SCRA Board Meeting

A G E N D A

Wednesday 31st January 2024 at 10.30 a.m. By Teams

Timing		Item	Paper	Purpose	Lead
10:30	1.1 1.2	**Apologies** **AOB**			
	2.1 2.2 2.3	**Minute of Meeting held on 13 December 2023** **Matters Arising** **Workplan**		Approval Update	NH/MM
	3.	**Staff Survey results 2023**		Noting	NH
	4. 4.1 4.2	**Strategy and Planning** Business Plan Corporate Plan		Noting	LB
	5. 5.1	**Finance and Resources** Budget Planning 2023/24		Noting	EM
	6.	**Review of Policies 2023**		Approval	PA
	7.	**New Risks**			
		Next Meeting Wednesday 20th March, by TEAMS			

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
Minute of SCRA Board Meeting held on
Wednesday 13th December 2023
By MS Teams

Present:
Michelle Miller (Chair)
Kay Barton
Suzie Vestri
Ying Zhang
Martin Toye
Jim Edgar

In Attendance:
Neil Hunter (Principal Reporter/Chief Executive)
Alastair Hogg (Head of Practice & Policy)
Ed Morrison (Head of Finance & Resources)
Susan Deery (Head of Human Resources)
Lisa Bennett (Head of Strategy & OD)
Paul Mulvanny (Senior Operational Manager, East and Central)
Donald Lamb (Data Manager) Item 8
Catherine Nixon (Research Manager) Item 13
Rory Blair (Student at University of Strathclyde) Observer
Pamela Armstrong (Governance Officer)

		Item	Owner
1.1	**Apologies** Lorraine Moore, Board Member Helen Etchells (Senior Operational Manager, North and West Scotland) Monica Sweeny (UNISON Branch Secretary)		
1.2	**AOB** None		
2.	**Declarations of Interest** None		
3.	**Minutes/Committees**		
3.1	**Minute of Board Meeting held on 20 September 2023** Approved		
3.2	**Board Workplan** Approved		
3.3	**Matters Arising** **Board Apprentice Scheme Update**		

	The Chair provided the following verbal update. • A Board Apprentice has been selected and joins the Board from January 2024, for one year. Induction meetings with the Chair and Officers will take place over the coming weeks.		

4.
4.1
	Audit & Risk Committee
	Draft Minute of Meeting held on 23 November 2023
	Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and Board Member updated the Board in the following areas:
	• Quality Assurance & Performance
	  o Case sampling: Report on preparation for proof
	  o Annual report on Joint Inspections of Children's Services
	  o Case sampling progress report
	• External Audit
	  o General update on current issues
	• Internal Audit
	  o Project Management Framework
	  o Progress Report 2023-24
	• Risk Management
	  o Review of SCRA Risk Management Policy
	  o Strategic and Operational Risk Registers
	• Annual Fraud Report 2022-23
	• Pensions Update
	
	The next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee will be held on 28th February 2024, by Teams.		

	Reports		

5.	**Chief Executive's Report**
	The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive spoke to the update report, which detailed a wide range of activity across the organisation.
	
	Noted:
	Updates were given on the following areas.
	• National Partnership Forum
	• Strategic Partnerships
	  o Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership
	  o Youth Justice Improvement Board (YJIB)
	• Scottish Government Liaison
	• Staff Survey
	• Press and Communications
	  o Care Experienced Week 2023		

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○ Taking Control of My Hearing pilot
○ Postcard feedback pilot
○ 40 Calls to Action – three years on
○ Stand Up for Siblings
○ Websites
○ Partnership communications
○ Dolly Parton Imagination Library
○ Internal communications
○ Information materials

Issues arising during discussion:

The Chair thanked the PR/CE for a comprehensive report. The staff survey points to an increase in confidence in the face of continuing challenges, financial and resource, and this as testament to the hard work of the PR/CE, senior team and the wider organisation.
Bairn's Hoose – A short life working group will commence in January. Recommendations from this group will be brought to the existing Governance Group.

Agreed:

An update on the 2023 Staff Survey will be given to the Board at its next meeting (January 2024)

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| **6.** | **Budget Monitoring** The Head of Finance & Resources introduced the report, which provides a summary of SCRA's financial position for year to November 2023 and forecast (based on October results) for the full year 2023/24

 Noted: The Scottish Government (SG) has allocated revenue funding of £25.16m for 2023/24, with agreement that up to £5.889m further resource may be required, bringing the total to £31.049m in line with the revenue budget approved by the Board in March 2023. SG provided additional resources of £2.75m at the Autumn Budget Review and the balance of funding will be provided at the Spring Budget Review subject to confirmation this month of revenue funding requirements. The Scottish Government has allocated capital funding of £2.7m for 2023/24 including £0.8m for Children's Care and Justice projects. The Board approved a £2.4m capital budget in March. As approved by the Board in March 2023 efficiency | | |

	savings of £150k (0.6%) have been targeted in 2023/24 (vacant space savings £25k, procurement savings £50k, Head Office staff savings £50k, Locality initiatives £25k). • The overall accruals-based revenue forecast underspend is £718k (2.3%). At this stage it is proposed that the revenue funding requirement for 2023/24 should be reduced by £700k. Although there remain several uncertainties in the current forecasts, bringing the possibility of additional spends, the Finance Team review of staff forecasts suggest a slightly optimistic view prevails in relation to recruitment timescales in the last quarter of 2023/24. • The capital budgets show little variance at this stage however the Glenrothes property project and technology refresh projects could see some slippage beyond 31st March 2024. **Issues arising during discussion:** • Fixed term contracts have reduced from 13% to 6%. • Work is continuing to stabilise the organisation, working hard with localities have establishment posts filled. **Agreed:** • To approve the reduction in revenue funding required at Spring Budget Review.
7.	**Budget 2024/25** The Head of Finance & Resources introduced the report, providing an update on discussions with Scottish Government and preparations for the 2024/25 budget. **Noted:** • In September 2023, the Board approved an updated Financial Strategy 2024/25-2028/29. The Strategy was shared with Scottish Government along with additional briefing papers all with a view to influencing the outcome of the 2023 Scottish Government Budget process which will set the published grant allocation for 2024/25. • Significant new demands on top of a large budget deficit in 2023/24 are putting significant strain on SCRA's budget of which around 80% is allocated to staff costs. The increase from the approved 2023/24 revenue budget to the revised 2024/25

	assessed need is 7.6%.
	• Discussions continue with Scottish Government officials to ensure there is a shared understanding of the challenges and risks facing SCRA and the wider Children's Hearings system.
	• With the introduction of the CCJB into Parliament, the improvement agenda underway in SCRA and the likely increased demands following the Scottish Government's response to the Hearings for Children report 2024/25 will be a year of significant change for SCRA and the Hearings system. This can only be tackled effectively if SCRA has a stable and sustainable revenue funding base.
	
	Issues arising during discussion:
	• There are 3 states which require to be mapped out.
	    o The steady state where SCRA needs to be sustainable and function in the way that is expected, while significantly underfunded.
	    o The shorter-term increased expectations (particularly CCJB) on SCRA that need to be addressed.
	    o The longer-term progress for the organisation, capturing aspirations of the Promise.		

8.	**Organisational Performance Report** The Data Manager introduced the Second Quarter Organisational Performance Report 2023/24: (1 July to 30 September 2023). **Noted:** • This report uses a balanced scorecard approach which attributes measures within the organisation into four quadrants; three aligned to the aims within our business plan: Care; Connect; and Protect and another quadrant around recovery or exceptions. This provides a concise report which enables a fuller focus on the key areas of performance throughout SCRA. Continuing feedback from the Board will be used to inform future development. • Children referred on offence grounds is showing an increasing trend. There is a significant upward trend occurring in Ayrshire locality. All three Ayrshire local authorities have discussed the rise in offence referrals at their respective Child Protection Committees. East Ayrshire had the most significant increase, and this has been discussed with Police		

Scotland who are undertaking an internal investigation/audit into this to inform senior officers as to the reasons for increase. They are also addressing delay in reporting incidents to SCRA as most of the incidents received in September were from July/August which is a significant delay. Locality managers will again meet the police to discuss further after they have completed their own review. Partner agencies have agreed to set up a multi-agency short-term working group to consider this issue and investigate all aspects such as Early and Effective Intervention thresholds which should prevent SCRA getting referrals which don't merit a referral to us. The increases seen could be beneficial in the longer term if processes are reviewed and updated if necessary. Offence referrals, albeit higher than they were previously, have decreased in Ayrshire since September.

