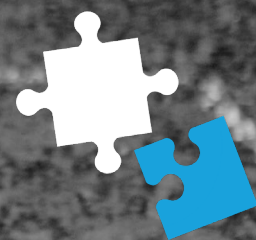


# Our Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting Year Report Card



**Reporting Year: 2021-2022**  
**(1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022)**

## Purpose of this Report



This report meets SCRA's statutory duty to report on children's rights, inclusion and corporate parenting. It replaces our previous annual Equality Mainstreaming Report, and is the way we will report on human rights.

As such, this report provides an update on what SCRA has done to ensure human rights are respected and met as set out in Part 2 of the Children and Young

People (Scotland) Act 2014; how SCRA has worked to meet the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty; and the activity undertaken to ensure we meet our corporate parenting duties as outlined in Part 61 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

## About SCRA

### Our Vision:

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

### Our Mission:

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

### Our Values:

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



## Key achievements at a glance

### SCRA's Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA)

SCRA introduced our bespoke approach to integrated impact assessment with inbuilt governance and quality assurance through our Equality Review Group in early 2020. Throughout the reporting period we have been further developing this approach and embedding it across the full breadth of our work.

### SCRA's Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting (RICP) Strategy

At the beginning of 2021, it felt right to widen our integrated approach and to combine three intersectional elements of our statutory strategic work – human rights, inclusion and diversity and corporate parenting. This approach enables us to take a rights-based approach to everything we do (for children, families, our workforce and our partners). It encourages us to recognise that there are people who require additional support in order

for their rights to be realised and that, as caring and committed corporate parents for the children we work with, we will do we all we can to uphold and defend these rights and ensure they are included, respected and valued.

This strategic approach is equally managed across three key SCRA areas of work – Practice and Policy (rights), Human Resources (inclusion and diversity) and Strategy (corporate parenting) which ensures it is embedded and links in to, and across, everything we do. The RICP Strategy also aligns with our corporate objectives of Care, Connect and Protect in SCRA’s 2020-24 Corporate Plan.

### **Remote Attendance Virtual Hearing Interface (RAVHI)**

This national team was developed in response to barriers to engagement and participation using technology in Virtual Hearings, as highlighted in feedback from those attending Virtual Hearings and in the EHRIA and ERG review of SCRA’s approach to Virtual Hearings. As a result, this team was created in recognition that we can do more to support people who have a right to be fully included in their Children’s Hearing. The RAVHI team check connectivity in advance of a Virtual Hearing and is available on the day to help facilitate access – and, therefore, participation – to the Virtual Hearing.

### **Keeping The Promise**

SCRA published its Keeping The Promise Route Plan, recruited a Keeping The Promise Programme Manager and brought existing staff members together in our Keeping The Promise team to coordinate and support our work on the route plan. The governance structure for SCRA to Keep The Promise is aligned to the three RICP strands of Rights, Inclusion and Corporate Parenting. RICP is the key strategic plan and delivery mechanism for SCRA’s Keeping The Promise work. Alignment to Our Hearings, Our Voice’s 40 Calls to Action along with previous research, plays a key part of our Keeping The Promise work – there is already a lot of work underway to improve what we do.

### **Hearings System Working Group**

SCRA is a key partner in this key group set up to oversee the reform agenda of the Children’s Hearings System, to Keep The Promise. The group is working collaboratively with partners to determine the approach, scope and timescales for the delivery of a reform plan.

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## **Our Data**

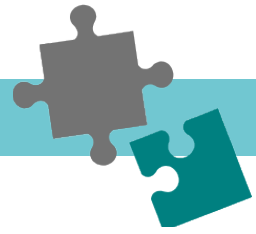
Please also look at our accompanying [RICY’s Children’s Rights Data Report Card 2021 \(Appendix A\)](#), which includes much more information and detail.

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## **What comes next**

- A large focus for 2022/23 will be on further developing, embedding and managing our EHRIA process. This will include: embedding EHRIA in our corporate planning process to encourage proactive and timely change management; training all managers and appropriate officers to further raise awareness of the legal and moral importance of impact assessment to further embed impact assessment across all areas of our business and, in particular, locality decisions; building in systematic review of completed EHRIA’s to assess perceived and actual impacts and adjust our approach if required; and recognising EHRIA within SCRA’s national strategic risk management and governance procedures.

