

SCRA Corporate Parenting Plan 2017-20





Contents

Page 3 Introduction

Page 5 Corporate Parenting – The Most Important Bit

- our aims
- our commitments to you

Page 19 SCRA as a Corporate Parent

Page 21 Corporate Parenting – The Legal Bit

Page 22 Corporate Parenting – The Planning Bit

For more information please visit - www.mycorporateparents.co.uk



Introduction to our plan

I am pleased to introduce the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration's Corporate Parenting Plan for 2017-20.

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) became a Corporate Parent on 1 April 2015. As Corporate Parents, we now have clear responsibilities concerning how we interact, work for and treat the children and young people that we are in contact with.

In many ways, these responsibilities simply reflect what we should already be doing (and in many cases are already doing).

We know that every one of you is an individual with different preferences, abilities and needs - our commitment to equality and fairness will make sure that we deliver a service without discrimination or stigma.

We have been looking, asking and listening for a long time now and have already started to try to get better at some of the things that you have told us. This plan will lay out clearly our commitments to you and how we will work to improve the service and experience that you will get.

We will continually look, ask and listen and importantly, DO. We hope this plan works for you and are keen to hear any thoughts you have.



Neil Hunter
Principal Reporter/Chief Executive Officer

SCRA website

Our aims

Contact us

Corporate Parenting - What's it about?

Corporate Parenting is intended to encourage people and organisations to do as much as they can to make sure you feel more in control of your life and better able to overcome any barriers.

Our Corporate Parenting Plan lays out the commitments that we are making over the next three years to improve your experience of the Hearings System – whether you go on to become looked after or if your contact with us ends before this.

We also want to create opportunities for care experienced young people to achieve and develop as they move into adulthood.



Corporate Parenting – The Most Important Bit

Our Corporate Parenting aims:

- You are at the centre of the Hearings System and are treated as an individual.
- The decisions that affect you are based on sound knowledge, clear evidence and with consideration of your views.
- Your Corporate Parents will work together to make the system work better for you.
- We will keep asking ourselves if the way that we do things is the best it can be.



Your views
are central

You are at
the centre

Working
together

We will make
the system better

You are
an individual

Our Commitments to you:

1. WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO MEET YOUR NEEDS AND PROMOTE YOUR RIGHTS

2. WE WILL GIVE YOU AS MUCH TIME AND GOOD INFORMATION AS WE CAN

3. YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN YOUR HEARING AND WE WILL DO ALL WE CAN TO MAKE YOU FEEL IT

4. OUR HEARING CENTRES WILL BE SAFE, COMFORTABLE AND FRIENDLY

5. WE WILL WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TO HELP GET THINGS RIGHT

6. WE WILL WORK WITH OTHER CORPORATE PARENTS TO MAKE SURE WE ARE ALL DOING OUR BEST FOR YOU

1. WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO MEET YOUR NEEDS AND PROMOTE YOUR RIGHTS

We have:

- Worked with Hearings-experienced young people to develop our customer commitments.
- Produced a range of age-appropriate information leaflets to tell you about your rights and how the system works.
- Provided contact phone numbers on our letters for you to call with any questions.
- Arranged for Hearings to take place in locations other than the local Hearings centre.
- Displayed our information in a variety of areas to promote your rights.
- Produced posters, leaflets, videos and podcasts to tell you about your rights.
- Collected information through our research that helps us to better understand you and your needs so we can make more informed decisions and support you better.
- Made sure that translation and interpretation is available where it is needed, including into British Sign Language.



1. WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO MEET YOUR NEEDS AND PROMOTE YOUR RIGHTS

We will:

- Develop a greater understanding of the issues that can affect you to make sure you are treated fairly, sensitively and we can meet your needs.
- Learn from you and others what we can do to help you feel safe, respected and, if you are coming to a Hearing, able to participate.
- Encourage you to participate using appropriate materials, equipment or technology if you are coming to a Hearing.
- Explain your rights clearly at all stages in the process – and make sure our Reporters are skilled and confident in doing this.
- Encourage you and your family to think about advocacy, legal representation or support from a family member or friend if you are coming to a Hearing.
- Consider holding Hearings at the place and time which is best for you.
- Do what we can to help you feel prepared and supported if you need to attend court.