- Children with Child Protection Orders is also showing an increasing trend which is replicated in Lanarkshire D&G and North Strathclyde localities. There aren't any variations occurring in the profile in terms of age, but these will continue to be monitored.
- Short term absence has remained within the target with seven localities and Head office within the 2% target. Long term absence has improved by 0.4pp but remains a challenge with only three localities and Head office meeting the 2% target in the quarter.
- Revenue spends are currently forecast to be outside of the 1% target. Senior managers continue to identify opportunities for redeploying underspends in-year to support the delivery of corporate priorities however it is expected a slightly lower funding need for 2023/24 will be confirmed to Scottish Government this month. The other financial targets around revenue savings, efficiency savings and capital spend is forecast to be on target currently.

Issues arising during discussion:
- By allowing localities to set individual targets, we are recognising that some localities will be performing better than others and encouraging them to continue an improvement journey. Targets are closely monitored and reviewed by the SOM's to ensure they are both stretching and realistic and within an acceptable range.

	• The increase in referrals has been communicated to the Police who are reviewing this internally. This is a good example of using data to respond to potential issues quickly. **Agreed** • To approve the Q2 Organisational Performance Report 2023/24, covering the period 1 July to 30 September 2023.		
9.	**SCRA Corporate Plan 2024/27** The Head of Strategy & OD introduced the draft plan. **Noted:** • Every three years SCRA develops and publishes a refreshed Corporate Plan. This sets the organisational direction for the period and is supported by three Business Plans laying out in greater detail how this will be achieved. • For each three-year cycle, a plan is provided to EMT and the Board with dates, approach, and proposed consultations. • Internal consultation has been taking place through summer and into Autumn. An analysis has been conducted on what has been received so far and key themes have been developed. • The environmental context is very busy now with the next three years being key to much change. An exercise has started to begin to map out some of that change in relation to impact on the organisation that requires to be planned for. • Following the Scottish Government's response in mid-December to the Hearings for Children report, time will be taken to process this and consider how it best be reflected within the Corporate Plan – what it means for the next three years of SCRA's work and what this may impact. • A second draft will be brought to the Board in January along with a draft year one Business Plan. **Issues arising during discussion:** • Internal research has commenced around digital exclusion and the needs of children families. Feedback will be provided to the Board at a later date. • The Corporate Plan should include how we're going to measure and report on performance with the outcomes within the plan.	LB LB	

10.	**Programme Management Update**		
	The Head of Strategy & OD introduced report, providing the first update on the Programme Management Framework and related projects.		
	Noted:		
	- A full programme structure has been developed iteratively in SCRA – initially through the Keeping the Promise framework – the Keeping the Promise Programme Board, related project plans, reporting etc and then into a broader framework in 2023. - In Feb '23, a full programme framework was put in place - developed through identified good practice from Scottish government and others, through our own experience and in line with Prince2 - our recognised project management methodology at programme level. This was to enable us to robustly deliver sustainable programme work across the organisation. - The establishment and development of a Programme Management Framework sets up the structures and governance arrangements required to manage change now and into the future. It will support clear processes, scope, structures, and controls for change activity. The development of this approach allows us to be ready for change in all its different forms – both internally and externally driven. - Much of the work will reflect an approach of testing, learning, iterating, evaluating and then implementing where there is evidence to support the change. - It also allows all our project work to be aligned to the Business Plan – to support us to deliver on the aims of the Business Plan, set up to be time bound. - In undertaking any transformational change programme, change readiness is essential - equipping managers and staff with the skills, leadership, and confidence to take forward change successfully.		
	Issues arising during discussion:		
	The Programme Board is one of the cornerstones of SCRA's approach in preparing for the next three to five, even ten years. The project framework is going to provide significant benefit to the whole organisation in terms of more effective management of change.		

11.	**Locality Performance Review** The SOM, East and Central, introduced the annual Locality Performance Reviews (LPRs). The reviews are part of an established cycle which cover all aspects of operations. This report sets out the approach to the LPRs and findings of the reviews which were carried out in the autumn of 2023. **Noted:** • The LPRs are formally structured meetings between the SOMs and Locality Management Teams (LMTs) which are conducted twice yearly. The March review focusses on locality planning for the year ahead. The review in the autumn covers review of progress against the locality plan, including key organisational and local objectives. The approach is one of constructive challenge in which the SOMs seek assurance on progress and to identify how to further assist localities with any objectives that are making slow progress. It is also a chance to re-assess the priorities within the locality plan and to adjust them to reflect changing circumstances. • The Locality Performance Reviews are an opportunity to recognise the progress that locality teams have made and to gather detailed feedback from the frontline to identify new and continuing challenges and to plan for the future. • The SOMs can assure the Board that, notwithstanding the uncertainty and challenges in the current operating environment, the operational response has ensured that a continuous service has been provided and progress has been made towards the objectives set down in the Locality Plans. **Issues arising during discussion:** • The Board thanked the report authors and acknowledged the hard work of the SOM's and the wider organisation. • The report provides assurance that activities are coordinated and lined up within localities, and across the organisations priorities. • Where localities are under resourced or workload pressure, organisational support is provided in terms of the redistribution of work to other localities where necessary. Where the is recurring more substantial interventions can be made available • Several locality staff have received training and		

	been upskilled in the risk management tool Decision Time. Localities are looking at risks that are coming towards us as well managing existing risks. Decision time has added real value and puts clear ownership in relation to the management risks.		

12.	**Research Plans 2023/24**
	The Research Manager introduced the report highlighting the research projects planned for 2023-24, current research activities, and research published this year. It also outlines the staffing changes that have occurred within the team this year.
	
	Noted:
	The report covers the following.
	• Composition of the Research Team
	• Research update
	    o Virtual Hearings
	    o Staying Connected
	    o Children aged 5-11 in residential care.
	    o Cyber-enabled offences committed by children and young people.
	• Other professional activities
	• Planned research.
	    o Ethics, rights, and legalities of using Artificial Intelligence in the Children's Hearings System
	    o Victim information and support research
	    o 12–15-year-olds referred to the Reporter on serious offence grounds
	• Support for demonstration projects and improvement work
	
	Issues arising during discussion:
	• The Board thanked the Research Team for a comprehensive report detailing the research activity of the team which is hugely significant and an important contribution whole policy landscape.
	• Where research recommendations have not been implemented, or are partially undertaken, a piece of work will be conducted to determine if further research is required throughout 2025-27.
	• The work with Bernardo's around child sexual exploitation (CSE) has evolved. As part of the work being undertaken with Scottish Government and side office, part of the funded Civic Challenge, A use case for CSE monitoring has been developed.		