- Specifically, EHRIA's will be conducted on: SCRA's decision-making and the statutory powers of the Principal Reporter (SCRA's Practice Direction); SCRA's Digital Programme work; and SCRA's Property Programme work. The nature of SCRA's work has transformed since 2020, as a result of the pandemic and the rapid deployment of technology, which impacts on our estate and property portfolio. The impact of this change must be recognised and addressed.
- With our partners, Scottish Government and The Promise Scotland, we will be working to deliver on The Promise – through the improvements that we can make now, and through the opportunities that the Reform agenda brings.
- SCRA is a collaborative corporate parent; we already focus on partnership working with our Children's Hearings Scotland colleagues through our My Corporate Parents website. We will promote this collaboration more effectively and we will work with other partners to be the best corporate parents we can be.
- We will actively develop our approach to values-based recruitment and inclusive leadership and behavior to ensure our workforce is diverse and inclusive to enable us to better represent the children and families we work with. Only with a diverse and inclusive workforce will SCRA be able to realise our ambitious vision and mission.



### Why are Rights important?

Human rights are fundamental to everything we do in SCRA. They underpin the way we work with all our staff and they determine the ways in which we make decisions that affect children and families across Scotland. As statutory decision-makers and committed corporate parents, SCRA makes decisions that are in the best interests of children to promote their individual wellbeing. These decisions can, and do, have an impact on the rights of a child and their family. When this happens, we must recognise the impact of our decision-making. We must make sure children and families understand the impact of our decisions have and fully support them to question these decisions, if they want.

SCRA is committed to becoming a rights-respecting and rights-defending organisation. We want to treat our staff, the professional partners we work with and the children and families we become involved with fairly and equitably.

We are working to ensure we are fully compliant with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

We are also proactively developing our work to ensure we are compliant with Scotland's planned Human Rights Bill, which will incorporate specific rights from: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

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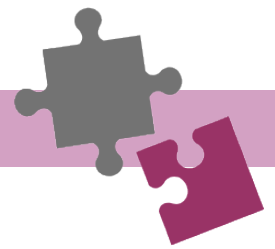
### Rights - Key Achievements:

- We have developed a collaborative approach to the distinctive decision-making in the Children's Hearing and Family Group Decision Making, which we hope will be useful and informative.
- We believe in advocacy as a key support for children. We continue to be members of the National Advocacy Expert Reference Group and have developed positive national and local working relationships with Advocacy Partners. We worked with the Scottish Government in planning, design and input to an online advocacy event for practitioners. We continue to promote the [Advocacy for Children's Hearing Website](#) across social media.
- We have developed and promoted the Scottish Government introductory training on children's rights across SCRA's staff group.
- We have worked with Article 12 in Scotland (a young person focused Scottish non-government organisation that works to promote young people's rights as set out in international human rights charters) to fully consider what Article 12 means for us all in SCRA and the wider Children's Hearings System.
- We have finalised and implemented a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and provided locality training in respect of the policy for all staff.

- We have developed a new practice direction for Reporters [Practice Direction 33 - Participation Rights and Legislative Changes](#) in July 2021 and included new information on our [website](#) for children and for young people to explain what these participation rights mean for you in your Children’s Hearing. We created and launched a [cartoon animation to promote sibling/participation/rights](#) on social media. We also worked with partners to develop extensive [materials for partners](#) to use in training or for information to help the implementation of the new legislation.
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## What comes next?

- SCRA’s training on the UNCRC and its impact across our work will be developed, particularly in relation to Article 12.
- We will be exploring different ways in which we can gather feedback from children and families and how we act on that feedback. This will link into the ways in which we explain and manage complaints from children.
- SCRA’s information on rights will be developed; to include more detailed information and to make it more accessible online – for children, parents and carers and for victims of offending behaviour.
- The Secure Care Pathway and Standards and the Youth Justice Standards are relevant to SCRA, and we will focus on internal awareness raising and training.
- SCRA will develop and implement a new Domestic Abuse Policy, which will complement the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, as well as focus our attention on gender-based violence.