2. WE WILL GIVE YOU AS MUCH TIME AND GOOD INFORMATION AS WE CAN TO:

Help you understand what is happening, prepare and get support - ask and get answers to your questions.

We have:

- Created two short films for young people about going to a Hearing and going to court.
- Put information on all our leaflets and our website about other organisations who can help you.
- Produced videos and podcasts to help you understand the different stages of your journey.
- Amended our letters to make them more child/young person friendly.
- Provided our letters and leaflets in a different language if you need them.
- Launched a new website with sections for children and young people
- Worked with our partners to improve their communication with children, young people and families.



2. WE WILL GIVE YOU AS MUCH TIME AND GOOD INFORMATION AS WE CAN TO:

Help you understand what is happening, prepare and get support - ask and get answers to your questions.

We will:

- Let you know about everything that is happening that may affect you – when we receive a referral about you, when we make a decision, what it all means.
- Make sure that we send everything to you as soon as we can, to allow you time to understand, prepare and get support.
- Keep checking our communications to make sure they have the right information to help you.
- Work with our partners to make sure that reports are written in a way that you can understand and that you get them in good time to let you prepare.
- Tell you who will be at your Hearing and explain why they have been invited.
- Encourage you to ask questions and then answer them in the way that suits you best.
- Explore new and creative ways of providing you with information in the format you prefer.
- Make sure that our staff are available for you.
- Make better use of technology to improve your experience of the Hearings System.



3. YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN YOUR HEARING AND WE WILL DO ALL WE CAN TO MAKE YOU FEEL IT

We have:

- Been working with the SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) to make sure your Hearing doesn't clash with any of your exams.
- Encouraged you to submit your views in a variety of different ways so that you have options available to you at all times.
- Undertaken research with our partners into what makes a better Hearing based on 10 years' worth of your views.
- Tried to write grounds in plain English so that you can understand why you are coming to a Hearing.
- Encouraged social workers, carers and others to speak to you about your Hearing and help you prepare.



3. YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN YOUR HEARING AND WE WILL DO ALL WE CAN TO MAKE YOU FEEL IT

We will:

- Make sure our Reporters take time to meet you before your Hearing and answer any questions you have before you go in.
- Encourage you to tell us how you would like your Hearing to be managed then do what we can to make sure this happens.
- Encourage you to say how you feel in your Hearing and in a way that is best for you. If you do not want to give your views we will respect that.
- Do what we can to get the conditions right to help you to participate in your Hearing.
- Encourage other agencies to provide you with support and encouragement to give your views and to participate in your Hearing.
- Improve ways to access the All About Me form.
- Ensure fair process and your rights are being respected during the Hearing.
- Encourage you to tell us about what would make your next Hearing better and do what we can to make this happen.



4. OUR HEARING CENTRES WILL BE SAFE, COMFORTABLE AND FRIENDLY

We have:

- Offered Pre-Hearing visits - if you want to, you can visit the Hearing centre before your Hearing takes place.
- Put photographs, contact details and maps of our Hearing centres on our website.
- Asked our Reporters to meet you before your Hearing and introduce themselves.
- Reception staff who are welcoming and aware of how you may be feeling.
- Improved our Hearing centres by working with Hearings-experienced young people, to make them bright, fresh, and welcoming for children and young people of all ages.
- Carried out two national inspections of our Hearing centres led by our Hearings - experienced Modern Apprentices and have implemented recommended improvements.
- Made sure that in most of our Hearing centres, children, young people and family members who wish to be kept separate from each other have been able to.
- Considered safety measures in all Hearing centres and have trained staff to deal with any issues.



4. OUR HEARING CENTRES WILL BE SAFE, COMFORTABLE AND FRIENDLY

We will:

- Continue to improve the images of each Hearing centre on our website so that you can look at them before you go.
- Continue to promote Pre-Hearing visits with you and your family, partners and organisations that support you if you attend Hearings.
- Make sure that our staff introduce themselves to you at the Hearing centre.
- Roll out of new and refreshed Hearing rooms across Scotland to ensure that all children and young people can attend Hearings in a welcoming and modern space.
- Provide a private space if you ask for one before or after your Hearing.
- Continually review safety measures to ensure that all visitors and staff feel safe in the Hearing environment.
- Respect your confidentiality by keeping your information safe and making sure that only those who need to, will see it.