	• Great value is placed on the work of the Research Team. It is a productive team and has brought to bear some resonant bits of real-life research which have made a change. Retrospective analysis of the research SCRA has published in some area has made significant impact on policy and practise. **Agreed:** • To approve the proposed plan for 2024/25.		
13.	**Risk**		
13.1	**Strategic and Operational Risks** The PR/CE introduced the report, which provides an update to the Board on the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers. The Risk Registers were last reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) at its November 2023 meeting and the Board at its June 2023 meeting. **Noted:** • The Strategic and Operational Risk Registers are kept under review by the Executive Management Team (EMT) and the Locality Risk Registers are kept under review by Locality Management Teams (LMTs) and the Planning and Performance Network (PPN). • The risk register format includes an assessment of inherent, residual and target risk to demonstrate the impact of existing control mechanisms and to link the agreed risk appetite. • The risks across both registers focus on the ongoing challenges in the delivery of a safe and effective service with the focus on capacity, resources, and information governance. In this context it is important the ARC and the Board keep risk appetite under review. **Agreed:** • To approve the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers.		
13.2	**Risk Policy Review** The PR/CE introduced the revised policy, previously approved by the Audit and Risk Committee in November, subject to Board approval. **Noted:** • The objectives of the risk management framework are founded on several key objectives to:		

- - ensure the delivery of core strategic and operational objectives within available resources.
    - support continuous improvement in service delivery.
    - inform SCRA business continuity plans.
    - support internal controls intended to reduce losses.
    - facilitate the timely identification and resolution of risks.
    - enable effective stakeholder communication on service delivery.
    - enhance SCRA's reputation and image.
  - The effectiveness of the Risk Management Policy will be reviewed and monitored based on the following measures:
    - the extent to which SCRA is successful year on year in achieving its business objectives.
    - the incidents of risks which have not been recognised and documented within the Risk Management structures; or which have been inappropriately rated within the structures.
  - The Risk Management Policy is underpinned by a commitment to training and development in risk management and the recognition of the importance of staff responsibilities in this area.
  - Revisions to the policy have been made in the following areas.
    - Risk management as part of the system of internal control
    - Risk Management Process
    - Risk Appetite, in particular financial and Accountability/Governance Risks which have moved from Open to Cautious – in reality, move to Open as required. "In reality" means when SCRA has no or very limited controls over decisions made by other agencies on which it relies for its functioning.
    - The clearest example is decisions made by Scottish Government on matters of full year budget allocation where, for SCRA to retain its stated risk appetite could be catastrophic for the body insofar as the Board would be unable to set a budget.
    - SCRA can set a budget to meet its needs with sufficient and formal reassurance from senior officials about the availability of in year resource to allow it to govern effectively, within clear boundaries of

	accountability and with a proportionate approach to risk. **Issues arising during discussion:** • At the recent Board Development Day, The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee raised the need for SCRA to ensure there is a proper calibration of risk appetite as we move into this next phase of budget and financial risks in particular. **Agreed:** • To approve changes to the Risk Management Policy.		13
14.	**New risks** None identified.		
	Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 31 January 2024		

SCRA Board Meeting Workplan December January 2024

Business Item	Wed 23/01/24	Wed 20/03/24	Wed 19/06/24	Wed 18/09/24	Wed 18/12/24
Strategic/Corporate					
Policy & Influencing Report			✓		
Research Programme					✓
Risk Register			✓	✓	✓
Governance					
Audit Committee Minutes		✓	✓		✓
Committee Annual Reports			✓		
Remuneration & Nominations Committee Minutes		✓			
SCRA Standing Orders Review (Next due March 2025)				✓	
Finance					
Budget Monitoring Report		✓	✓	✓	✓
Draft Budget	✓	✓		✓	✓
Annual Report & Accounts					
Financial Strategy				✓	
Planning				✓	
Draft Corporate, Corporate Parenting & Business Plan	✓	✓ (BP)			✓
Draft Annual Report					
Annual Workforce Planning Report		✓			
Communications Plan			✓	✓	
Performance					
Organisational Performance Report		✓	✓		✓
Operational				✓	
Locality Performance Reviews					✓
Chief Executive's Report		✓	✓		✓
Complaints Review			✓		
Inclusion Annual Report			✓		
Environmental Annual Report		✓			
Overview of Policies Annual Report	✓			✓	✓
Health & Safety Annual Report		✓			
Procurement Report				✓	

Business Item	Wed 23/01/24	Wed 20/03/24	Wed 19/06/24	Wed 18/09/24	Wed 18/12/24
Property Strategy			✓		
Keeping the Promise update		✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff Survey	✓	✓			
Role of the Reporter (TBC)					
Agile Policy (Next review Sep 2024)				✓	
SCRA Framework Document (next review 2024)				✓	
SCRA Whistleblowing Policy (next review Dec 2024)					✓

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION
Chief Executives Report – 2023 Staff Survey results

Accountable Director:	Neil Hunter Principal Reporter/Chief Executive	**Date:**	31 January 2024

Recommendation:
1. To note the Chief Executives update on 2024 staff survey
2. to note the progress made in the 2022 staff survey action plan
3. to note the Chief Executives/EMT's intention to consult with staff and Partnership Forum on priorities for 2023 staff survey actions and report to the Board in March 2024

Reason for Report   To advise of the outcome of the annual SCRA staff survey and to consider implication and actions required

Resource Implications   None

Strategy   Findings contribute to Corporate Plan priorities 2024-27

Equalities Duties   Indicate whether an Equalities and Human Rights Impact assessment (HRIA) is required and has been completed. Describe in the body of the report any issues/findings/adjustments that have been made.

Equalities Impact Assessment Required/Completed

☐   Yes

■   No

Issues/action points:-

Consultation   Will be subject to reporting at National Partnership Forum and Health and Wellbeing Group and CEO/PR Team Brief sessions

Document Classification   Open

1.   Background information

1.1   At its March 2023 meeting the Board approved a series of actions aimed at responding to the 2022 SCRA staff survey. The 2022 survey results were amongst the most challenging the organisation has ever faced and came in the midst of a building public sector funding crisis, a post pandemic series of organisational, operational and societal challenge a cost of living crisis in the UK and ever increasing tensions over staff pay, reward and recognition. The 2022 staff survey came just weeks after SCRA announced a vacancy freeze following the acute uncertainty in the run up to the Scottish Government Emergency budget, where the agreed in year support to the organisation was deemed under threat.

1.2   Despite much of the economic and policy context and levers being outwith SCRA's control, the organisation embarked on an ambitious plan of actions to address the downward slide of key measures such as:
- morale,
- job security,
- confidence in the future of the organisation
- management of change
- deterioration in pay
- drift of our reward structure in comparison to other comparable roles across Local Authorities and other public bodies in the justice sector.

2.   Our programme of work in response to the 2022 staff survey

2.1   The following action plan was presented to the Board in March 2023 and approved;-

2.2   Pay and reward – key actions

- maximise year on year cost of living increases for SCRA staff within the parameters of Ministerial policy.
- separate incremental progression from annual cost of living increases
- undertake a full pay and reward benchmarking exercise with UNISON as part of our 23/24 pay discussions.
- seek approval to review the role of the Children's Reporter in light of the recommendations of the Hearing System Working Group

2.3   Workload – key actions

- maximise the investment required to fulfil the workload requirements for SCRA arising from the Children's Care and Justice Bill.
- We will proactively work with SG on a stable and sufficient financial framework for implementing the HSWG recommendations
- continue to make resource shifts between operational teams to improve alignment between assessed demands and staffing, using our existing resource allocation framework

- secure the extension of the vast majority of fixed term posts for 23/24 and seek integrate these roles through turnover in establishment.
- commence work on optimising ways of working between Reporters and Locality Support Administrators, reducing where possible unnecessary transactional work via a revised operational model (target operating model)
- commence a programme of activity in 2023/4 aimed at stabilising our operational model and movement toward improving overall efficiency and effectiveness in our work improved CSAS functionality

2.4 Morale – key actions

- We will continue to build on the successful programme of work on health and wellbeing across SCRA – with a focus on individual and collective health, team building, respect, kindness and a positive organisational culture
- We will continue to build on the clear improvements in our multi-channel, multi-mode communications work, continue to commit to a culture of openness and transparency, increase the visibility of the Senior Team and the Board.
- We continue to try and work the highest principles of engagement and consultation in Partnership with UNISON. In 2023/4 we will work within the National Partnership Forum to refresh and update any aspects of the Partnership Agreement to ensure these principles are as visible across SCRA.
- We will deliver a comprehensive plan of support and training in support of the delivery of the Locality Support Administrator job description, roles and responsibilities
- We will build upon the progress made in recent staff survey results on areas such as direct support from line managers, working in a supportive team and job/role enjoyment

2.5 Managing Change – key actions

- put in place a comprehensive programme of training for all managers on the Scottish Government Quality Improvement model. This is already driving improvements and inclusive tests of change at team and locality level.
- recommended the Professional Managers Award after a suspension during the pandemic
- We are implementing a comprehensive package of measures to establish a programme board and project management structure across SCRA, including investment in staff to support these arrangements.
- deliver a targeted programme of learning and skills development with the aim of improving the confidence and effectiveness of the 15% or so of the workforce who expressed a need for more intensive help and training

2.6   We have made progress on all of these key actions – a tabular summary of progress is shown at appendix C.

3.   2023 SCRA survey

3.1   The results of the 2023 staff survey are shown at appendix A. In total 261 staff members completed the survey which is 54% of all staff. This compares with 249 staff in 2022.