### Why is Inclusion & Diversity important?

As a public sector organisation, SCRA must adhere to the Equality Act 2010. This includes the three elements of the general duty: elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations across nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy, maternity and breastfeeding; race; religion and belief; sex; sexual orientation; and marriage/civil partnership) – SCRA also recognises a tenth 'protected characteristic' of care experience. In Scotland, the Public Sector Equality Duty sets specific duties that help us to meet the general duty in the Act. This means we must set Equality Outcomes every three years and report every two years on our progress towards meeting these outcomes and 'mainstreaming' (making sure equality is considered in everything we do) the Equality Duty.

### Our Equality Outcomes 2020-2023 are:

- 1.** Children, young people and their families are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. They understand and are able to access our services in ways that suit their individual needs.
- 2.** We will build an inclusive culture which values and develops our people, providing them with the tools and support they need to be skilled, confident, valued respected and cared for to maximise their potential.
- 3.** We will actively tackle under-representation and create a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.

SCRA's approach to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion goes beyond our legal responsibilities; it aspires and strives to develop an inclusive ethos within the organisation based on fairness, equality, cultural diversity, dignity and respect. To reflect this approach, SCRA is also committed to meeting the Fairer Scotland Duty and Islands (and remote and rural) Communities Impact Assessment. Being inclusive in every way not only makes SCRA a great place to work, it ensures that we are delivering the best possible service to children and their families – one that is accessible to all, meets their individual needs and upholds their rights.

Our approach to inclusion and diversity has been restructured and embedded into a wider strategic approach, ensuring equality, equity, diversity and inclusion sits at the heart of everything we do – now and in the future. Our inclusion and diversity work is led by SCRA's Inclusion & Diversity Manager and an Inclusion & Diversity Steering Group (chaired by the Head of HR). It is supported by topical inclusion and diversity groups: our LGBT Group, Disability Group and a new Race & Ethnicity Group, as well as a network of 33 Inclusion Ambassadors from varying locations and roles throughout SCRA, who continually champion our inclusion and diversity work in their localities.

To ensure continual improvement and sharing of best practice to enable us to become industry leaders in our approach to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, SCRA are members of: Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei); NDPB Equality Forum; First Minister's National Advisory Council for Women & Girls, the Scottish Government's BSL Justice Advisory Group, and the Cross Justice Working Group on Race Data & Evidence. SCRA were previously members of the Pride in Justice Group, but this group has been inactive since early 2020.

## Our Data

- Board diversity data – the gender split of our Board is 63% female and 37% male. We will be actively seeking to increase the diversity of our Board in future recruitment exercises.
  - Our Employee Statistics are published on our [website](#).
  - Our 2021/22 staff survey sought to understand what our workforce understood about inclusion and diversity for them, for others and for the organisation. They told us:
    - 81% felt included and respected in SCRA
    - 87% said that SCRA is committed to equalities, diversity and inclusion
    - 81% said that people of all cultures and backgrounds are respected and valued in SCRA
    - 67% said that SCRA provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs
    - 84% of staff knew where and how to report harassment or discrimination
    - 94% of staff understood their own responsibility for inclusion and diversity
    - 77% of staff said that their line manager demonstrates commitment to and support of inclusion and diversity.
    - Our Gender Pay Gap as of 31st March 2021, was 24.32%. Our Disability and Ethnicity Pay Gaps are in favour of those with a declared disability, and those who have declared are non-White British. Our Gender Pay Gap report is available on our [website](#).
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## Inclusion and Diversity - Key Achievements:

- Our new Race & Ethnicity Group is chaired by our Principal Reporter/CEO to ensure our race equality work is a strategic priority. This work will be driven by our desire to be anti-racist in everything that we do. We are using the Scottish Government's Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit to identify areas in our recruitment, selection and retention to better diversify our workforce.
- SCRA has been used as a case study for good practice for our approach to Employee Equality Monitoring by enei [Case Study Template \(enei.org.uk\)](#) and the collection and use of equality monitoring data of children referred to SCRA by the Scottish Government [A good practice case study of the collection and use of equality data](#).
- SCRA is committed to promoting the mental health of our people. Throughout the pandemic we have specifically focused on proactively supporting our workforce with their well-being, including the introduction of Wellness Action Plans and an organisational Wellbeing Brochure to provide a single place to see all of the support available for our people. We have continued to provide mindfulness sessions through our 12 Mindfulness Champions across the organisation. We have 7 trained Mental Health First Aiders.
- We introduced the Hidden Disability Sunflower Scheme across all our offices to discreetly support people who have a hidden disability and who may need additional support, help or more time. A hidden disability is one that may not be immediately obvious such as learning difficulties, mental health as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing loss.
- A Disability Toolkit has been developed and piloted by SCRA's Research Team. This is the first such toolkit that:
  - 1) allows for the identification of additional needs that could have substantial and long-term impacts upon a child's ability to carry out normal day to day activities; and
  - 2) provides an indicator of wider vulnerability and contextual factors that were pertinent to understanding child protection risk.