5. WE WILL WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TO HELP GET THINGS RIGHT

We have:

- Developed a Modern Apprenticeship Programme for young people with experience of the Hearings System.
- Launched a work experience programme for young people with experience of the Hearings System.
- Consulted with Hearings-experienced children, young people, families, carers and professionals to improve our communications.
- Improved our Hearing facilities in consultation with young people to make Children's Hearings a more participative and engaging environment.
- Redesigned our information leaflets and letters to make them clearer and more informative.
- Launched Pre-Hearing visits with help from Hearings-experienced young people.
- With the help of young people created films about Children's Hearings and going to court.
- Hearings-experienced young people have played an active role in our Board and Senior Management recruitment.



5. WE WILL WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TO HELP GET THINGS RIGHT

We will:

- Create a film and a suite of information for children, young people and families with learning disabilities.
- Trial the use of new participation tools within Children's Hearings to support you to get your views across in different ways.
- Listen to local children and young people's comments about how to improve their Hearing centres.
- Continue to listen to children and young people with experience of the Hearings System about what we could do better.
- Engage with local Champions Boards to improve local initiatives and make children and young people feel included in their community.
- Work with children and young people to improve access to information, advocacy, representation and support services to improve their experience and understanding of Children's Hearings.



6. WE WILL WORK WITH OTHER CORPORATE PARENTS TO MAKE SURE WE ARE ALL DOING OUR BEST FOR YOU

We have:

- Consulted, trained and worked with a variety of agencies affiliated with the Children's Hearings System to improve services for families involved in the System.
- Launched a team, including Hearings-experienced young people, to develop a Young People's Board for the Children's Hearings System.
- Encouraged and supported organisations directly involved in the Children's Hearings System (for example, Social Work Services) to improve their support and information services to children, young people and families involved in the System.
- Developed a 'Vision and Values' for all partners to work to in the Hearings System.
- Carried out Better Hearings research resulting in a multi-agency action plan.
- Going to court materials for children, young people and their families, including a going to court film.
- Added information materials about court onto our website.
- Requested Children's Hearing matters be heard first in court.

6. WE WILL WORK WITH OTHER CORPORATE PARENTS TO MAKE SURE WE ARE ALL DOING OUR BEST FOR YOU

We will:

- Make sure that the professionals coming to your Hearing have the information they need so that they are fully prepared and can give you the support you need.
- Do everything we can to ensure the court process is concluded as soon as possible to avoid any unnecessary delay and distress.
- Continue to work with our partners within the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service to influence the way that cases in the Hearings System are dealt with nationally and locally.
- Explore ways to improve the experience for children and young people at court and in particular, child witnesses.
- Continue to learn from each other about what is working and what is not – and what we can do to change things?

SCRA as a Corporate Parent

Corporate Parenting is intended to encourage people and organisations to do as much as they can to make sure looked after children and young people feel more in control of their lives.

SCRA is an important part of the process through which children and young people become looked after. Our Corporate Parenting Plan recognises this and includes commitments that will help to improve the experience of children and young people in the Hearings System.

We also want to create opportunities for care experienced children and young people to achieve and develop as they move into adulthood.

There are different ways that you may come into contact with our service, for example;

- You might get a letter from us saying we have received a referral for you.
- You may have attended a Hearing.
- You've joined our organisation through our Modern Apprentice scheme.
- You've participated in one of our consultation events.

Whatever way you have experienced our service, we are absolutely committed to making sure that at every point along the way, we do our very best to make sure the service you receive from us is the best that it can be.



Working in Partnership



Whatever way you have experienced our service, we are absolutely committed to making sure that at every point along the way, we do our very best to make sure the service you receive from us is the best that it can be.

We work very closely with other Corporate Parents and in particular with Children's Hearings Scotland (the Panel) to ensure that your experience of coming to a Hearing runs as smoothly as possible.

It felt important for us to have shared aims for Corporate Parenting. You will see our aims in both of our Corporate Parenting Plans and on our new website www.mycorporateparents.co.uk.