3.2   Key results from 2023 staff survey

3.3   A summary of key staff survey results is shown at appendix A. A comparison of highest and lowest movement in the survey results is shown at appendix B. Overall the staff survey shows modest improvements across most core areas. The lowest scoring items remain confidence in raising issues with the senior team, followed by pay and ability to challenge the way things are done in SCRA. Even so some, albeit small progress was made in all of these 3 lowest scoring indicators.

- **I feel confident in the future of SCRA** – this measure has shown significant improvement, (+18 pp) although in the individual comments continue to emphasise the uncertainty as a result of the Hearings for Children report recommendations, the challenge to SCRA's future role in the Hearing System and the known financial instability of the organisation**.**
- **Confidence in SCRA to manage future change** – also has shown improvement in areas such how staff will be supported to manage change (+19 pp) as well as the organisations overall ability to manage change (+24pp)
- **Challenging the way things are done in SCRA** – whilst this remains one of the lowest rated areas of the survey – there have been reasonable levels of improvement since 2022 with the overall number of people reporting feeling confident increasing by 22 points

3.4   To some extent these more encouraging results reflect the investment of time and effort both SCRA and its trade union partner UNISON have made in trying to improve our approach to change management, improved communication and engagement, culminating in an enhanced and refreshed partnership agreement. The completion and publication of the Hearings for Children Report will also have contributed to a gaining sense of confidence in the future of SCRA and the Children's Reporters continued relevance and function. This was enhanced by the visibility of SCRA staff engagement work and the resultant influence and impact that it had in the Hearing System Working Group final deliberations.

3.5   A key area of focus in the past year was completion of the revised partnership agreement a renewed focus on staff engagement, participation and perspective, prioritising further improvements in a sense of openness and transparency and shortening lines of communication. We recognised in 2022 that the unhappiness connected with the review of Locality Support Administrators (LSA) made a significant impact on measures such as this. in 2023 we saw a considerable commitment and expansion of a supported implementation programme. It is clear from the small number of comments across the staff survey that there remain some areas of concern that need to be addressed in terms of training, skills development and confidence.

- **SCRA's vision, values and priorities** – the results in 2023 remain strong at 88%, showing a small increase from 2022
- **Morale, enjoyment of my job and pride in SCRA** – overall, whist the vast majority of people enjoy their job (89%) morale remains much lower than we would want at 56%. The single biggest factor influencing morale mentioned by staff in the comments section was workload.
- **Support from my line manager and working in my team –** the previous strong showing across these results in the mid 80% continued into 2023

3.6 We need to continue to focus on the multiple variables that contribute to morale in the work place – control, autonomy, engagement, influence, well managed change, optimism for the future, wellbeing, manageable workload and reward. We see some of them recovering from 2022 – but not all and not all at the same rate and time. The creation of budget stability, in turn allowing us to end the staff vacancy freeze an increased sense of future and forward plan, more clarity in the strategic and policy landscape around the hearing system all contributed to creating the conditions where morale may improve and a small improvement was evident and needs to be built upon.

- **Workload –** as suggested earlier – workload and morale have a clear link. Whilst a sense of acceptable workload did improve in 2023, 1 in 5 staff in SCRA report having an unacceptable workload, with the key reasons attributed to volume of work and insufficient staffing levels
- **Terms, conditions and pay** - whilst overall terns and conditions in SCRA rate relatively highly (74%) and are improving (+13pp), satisfaction with pay remains very low at 32%. Whilst SCRA has now agreed a 2 year pay settlement with UNISON to 2024/25 despite being at the high end of public sector agreements, remain below headline rates of inflation and occurs in the context of a prolonged and well recognised crisis in the cost of living affecting all of our staff.
- **Health and Wellbeing of the SCRA workforce** – the reported health and wellbeing of the workforce remains strong despite the challenges faced around workload and capacity. SCRA was an early adopter of strong programmes of work – particularly on mental health, stress and anxiety and these continue to be rated highly through individual comments. Notable in the last 2 years has been the extent to which health and wellbeing has been embedded in teams and the degree of energy, dynamism and forward planning of wellbeing leads.
- **Office Environment –** scores very strongly and the individual comments on the improvements happening across our estate to modernise and make best use of space are highly positive. Our biggest challenge in the next few years is to continue momentum and access to capital as well as offload avoidable revenue costs to be reinvested in front line services.
- **Supervision and engagement from my line manager** - all 3 key measures are reported in the range 80-85%. Line management support, supervision and responsivity to individual needs remains a cornerstone of the SCRA approach and current and future programmes of work aim to continue this though leadership and management learning and development. Quite a number of individual comments across the survey refer to the changing demands on our managers and leaders, the scope of expectation and span of control and responsibility. There are some signs of stress and pressure emerging. These

are areas we need to be alert and responsive to – we will continue an open and honest dialogue with managers about how we can evolve and develop our model and support within SCRA.

- **Communication in SCRA –** quality of the channels of communication remains high at 88% - time to meaningfully stay connected across SCRA is under pressure and undoubtedly related to workload and capacity pressures
- **Leadership in SCRA –** confidence to make contact and raise issues with the senior team remains lower than we would wish and aspire to (47%) although overall confidence in the leadership of SCRA is increasing (75%)
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –** for many years this has been some of the strongest results in the annual survey and continues in this trajectory
- **Harassment, victimisation and discrimination in SCRA –** we have developed and strengthened this section for 2023 – a third of the survey respondents report having witnessed harassment, victimisation and/or discrimination in SCRA, 43% reported it and of that number 71% felt it was taken seriously.
- **Learning and Development in SCRA –** there is a massive appetite for learning and development in SCRA. 78% of respondents felt the organisation supported individual learning and development goals – there were a number of barriers for some staff identified to taking up learning and development opportunities – such as workload and topic relevance – but the vast majority of respondents rated this area positively. SCRA's capacity to deliver ongoing learning opportunities is an area that will require current and future investment – not least in light of the Hearings for Children report, UNCRC, and the Care and Justice Bill proposals.

Appendix A - more detailed findings

Table 1

Type of post	Responses with comparison to prior year	Proportion of responses	Reponse rate
Head Office staff/Business Support staff	31 (40)	12%	56%
Locality Reporter Manager/Head Office Manager	35 (36)	13%	61%
Locality Support Manager	14 (8)	5%	54%
Senior Manager/EMT	5 (6)	2%	71%
Senior Practitioner/Reporter/Trainee Reporter/Assistant Reporter	105 (99)	40%	50%
Locality Support Administrator/Trainee Support Administrator/Modern Apprentice/	71 (60)	27%	51%
Total	261 (249)	100%	54%

Table 2

Area	Responses with comparison to prior year	Proportion of responses	Reponse rate
Ayrshire	23 (27)	9%	55%
Central	19 (15)	7%	49%
Glasgow	28 (25)	11%	56%
Grampian	19 (14)	7%	59%
Head Office/Business Support	53 (60)	20%	58%
Highlands and Islands	17 (13)	7%	68%
Lanarkshire/Dumfries & Galloway	32 (25)	12%	55%
North Strathclyde	20 (19)	8%	36%
South East	21 (21)	8%	53%
Tayside/Fife	29 (27)	11%	58%
Total	261 (249)	100%	54%

1. I feel confident in the future of SCRA

69% of staff who responded said yes – they were confident in the future of SCRA whilst 31% indicated no. Both these measures showed increases because the option of 'don't know' was deleted in 2023 making precise direct comparisons difficult. Last year 31% of respondents answered don't know. The increase in those answering yes this year was +18% and no was +13%. This suggests overall a small moderate increase from last year.

Individual comments

This question generated 80 individual responses, raising over 90 discrete issues.

By far the most significant was uncertainty about SCRA and the Children's Reporters future role in the Hearing system as a result of the Hearings for Children Report – just under 30% of all responses related to the Promise/Hearing System Working Group generating uncertainty about the future (and very existence of SCRA) and a further 14% about SCRA's future role being weakened or undermined.