- We published an LGBTQ+ Inclusive Language Guidance Note to support our communications and interactions to avoid biases, slang or expressions that exclude certain groups based on gender identity or sexual orientation.
- We published our BSL Action Plan in March 2021 and we continue to actively implement the Plan.
- We introduced Visual Information Guides/Social Stories for children [attending a virtual hearing](#) and we plan to develop guides for children attending their Hearing in person, across the country.
- We added 'care experience' into our Employee Equality Monitoring to reflect SCRA's commitment to recognising care experience as a tenth protected characteristic.
- SCRA's inclusion and diversity work was subject to internal audit in October 2021, which found a 'substantial' level of assurance of the design and operational effectiveness of this programme of work. It highlighted areas for improvement around governance, training and impact assessment. These recommendations have been prioritised in our work for 2022/23.
- SCRA received the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei) Bronze TIDE Award in July 2021. TIDE is enei's self-assessment evaluation and benchmarking tool which measures an organisation's approach and progress on diversity and inclusion to encourage flexible and inclusive management of diversity and inclusion work programmes. Participation in this benchmarking exercise identified areas for improvement that we will focus on in 2022/23 including training and procurement.

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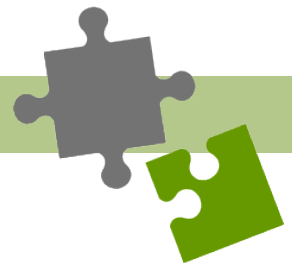
## What comes next?

**We have produced an ambitious plan for our inclusion and diversity work for 2022-2023, which includes:**

- Introducing Inclusive Behavioural Standards & Framework which will sit alongside our Code of Conduct and Management Standards to ensure our people reflect SCRA's values and expected associated behaviours.
- Race equality will be a significant focus for 2022 and beyond, including the development of an ambitious Race Equality Action Plan. We will engage with external organisations and individuals to do this in recognition that a wider expert reference group is required to fully enable us to realise our ambitions around racial equality and diversity.
- We will work towards meeting the Mental Health at Work Standards – and our Mental Wealth Group will lead SCRA on this journey. As part of this work we will develop and implement a Wellbeing Strategy. We will also train more of our people in Mental Health First Aid.
- We will develop a Menopause Toolkit - which is being driven by a subgroup of our Mental Wealth Group.
- We will train more Mental Health First Aiders to support the mental health and wellbeing of our people after a particularly challenging period brought about as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and organisational and legislative change.
- We will reinvigorate our Women into Leadership Network, which currently has over 30 members and we are looking to recruit more.



- We will develop a Gender Pay Gap Action Plan to further address our gender pay gap.
- We will focus on training our workforce on inclusion and diversity. This will start with ensuring SCRA's Board are fully trained in their role as a Board in terms of legal compliance and risk. We will provide baseline training to all staff to raise awareness of inclusion and diversity, with a deeper focus on inclusive behaviours and language.
- We will recommend action to address the diversity of SCRA's Board. This work will inform the ongoing improvement work around increasing the diversity of our workforce and the tools we use to attract, recruit and retain a broad and diverse workforce.
- We will develop our work on the following areas, where we may develop new policy, guidance, information or training: inclusion & diversity; the menopause; grief and bereavement and neurodiversity.
- We will adopt an intersectional approach to adjustments at work over the employee lifecycle, including revising our Reasonable Adjustments Guidance Note and producing new Adjustments at Work Guidance that goes beyond adjustments required because of disability.
- We will focus on inclusive and sustainable procurement. The Procurement Strategy has been reviewed to reflect that we will consider equality, diversity and inclusion throughout tender processes and comply fully with legislation. Where relevant and proportionate in our regulated procurements, we will carry out an Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) at procurement stage and suppliers are required to provide details of any equality policies and systems that they have in place and that will be utilised when delivering the contract. We will develop an Equality Diversity Form and a Supplier Guide on Inclusion & Diversity to include in our tenders to promote and monitor inclusive procurement. We will also explore opportunities to provide inclusion and diversity training or an awareness video for suppliers.