We have developed a set of commitments to lay out what we believe we need to change, get better at, or keep doing for these aims to become a reality.

For each commitment you will see some of the things that we are going to be doing to make it happen. For a full list of activities that are planned for each year, head to the Planning section.

Visit the website

Corporate Parenting – The Legal Bit

What is it?

When the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 came into force in April 2015, SCRA became a Corporate Parent. These responsibilities interact with our commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the role and importance of children and young people's rights.

The corporate parenting legal duties apply to all children/young people who are looked after. This includes children/young people who are in foster care, residential care, secure care, looked after at home or in formal kinship care. They also apply to care leavers who were looked after on their 16th birthday (or subsequently) up to and including the age of 25.

Our duties as a Corporate Parent:

- be alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and young people.
- assess the needs of looked after children and young people for services and support we provide.
- promote the interests of looked after children and young people.
- provide opportunities for looked after children and young people to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing.
- take appropriate action to ensure looked after children and young people access these opportunities and make use of our services and support.
- take any other action appropriate to improve our functions to meet the needs of looked after children and young people.

Corporate Parenting – The Planning Bit

How we will do it

This plan covers what we are going to be doing over the next three years as Corporate Parents, and each year we will go into a detail about what to expect that year using the 'We will' statements.

You might notice that the same thing is in more than one year – that is when we are going to be taking it in stages or are going to be doing the same thing but more of it.

For example in year 1 we are going to 'Roll out or new and refreshed Hearing rooms'. You will see this again in year 2 and year 3 because it is something that we plan to do every year as we work towards making all of our Hearing suites new, fresh and fit for purpose.

How will we know we are getting it right?

One of the duties that comes with being a Corporate Parent is to publish an annual Corporate Parenting Plan and, at the end of the year, our performance against it.

The plan shows all of the things that we intend to do to meet our statutory duties as a corporate parent but, more importantly, outlines how we are reviewing and redesigning the way we do things and working with other corporate parents to deliver better experiences and outcomes for you.

Our annual performance report, which will be published every spring, shows whether we did the things we set out to do, how well we did them, in addition it lets us see where we could get better and hopefully this is something that you can help us with.



Year 1 - Corporate Parenting Actions:

	Action we will	Originated	Corporate Parenting Duty	UNCRC Article
1.	Explain your rights clearly and in a way that is easily understood at all stages in the process.	Better Hearings Corporate Parenting Plan	c, e	2, 3, 1 2, 23, 30
	Encourage you to participate through the use of appropriate materials, equipment or technology if you are coming to a Hearing.	Better Hearings Corporate Parenting Plan	c, e	2, 3, 12, 23, 30
	Encourage you and your family to think about advocacy, legal representation or support from a family member or friend.	Better Hearings Corporate Parenting Plan	a, b, c, d	2, 3, 5, 12, 23, 30, 40
	Continue to work with Reporters to ensure they are competent and confident in how they can support better understanding of your rights and how you can access them.	Better Hearings Corporate Parenting Plan	a, b, c, e, f	2, 3, 12, 16, 23, 30
	Consider holding Hearings at the place and time which is best for you.	Better Hearings Corporate Parenting Plan	a, b, c	2, 3, 12, 16, 23
2.	Let you know about everything that is happening that may affect you – when we receive a referral about you, when we make a decision, what it all means.	Better Hearings Blueprint review	a, b, c, e	2, 3, 12, 23, 30
	Make sure that we send everything to you as soon as we can, to allow you time to understand, prepare and get support.	Better Hearings Blueprint review	e	2, 3, 12, 23, 30
	Keep reviewing and updating our communications to make sure they have the right information to help you.	Better Hearings Corporate Parenting Plan	a, b, e	2, 3, 12, 23, 30
	Explore new and creative ways of providing you with information in the format you prefer.	Corporate Parenting Plan	a, b, c, e	2, 3, 12, 23, 30
	Make sure that our staff are available for you.	Corporate Parenting Plan	a, c, e	2, 3, 12, 23

Year 1 - Corporate Parenting Actions:

	Action we will	Originated	Corporate Parenting Duty	UNCRC Article
3.	Continue to make you feel welcome, safe, respected and comfortable if you are coming to a Hearing.	Corporate Parenting Plan	a, e	2, 3, 12, 16, 23, 30
	Do what we can to get the conditions right to help you to participate in your Hearing.	Better Hearings Corporate Parenting Plan	a, b, c, d	2, 3, 12, 16, 23, 30
	Improve ways to access the All About Me form.	Corporate Parenting Plan	b, c, e	2, 3, 12, 23, 30
	Encourage other agencies to provide you with support and encouragement to give your views and to participate in your Hearing.	Better Hearings Corporate Parenting Plan	c, f	2, 3, 12, 23, 30
	Encourage you to tell us how you would like your Hearing to be managed then do what we can to make sure this happens.	Better Hearings	c, d, e	2, 3, 12, 16
	Ask you how you would like to give your views in the Hearing to encourage you to say how you feel and in a way that is best for you. If you do not want to give your views we will respect that.	Better Hearings	b, c, d, e	2, 3, 12, 16, 23, 30
	Ensure fair process and your rights are being respected during the Hearing.	Better Hearings	c, d, e	2, 3, 12, 16, 23, 30, 40

Year 1 - Corporate Parenting Actions:

	Action we will	Originated	Corporate Parenting Duty	UNCRC Article
4	Continue to enhance visuals of each Hearing centre so that you can look at them online before you go.	Corporate Parenting Plan	e, f	2, 3, 12, 23, 30
	Continue to promote Pre-Hearing visits with children, young people and families, agencies and organisations which support children to attend Hearings through our Pre-Hearing champions.	Better Hearings Corporate Parenting Plan	a, b, c, d, e	2, 3, 12, 23
	Make sure that our staff introduce themselves to you at the Hearing centre.	Corporate Parenting Plan	a, c, e	2, 3, 12, 23
	Make sure our Reporters have enough time to meet you before your Hearing and answer any questions you have before you go in to your Hearing.	Better Hearings	e,f	2, 3, 12, 23
	Roll out of new and refreshed Hearing rooms across Scotland to ensure that all children and young people can attend Hearings in a welcoming and modern space.	Fit for us programme	a, b, e, f	2, 3, 12, 23
5	Provide a private space if you ask for one before or after your Hearing.	Better Hearings	a, b, c, e	2, 3, 12, 16
	Continually review safety measures to ensure that all visitors and staff feel safe in the Hearing environment.	Better Hearings	a,e	2, 3, 12
	Respect your confidentiality by keeping your information safe and making sure that only those who need to, will see it.	Better Hearings	a,c,	2, 3, 16
	Create a film and a suite of information for children, young people and families with learning disabilities.	Corporate Parenting Plan	a, b, c, d, e, f	2, 3, 12, 23
	Trial the use of new participation tools within Children's Hearings to support you to get your views across in different ways.	Equalities Strategy	a, b, c, d, e, f	2, 3, 12, 23, 30

Year 1 - Corporate Parenting Actions:

	Action we will	Originated	Corporate Parenting Duty	UNCRC Article
5	Listen to local children and young people’s comments about how to improve their Hearing centres.	Better Hearings	b, c, d, e	2, 3, 12
	Continue to listen to children and young people with experience of the Hearings System about what we could do better.	Better Hearings	b, c, d, e	2, 3, 12
	Engage with local Champions Boards to improve local initiatives and make children and young people feel included in their community.	Corporate Parenting Plan	b, c, d, e	2, 3, 12
6	Make sure that the professionals coming to your Hearing have the information they need so that they are fully prepared and can give you the support you need.	Better Hearings	b, c, d	2, 3, 12, 23
	Continue to work with our partners within Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service to influence the way that cases in the Hearings System are dealt with nationally and locally.	Better Hearings Corporate Parenting Plan	c, f	2, 3, 12, 23
	Continue to learn from each other about what is working and what is not – and what we can do to change it.	Corporate Parenting Plan	c, f	2, 3, 12, 23

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
Ochil House, Springkerse Business Park
Stirling, FK7 7XE

Tel: 0300 200 1555
communications@scra.gsi.gov.uk



SCAN THIS 

published April 2017