A further 14% felt there was too much change generally, 7% lack of government support and funding and a range of other views covering areas such as Care and Justice Bill, poor leadership of change, general funding and lack of resources, introduction of technology and new roles were mentioned.

2. Confidence in SCRA to manage future change

68% of respondents answered yes to this question – and 31% answered no. Again this question was modified from last year to delete 'don't know' responses. Last year 33% of respondents answered didn't know. In 2023 the number of people who answered yes rose by 24% and no by 9% suggesting a reasonably strong shift in positive views in 2023. Communication and engagement continue to be the areas most highly rated in terms of continuing progress on confidence in the organisations ability to manage change.

Table 3

The things I need to feel supported to respond to future changes are (you can choose more than one)	Count (prior year)	% (prior year)
Improved communication	157 (141)	63% (59%)
Direct engagement	138 (110)	55% (46%)
More consultation	75 (79)	30% (33%)
More regular team meetings	71 (64)	29% (27%)
More learning/training opportunities	121 (105)	49% (44%)
Support from my line manager	90 (60)	36% (25%)
Other (please specify)	22 (27)	9% (11%)
	Yes	No

What I need to feel supported to respond to future change – individual comments

22 people responded to this raising a broad range of issues – the most common was ensuring that we listen to the impact of change on front line staff, that staff remain engaged and have time to be able to do so and that ongoing communication is regular and meaningful.

3. Challenging the way things are done in SCRA

66% of respondent felt able to challenge the way things are done in SCRA, with 34% feeling the opposite. In last years survey 27% answered 'don't know'. In 2023 those answering yes increased by 22% and those answering no by 5%.

> **Individual comments**
>
> There were 57 individual responses raising 60 issues. The largest single issue raised was that challenging issues in SCRA with senior management would make no difference (28%), followed by the need for more consultation, engagement and active listening by senior management (25%) and direct access to senior managers (17%) by front line staff. 1 in 10 of those who made comment felt that trust between senior managers and staff could be improved and managers needed to understand staff experience more. A range of other comments (> 3%) felt that promotion of stronger trade union and/or staff and collective representation would be helpful.

4. SCRA's vision, values and priorities

88% of survey respondents agreed that they understood SCRA's vision, values and priorities over the next 12 months with 12% disagreeing. The option of 'don't know' was removed in 2023. In the previous year 13% of people said they didn't know. In 2023's survey those who responded positively increased by 8% and those who disagreed by 5%, suggesting a small increase from over the last 12 months, albeit from a very high previous rating.

5. Morale, enjoyment of my job and pride in SCRA

89% of survey respondents overall felt they enjoyed their job an increase of 6% from 2022.

Table 4

	Yes	No
Overall, I enjoy my job	89% (up 6pp)	11% (down 6pp)

Whilst overall enjoyment on peoples jobs remains high, morale in SCRA continues to struggle with only 56% of respondents agreeing that morale is good, 23% were neutral on this question and 21% feel that morale is poor.

Table 5

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
Overall, my morale at work is good	56% (up 5pp)	23% (no change)	21% (down 5pp)

73% of respondents felt proud to work for SCRA, whilst 3% did not and 24% were neutral. 4% of responses were attributed to 'don't know' in 2022 and in 2023 there was a 4% increase in the reported sense of pride in working for SCRA.

Morale - individual comments

90 people provided comments in this section with 142 individual issues raised – key themes are:

- workload –   18%
- shortage of staffing –   8%
- better line management –   8%
- poor pay –   6%
- too much change –   6%
- better recognition of staff –   6%
- administrative burden –   6%
- sickness absence of colleagues   4%
- staff turnover –   4%
- temporary contractual arrangements –   4%
- poor communication –   4%
- poor senior management –   4%
- inconsistent application of agile/flexible working –   4%
- workload inequity –   2%
- micro management –   2%

A range of other issues were mentioned by in turn by ~ 1% of respondents-
- poor relationships at work
- behaviour of other colleagues
- favouritism in decision making
- bullying
- lack of learning opportunities
- introduction of digital technologies
- lack of autonomy
- career progression
- status of SCRA in hearing system

6. Support from my line manager and working in my team

Table 6

		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
I get the support I need from my line manager		80% (up 1pp)	10% (down 5pp)	10% (up 6pp)	n/a (down 2pp)
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
My manager supports me to work in an agile way?		84% (up 1pp)	11% (down 4pp)	5% (up 3pp)	
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
I get the support I need from my Locality/Team colleagues		86% (up 11pp)	12% (down 6pp)	1% (down 5pp)	n/a (no change)
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
My team are accessible and support each other while we work in agile ways?		84% (up 6pp)	11% (down 4pp)	5% (down 2pp)	

Support from line managers continues to be experienced positively by 80% of respondents a marginal increase from 2022. Those who disagree rose by 6 percentage points to 10%. There was significant increase in those reporting working in a supportive team (75% - 86%) and the previous high levels of support experienced for agile working have continued.

7. Workload

63% of respondents reported that their workload was acceptable to them, 18% disagreed and 18% were neutral. The category 'don't know' was removed in the 2023 survey – only 1% didn't know in the previous year. The number of people who agreed that there workforce was acceptable increased by 14%, the number of people who neither agreed or disagreed (neutral) decreased by 11%. The number of people who reported regularly working at weekends and non working days decreased by 7%, those who reported occasionally working in this way was 43% - a small increase on the year before and those who never worked in this way also showed a small increase.

Table 7

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
I have an acceptable workload	63% (up 14pp)	18% (down 11pp)	18% (down 2pp)	n/a (down 1pp)

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
Do you regularly work at weekends/non working days (not planned overtime)?	17% (down 7pp)	43% (up 1pp)	41% (up 5pp)

Workload – individual comments

There were 62 individual comments raising 75 issues. The issues raised were

Staff shortages/staffing capacity	21%
Volume of work	11%
Role needs reviewed (specifically LRM/LSM)	9%
Demands of Court	9%
Capability of colleagues	9%
Inconsistent demands	8%
Inequitable distribution of resources between/within teams	8%
Lack of time in contracted hours	7%
Complexity of work has increased	5%
Insufficient training to carry our role	4%
Too much administrative work	4%
Demands of the PDA	4%
Limitations/performance of CSAS	4%
LSA role review	4%
Can't take time back after excess hours Fair allocation of work To much change Specialist role with no cover	1%

Table 8

If you answered regularly, why is this? You can choose more than one option.	Count (prior year)	% (prior year)
Managing my workload	40 (56)	62% (67%)
Pressures of workload	36 (61)	55% (73%)
Supporting team members	18 (27)	28% (32%)
Quieter working environment	10 (19)	15% (23%)
Suits my personal circumstances	16 (14)	25% (17%)
Providing cover	7 (9)	11% (11%)
Keeping on top of emails	27 (35)	42% (42%)
Other (please specify)	12 (15)	18% (18%)

Working regularly outwith contracted hours- Individual comments

There were 12 individual comments, raising 13 issues.

The majority (33%) mentioned unable to meet demands within part time working patterns, followed by demands of coursework on training courses (PDA) (25%), balancing caring responsibilities (25%), demands in court related work (18%) issues with working patterns (8%) and workload exceeding contracted hours (8%).

Overall 89% of respondents felt able to manage good work-life balance.

Table 9

	Yes	No
I can manage a good balance between home and work life	89% (up 2pp)	11% (down 2pp)

8. Autonomy, tools, challenge, feedback and engagement

Table 10

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
I am given the necessary autonomy to carry out my role	81% (down 3pp)	12% (up 3pp)	7% (up 3pp)	n/a (down 2pp)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
I have the right equipment to carry out my role?	99% (up 17pp)	1% (down 14pp)	n/a (down 3pp)	
If you answered no, please specify...	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
I am sufficiently challenged in my role	77% (down 3pp)	18% (up 5pp)	5% (down 1pp)	n/a (down 1pp)
I am consulted on decisions that affect my work or role	55% (up 8pp)	28% (up 1pp)	17% (down 6pp)	n/a (down 3pp)
I get clear feedback on how I am performing in my job	72% (up 2pp)	20% (up 2pp)	8% (down 3pp)	n/a (down 2pp)

There were small variations in these measures – sense of autonomy, whilst down by 3% remained high at 80%. Similarly feeling challenged in role (77%) was slightly down on 2022, receiving feedback on performance slightly up at 72% and feeling consulted on decisions showed a moderate improvement from last year. There was a more significant increase in the number of people who felt that they had the right equipment to carry out their roles.

