our aim to have a more ethnically diverse workforce.
3.1.5	We will explore opportunities to work with education (to include secondary schools, further and higher education) to promote SCRA as a potential employer of choice amongst young people, particularly in areas of socio-economic deprivation where they might not otherwise go on to further or higher education, to identify actions to progress in 2022-23.

3.1.6	We will identify and develop meaningful ways for different groups of talented people to gain work experience in SCRA, be supported and thrive regardless of socio-economic background or educational attainment (e.g. internships, student placements, project based placements as well as our existing Modern Apprenticeship Programme) and revise our Youth Employment Strategy to increase opportunity, to progress in 2022-23.
3.1.7	We will consider how we can reduce our Gender Pay Gap, particularly the potential for reducing the disparity by attracting more men into the organisation on lower grades and more women into higher grades, to identify actions to progress in 2022-23.
3.1.8	We will analyse applicants for all posts across the protected characteristics to further understand the diversity issues within each grade to inform what further actions we could take to increase diversity.
3.1.9	With the introduction e-recruitment we will track career progression of successful candidates against protected characteristic to identify areas of positive action.



Published March 2021
www.scra.gov.uk