Right equipment to carry out my role – individual comments

There were 33 individual comments raising 48 issues

- 33% off issues raised cited the lack of access to SCRA mobile phones to conduct their work
- 13% of issues identified lack of sufficient hearing room/virtual hearing hardware
- 10%- raised issues of poor performance/lack of office based printers
- 8% focussed on ongoing concerns about CSAS performance and functionality
- 6% identified network performance issues, access to split screens at home, connectivity at court respectively

Single issues raised included – lack of home workstation, lack of allocated desk in the office, issues with home connectivity, lack of printer at home and desire to see recording devices assist with precognition work.

9. Terms, conditions and pay

Table 11

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
I am satisfied with the overall terms and conditions package that SCRA offers	74% (up 13pp)	14% (down 3pp)	12% (down 9pp)	n/a (down 1pp)
Compared to people doing a similar job in other organisations I feel my pay is reasonable	32% (up 6pp)	22% (up 2pp)	46% (no change)	n/a (down 7pp)

Satisfaction with overall terms and conditions in SCRA increased by 13 percentage points to 74%. Whilst the question was changed this year (by removing 'don't know') the impact based on previous year seems minimal.

Satisfaction with pay against comparable roles remains very low at 32%.

10. Health and Wellbeing of the SCRA workforce

Respondents generally reported high levels of both physical and mental health at work, a position retained from last years survey. There was a drop (-7%) in the degree to which respondents felt that communication on health and wellbeing was sufficiently regular or useful, albeit satisfaction remained at a relatively high level (78%).

Table 12

	Yes	No	Don't know
Generally, my mental health at work is good	81% (up 9pp)	19% (down 1pp)	n/a (down 7pp)
Generally, my physical health at work is good	90% (down 1pp)	10% (up 4pp)	n/a (down 3pp)
	Yes	**No**	
I believe that SCRA provides me with regular, useful and proactive information or opportunity to improve/maintain my health and wellbeing at work?	78% (down 7pp)	22% (up 7pp)	

By far and away the most significant factors in supporting health and wellbeing were rated as the ability to work in an agile and flexible way, followed by support and empathy for health and wellbeing issues from line managers and colleagues, awareness of health and well being issues and the visibility of both national and local groups promoting health and wellbeing.

Table 13

What information and support have I found supportive to my mental health at work? You can choose more than one option.	Count (prior year)	% (prior year)
Increased awareness of mental health issues across the workforce	81 (94)	33% (41%)
Empathy and support shown by managers and colleagues	137 (117)	55% (51%)
Access to counselling and other EAP services (HELP EAP)	49 (38)	20% (17%)
Consideration and discussion about reasonable adjustments in the workplace	42 (31)	17% (14%)
Access to Mental health first aid trained colleagues – who can listen and signpost for professional support	23 (13)	9% (6%)
Promotion of agile working	151 (161)	61% (70%)
Promotion of flexible working	134 (124)	54% (54%)
National and Local wellbeing groups designing a plan of activity to support wellbeing	52 (55)	21% (24%)
Access to personal resilience technique support e.g. mindfulness, mentoring, coaching	33 (28)	13% (12%)
Access to occupational health advice	25 (n/a)	10% (n/a)
Not applicable	25 (19)	10% (8%)
Other (please specify)	10 (10)	4% (4%)
	Yes	**No**

11. Office Environment

While SCRA continues to work on a comprehensive improvement programme of our estate and introduce SMART working environments and improve efficient use of space – we are doing so on the basis of a very positive view of our existing working environments across Scotland.

Table 14

	Yes	No	Not applicable/ or WFH
I believe SCRA provides me with a safe and welcoming working environment when I work from the office/Hearings suite	89% (up 2pp)	11% (up 4pp)	n/a (down 6pp)

12. Supervision and engagement from my line manager

In recent years the respondent ratings to support from their line manager has improved consistently. In 2023 that progress is largely maintained (see table 4) – and built upon through regular discussions (85%) and team meetings (80%).

Table 15

	Yes	No
I have regular one to one discussions with my line manager	85% (no change)	15% (no change)
If yes, do these discussions cover… (you can choose more than one option)	Count (prior year)	% (prior year)
Personal issues	162 (133)	72% (64%)
Work issues	220 (207)	98% (99%)
Team issues	174 (167)	77% (80%)
My development	162 (140)	72% (67%)
My wellbeing	169 (143)	75% (68%)
Other (please specify)	12 (3)	5% (1%)
	Yes	No
I attend regular team meetings	80% (no change)	20% (no change)

13. Communication in SCRA

We have experienced many years of steady growth in the ratings of internal SCRA communications. This year there have been small changes in peoples ratings of ability to stay connected in the organisation (-4%), alongside modest decrease on time to read and digest communications (-7%).

	Yes	No	
			16
I find meaningful ways to stay connected within the organisation	68% (down 4pp)	32% (up 4pp)	
If yes, please give an example…			
I find that the communications from SCRA (either via all staff emails, the Team Brief, Team Brief virtual sessions, webinars or from Connect) give me sufficient, timely and accessible information?	88% (no change)	12% (no change)	
I make the time to read/and or digest the communications issued either at local or national level?	70% (down 7pp)	30% (up 7pp)	

14. Individual comments - meaningful ways to stay connected within the organisation

73 individuals commented on this mentioning 122 ways of staying connected

SCRA intranet/Connect	19%
MS Teams and email	10%
Informal team discussions	10%
Team meetings and events	10%
Team Brief	9%
National Networks	7%
Face to face meetings	7%
SCRA training events	7%
Wellbeing activities	3%
National Reporter	3%
Mindfulness, WhatsApp group	2%

15. Leadership in SCRA

Confidence in the senior team of the organisation has been an area of significant challenge over a number of years. In 2023 we removed the option of 'don't know' from the survey. Respondents confidence in raising issues via the senior team remains low at 57%, with most of the shift from 2022 being from 'don't know' to 'no'. Confidence in the leadership of the organisation has shown a reasonably significant improvement to 75%.

Table 17

	Yes	No	Don't know
I know who the Executive Management Team (EMT) are?	71% (up 1pp)	29% (up 9pp)	n/a (down 11pp)
I feel able to contact EMT or a member of EMT, if I have an issue I want to raise	47% (up 3pp)	53% (up 18pp)	n/a (down 21pp)
I'm confident in the leadership of the organisation	75% (up 20pp)	25% (up 13pp)	n/a (down 33pp)

16. Equality, diversity and inclusion

Fair treatment, respect and inclusion remain highly rated in SCRA. Whilst the 'don't know' response was deleted in 2023 – the majority of previous don't know responses have moved to positive ratings on SCRA commitment to equality and inclusion (95%), valuing difference (91%) and expression of ideas (80%). Personal- (98%) and line management responsibility (94%) for equality, inclusion and diversity remains very high.

	Yes	No	Don't know

Table 18

I am treated fairly and respected in SCRA ?	91% (up 11pp)	9% (up 2pp)	n/a (down 13pp)
SCRA is committed to equalities, diversity and inclusion	95% (up 7pp)	5% (up 2pp)	n/a (down 10pp)
I think that SCRA respects individual differences (e.g. cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas, etc.)	91% (up 11pp)	9% (up 4pp)	n/a (down 15pp)
SCRA provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs	80% (up 12pp)	20% (up 11pp)	n/a (down 23pp)

	Yes	No	Don't know
I understand my individual responsibility for inclusion and diversity and how this relates to my role.	98% (up 2pp)	2% (no change)	n/a (down 3pp)
My line manager demonstrates commitment to and support of inclusion and diversity	94% (up 15pp)	6% (up 4pp)	n/a (down 18pp)

17. Harassment, victimisation and discrimination in SCRA

This is section that has been jointly developed between UNISON and SCRA in order to establish a baseline set of measures on harassment, victimisation and discrimination across SCRA. Over a third of respondents reported having witnessed behaviour that can be defined as harassment, discrimination or victimisation in SCRA, the vast majority involving a colleague. Only 41% of respondents reported this incidence, despite 67% feeling confident about reporting such issues. When it was reported 71% of respondents felt that it was taken seriously by the organisation.

Table 19

If I had a concern about harassment or discrimination I know where and how to report that concern	83% (down 2pp)	17% (up 8pp)	n/a (down 6pp)
I would feel confident about reporting harassment, discrimination or victimisation.	67%	33%	
Have you every witnessed harassment, discrimination or victimisation while working for SCRA?	34%	66%	

If yes, was the perpetrator...	Count	%
Colleague	66	79%
Member of the public	11	13%
Professional	2	2%
Other (please specify)	7	8%
	Yes	No
If yes, did you report the harassment, discrimination or victimisation?	43%	57%
If you reported it, was it treated seriously?	71%	29%

18. Learning and Development in SCRA

The strong results established over the last period in SCRA have continued. A number of the questions have been amended in 2023 in that the 'don't know' option was removed. Whilst direct comparability is more difficult there is a reasonably strong

growth in opportunities to share knowledge and experience (82%) and support for individual development goals (78%). The main inhibitor of staff take up of learning continues to be workload and relevance.

Table 20

I have opportunities to share my skills and knowledge with others in the organisation.	82% (up 13pp)	18% (up 3pp)	n/a (down 16pp)
I feel my skills and experience are valued and utilised by SCRA	75% (up 13pp)	25% (up 7pp)	n/a (down 20pp)
SCRA supports me in exploring my learning and development goals and plans?	78% (up 17pp)	22% (up 7pp)	n/a (down 24pp)
Activities I have participated in the last 12 months include (you can choose all that apply)	Count (prior year)	% (prior year)	
Webinars	138 (139)	53% (57%)	
e-learning	218 (184)	84% (75%)	
Team Brief virtual sessions	126 (168)	49% (69%)	
Staff Event 2023	111 (n/a)	43% (n/a)	
Self directed learning	106 (84)	41% (34%)	
Face to face training	159 (123)	61% (50%)	
Groups or networks	105 (92)	41% (38%)	
Shadowing or mentoring (within SCRA)	69 (46)	27% (19%)	
External shadowing or mentoring	15 (10)	6% (4%)	
Not applicable (haven't participated in any)	5 (8)	2% (3%)	
	Yes	No	Not applicable / Don't know
These activities are helping my personal or career development in SCRA...	77% (up 12pp)	19% (up 5pp)	4% (down 14pp) / n/a (down 3pp)

If not, I haven't been able to participate in training due to...	Count (prior year)	% (prior year)
Lack of relevant opportunities	20 (23)	50% (44%)
Workload	20 (35)	50% (67%)
Other (please specify)	10 (11)	25% (21%)

Appendix B - range of responses

Areas with the most postive responses — Percentage

Q24 I have the right equipment to carry out my role?	99%
Q56 I understand my individual responsibility for inclusion and diversity and how this relates to my role.	98%
Q47 SCRA is committed to equalities, diversity and inclusion	95%
Q57 My line manager demonstrates commitment to and support of inclusion and diversity	94%
Q48 I think that SCRA respects individual differences (e.g. cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas, etc.)	91%

Areas with the most negative responses — Percentage

Q44 I feel able to contact EMT or a member of EMT, if I have an issue I want to raise	53%
Q29 Compared to people doing a similar job in other organisations I feel my pay is reasonable	46%
Q7 I feel able and confident to challenge the way things are done in SCRA?	34%
Q4 I am confident that I will be effectively supported in future changes in SCRA?	33%
Q6 Do you have confidence in the organisation to manage future change successfully?	32%

Areas with the largest changes in positive values — Percentage point diff

Q6 Do you have confidence in the organisation to manage future change successfully? (68% in 2023 vs 44% in 2022)	24pp
Q7 I feel able and confident to challenge the way things are done in SCRA? (66% in 2023 vs 44% in 2022)	22pp
Q45 I'm confident in the leadership of the organisation (75% in 2023 vs 55% in 2022)	20pp
Q4 I am confident that I will be effectively supported in future changes in SCRA? (67% in 2023 vs 48% in 2022)	19pp
Q3 I feel confident about the future of SCRA... (69% in 2023 vs 51% in 2022)	18pp

Areas with the largest changes in negative values — Percentage point diff

Q44 I feel able to contact EMT or a member of EMT, if I have an issue I want to raise (53% in 2023 vs 34% in 2022)	18pp
Q3 I feel confident about the future of SCRA... (31% in 2023 vs 18% in 2022)	13pp
Q4 I am confident that I will be effectively supported in future changes in SCRA? (33% in 2023 vs 20% in 2022)	13pp
Q45 I'm confident in the leadership of the organisation (25% in 2023 vs 12% in 2022)	13pp
Q49 SCRA provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs (20% in 2023 vs 9% in 2022)	11pp

Appendix C- 2022 staff survey – action plan update

1.	Pay and reward – key actions	Progress	Status
a	We will continue to try and maximise year on year cost of living increases for SCRA staff within the parameters of Ministerial policy.	2 x pay deals have been successfully negotiated during cost of living crisis. Whilst well below headline inflation have been at the higher end of that allowable by Scottish Ministers	Achieved until 2024/25
b	We will examine with SG pay policy the potential to separate incremental progression (to those entitled to progression) from annual cost of living increases should negotiations remain protracted in future years	Agreed	Achieved 2023/24
c	We will undertake a full pay and reward benchmarking exercise with UNISON as part of our 23/24 pay discussions. We will use the results of this benchmarking to assist with our ongoing discussions with the SG regarding pay policy	Underway with UNISON	Ongoing and will feed into the Review of the Role of the Reporter
d	We will bring a proposal to the Board in September 2023 seeking approval to review the role of the Children's Reporter in light of the (likely) recommendations of the Hearing System Working Group recommendations. We will create an internal team from across SCRA to	Approved by Board September 2023	Project Team being assembled Q4 2023/24 – aim to complete whole review and business case Q4 2024/25

	assist with this review, will do so in partnership with UNISON and will seek external capacity and assistance where necessary.		
2	**Workload – key actions**	**Progress**	**Status**
a	We will seek to maximise the investment required to fulfil the workload requirements for SCRA arising from the Childrens Care and Justice Bill. We will proactively work with SG on a stable and sufficient financial framework for implementing the HSWG recommendations	Full assessment has been captured in CCJB financial memorandum. Circa £900k revenue transitional arrangements secured in 2023/24. Balance planned in budget scenarios for 2024/25 for consideration and Board Jan and March 2024	Ongoing (CCJB) Still to commence (HFC) – SG policy position delayed to Dec 2023
b	We will continue to make resource shifts between operational teams to improve alignment between assessed demands and staffing, using our existing resource allocation framework	Delivers as required throughout 2023/24 – EMT continue to regularly monitor workload versus resource ratios approving short and long term resource shifts where required.	Ongoing
c	We have secured the extension of the vast majority of fixed term posts for 23/24 and will seek opportunities to integrate these roles through turnover in establishment.	Achieved – reliance of fixed term posts greatly reduced. Significant stabilisation across all roles	Significant progress – continue to monitor
d	Having achieved assimilation of the Standard Operating Model across the service, we have further committed to ongoing improvement to our organisation wide 'Target Operating Model'. This will include optimising ways of working between Reporters and Locality Support Administrators, reducing where possible unnecessary transactional work.	Ongoing – Target Operating Model work has commenced. Operational Development Team has been established to act as dynamic conduit between Localities, SOM's and Digital Team priorities	Underway – Target Operating Model – 2025/26. Incremental improvement and developments ongoing
e	We will embark on a programme of activity in 2023/4 aimed at stabilising our operational	As above – in addition Digital Work Programmes 3- 6 planned out for	Ongoing through digital work packages 3 – 6 in

		2024/25. Digital Champions developed across localities creating synergy with Digital and OD team	2024/25 and Operational Development Team plan 2023/24. Will be expanded to align with next corporate planning cycle and support to develop and implement TOM
	model and movement toward improving overall efficiency and effectiveness in our work – including a focus on better understanding and improving the intersectionality of operating procedures, processes, practice requirements and CSAS functionality in order to tackle the concerns about reducing administrative transactions.		
3.	**Morale**	**Progress**	**Status**
a	We will continue to build on the successful programme of work on health and wellbeing across SCRA – with a focus on individual and collective health, team building, respect, kindness and a positive organisational culture	Health and Wellbeing programme now very well embedded across SCRA. Wellbeing Champions and wellbeing plans in all areas of the organisation	Ongoing and showing strength and dynamism – highly rated in staff survey
b	We will continue to build on the clear improvements in our multi-channel, multi-mode communications work, continue to commit to a culture of openness and transparency, increase the visibility of the Senior Team and the Board	All channels of communication developed and regularised – highly retd in staff survey	Capacity continues to in part inhibit engagement and uptake in minority of staff
c	We continue to try and work the highest principles of engagement and consultation in Partnership with UNISON. In 2023/4 we will work within the National Partnership Forum to refresh and update any aspects of the Partnership Agreement to ensure these principles are as visible across SCRA.	Partnership Agreement refreshed and updated jointly by SCRA and UNISON	Series of UNISON SCRA workshops will kick of programme of visibility and implementation (1 Feb 2024)
d	We will deliver a comprehensive plan of support and training in support of the delivery of the Locality Support Administrator job description, roles and responsibilities	Commenced March 2023	Under constant review in terms of impact, reach and sufficiency.

e	We will build upon the progress made in recent staff survey results on areas such as direct support from line managers, working in a supportive team and job/role enjoyment	Ongoing through management development programme	Ongoing – remains highly rated in staff survey. Need to assess ongoing support and capacity for managers across SCRA as signs of stress and stretch emerge
4	**Managing Change**	**Progress**	**Status**
a	We are putting place a comprehensive programme of training for all managers on the Scottish Government Quality Improvement model. This is already driving improvements and inclusive tests of change at team and locality level.	Complete – many QI projects have now become tests of change as part of ongoing work under Programme Board. Feedback from managers has been encouraging. Small cohort has entered SCiL programme	Complete – assess next phase.
b	Over and above this we have recommenced the Professional Managers Award after a suspension during the pandemic	Ongoing – cohort 3 now in place. Feedback positive and dynamic	Continue to invest in future cohorts as required
c	We are implementing a comprehensive package of measures to establish a programme board and project management structure across SCRA, including investment in staff to support these arrangements. This work is aimed at providing more coherence, managed and well planned approach to managing change across SCRA and the wider Hearing System at an unprecedented time	Extensive programme board structure now developed overseeing 3 x core programmes – Care/Connect and Protect aligned to Corporate plan priorities and structure to 2027	Underway – staff group in place – programmes of work scoped and developing quickly
d	Following an in-depth survey of SCRA skills, undertaken by an independent expert organisation, we will deliver a targeted programme of learning and skills development	Range of training, mentoring coaching being delivered by Operational Development Team – priority 1 is the 15% of staff with self acknowledged	Ongoing – assess resources for 2024/25 in budget setting process.

with the aim of improving the confidence and effectiveness of the 15% or so of the workforce who expressed a need for more intensive help and training	ongoing learning and skills development needs	

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Overview of Policies

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive   **Date:** 31 January 2024

Report prepared by: Governance Officer

Recommendation:

The Board is asked to:-

a) Note the programme of policy reviews undertaken in 2024, as outlined in section 3.1.

b) Review and agree the schedule planned for 2023 and the proposed delegations for approval.

Reason for Report: Board discussion/approval

Resource Implications: Within available resources

Strategy: Within agreed plans

Equalities Duties: Equalities Impact Assessment not required (individual policies are subject to EQIA on agreement and/or point of review)

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

1. Introduction

1.1 The Board receives an annual overview on the range of policy reviews undertaken over the course of one year. Regular review of these policies, under EMT delegated authority, ensures that policies are consistent and effective and are up to date with regulations, legislation and advances in technology. The report also identifies policies that have previously been agreed as reserved to the Board and if subject to review, identifies a timeline for reporting.

1.2 This report covers the period from January to December 2023.

2. Overview of Policies

2.1 All policies are available to staff via Connect (SCRA's intranet).

2.2 To comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) all new/revised policies, processes and/or practices require an EHRIA. Significant progress has been made in ensuring this compliance and strong joint work has been established with the SCRA Equalities Review Group who offer support, quality assurance and direction as well as oversight of plans and refinements to negate or reduce any assessed impacts.

2.3 The HR Sub-Group of the National Partnership Forum deals with policies that affect employment and/or that may have an impact on staff at work.

All SCRA policies are routed via the Partnership Forum for consultation.

2.4 Health and Safety policies are monitored and tracked by the Health & Safety Committee.

2.5 The Board agreed in 2021 that policies which set direction, require specific high-level scrutiny and governance arrangements or are of a novel/controversial, public interest nature are reserved to and shall bebe routed via the Board for approval. This is also in line with best practice. These include;
- Whistleblowing,
- Risk Management,
- Fraud Policies
- Complaints
- Media Handling
- Organisational Change,
- Voluntary Severance/Redundancy Policy
- Major revisions to SCRA terms and conditions
- Overall Health & Safety Policy Statement
- Records Retention and Destruction Policy
- Anti-Harassment Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection & GDPR
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Board Code of Conduct

3. Review of Policies

3.1 Over the reporting period (December 2022 – December 2023) the following reviews of SCRA policy were undertaken. All of the policy areas are deemed within the delegated authority of the Executive Management Team. Work undertaken on policies and guidance will vary from full and comprehensive review to minor adjustments reflecting technical or legislative changes.

Function	Status	Title	Review schedule
HR	New	Inclusive Standards and Behaviours Framework	3 yearly
		Right to Disconnect	
	Revised	Travel Policy	3 yearly
		Recruitment & Selection Policy	
		Learning & Development Policy	
		Job Evaluation Policy	
		Probation Policy	
		How to enter a time & Expenses Claim	
		Flexible Retirement Guidance	
Health & Safety	Revised	Accident and Incident Policy 2022	As required
		Accident and Incident guidance Note	
		Eye test Policy	
		First Aid Policy	
		Manual Handling Policy	
		No Smoking Policy	
		Sharps and Bodily Fluids Policy	
		Violence in the Workplace Policy	
		Substance Misuse Policy	
		Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Policy	
		Fire Policy (and associated Guidance note)	
		Lone Working Policy	
	Other	Flu Vaccination programme for staff	Annually

Function	Status	Title	Review schedule
Information Technology Security	Revised	The Information Security Handbook Version 4.1	Annually
		Data Classification Policy	New
		USB Policy	As required
		Cyber-Security strategy	
Finance	Revised	Schedule of Delegated Authority *	Annually
		Procurement Policy	
		Fraud Policy	
		Risk Management Policy	
		Procurement Policy	
		The Corporate Procurement Strategy 2020 – 2023	

*This is the scheme of delegated authority from the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive to the EMT and direct reports of the EMT. The scheme of delegation to the PR/CE is determined by the Scottish Government Framework Agreement for SCRA

4 Programme for 2024
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Function	Status	Title
HR	Review	Performance Appraisal Scheme**
		Staff code of Conduct
		Dignity At Work
		Whistleblowing Policy***
		Agile Working
Health & Safety		Stress Policy
		First Aid Policy
		Fire Policy
		Asbestos Policy
Information Governance		Records Management Plan
		Retention Policy
I		The Information Asset register
Information Technology Security		Incident Response Plan
		CSAS Accreditation Policy
		CSAS Threat Assessment
		CSAS SyOps
		The cyber-security strategy
Finance		Schedule of Delegated Authority
		Procurement Policy
		Fraud Policy
		Risk Management Policy

** This is the Performance Appraisal Scheme for all staff except the PR/CE which is reserved to the Chair and Board, reported via the Remuneration Committee annually
***Whistleblowing Policy is reserved to the Board and will be presented for approval in 2024.

5. **Recommendation:**

5.1 The Board is asked to:-

    a) Note the programme of policy reviews undertaken in 2023.

    b) Review and agree the schedule planned for 2024 and the related delegations for approval.