### Why is Corporate Parenting important?

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 put the concept of 'corporate parenting' into Scots Law and defines corporate parenting as 'the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers'. Part 9 of the Act means that we have to do certain things for the children we are responsible for and we have to report to Scottish Ministers on how we are doing this.

A compassionate and committed corporate parent wants the best outcomes for looked after children, listens to them and makes their needs a priority.

At SCRA, we are all proud and committed corporate parents and do our best to make the experience of having contact with the Reporter, or coming to a Children's Hearings, the best that it can be - in a system that is focussed on care and protection. We have been working closely with children and young people as well as our Partners to look at how we can improve in the way that we deliver our service and The Promise has offered us the opportunity to really focus our Corporate Parenting efforts – and gives us, and all the other Corporate Parents, the same mandate – to really encourage strong, collaborative working to deliver on the asks.

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### Corporate Parenting - Key Achievements

- SCRA has appointed a Keeping The Promise Programme Manager to lead our Promise work – across both Reform and Improvement – and an Operational Change Lead to ensure close working between the project team and operations, these roles are part of a wider Keeping The Promise Team.
- SCRA's [2021-24 Keeping the Promise Route Plan](#) has been developed and published to describe what SCRA will be doing to Keep the Promise and an internal Promise Programme Board is in place to oversee this work. We also created an [animation](#) about our approach to this journey.
- Working with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) we have developed a programme of Trauma training for all staff – the first two modules are complete and ready to be rolled out.
- With Our Hearings, Our Voice, we prioritised their calls to action by the things that we could take forward in SCRA, and those that we will work with others on. The asks form part of our direction for participation group and are part of our Promise work. We provided OHOV and our partners with our '1 year on' progress report.
- The Dolly Parton Book Gifting programme was successfully rolled out to all localities, you can find out more about it [here](#).
- Another six Hearings rooms were revamped to make them more child and family friendly in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Bellshill, Lochgilphead, Inverness and Kirkwall.
- Individual takeaway sensory and colouring kits were available in all our Hearing centres for children to take when attending Hearings during the pandemic.

- A care-experienced Modern Apprentice was recruited and appointed to the Dumbarton office - our 13th Modern Apprentice.
- In partnership with Proud to Care in Inverclyde, new 'Hearing About Me' forms were designed and developed to replace the All About Me Forms. These will be available electronically, by email or on paper.
- SCRA has been working with partners e.g. CELCIS and STAF Participation Network to explore different approaches to participation and to hear from others what has worked (or not) and we will continue to work with others as we look at improving how we can enable more effective participation through our Promise work.
- We recently undertook the level 2 consultation with care experienced Modern Apprentices in partnership with Health Improvement Scotland to provide advice and consultation on the Barnahus Standards.
- The Born Into Care research by the Universities of Lancaster and Stirling and SCRA research report has been submitted to the Scottish Government and considers the impacts of inequality.
- On behalf of Stand Up For Siblings SCRA and CHS undertook surveys of Panel Members on their experience and observations of siblings' participation rights before and after implementation of the new laws to assess how they were working in practice.

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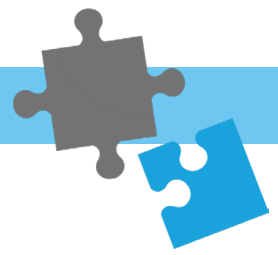
## What comes next?

- Delivery of the Keeping The Promise Route Plan is our key priority for Corporate Parenting and we will be engaging with staff across the organisation as we take forward The Promise work – ensuring everyone has the opportunity to be part of the discussion and the improvement.
- A project called 'Options, Choices and Participation' is one of the first areas that will be looked at under Promise Improvement work - this focusses on how we can:
  - better prepare Children if they are going to be attending a Hearing – understanding what their needs are, how we can support them and how we better enable them to participate – in ways that suit them.
  - better support and enable participation for children who don't attend their Hearings.
- We will be working with Our Hearings, Our Voice and Hearings System Partners to look at language – how we can improve it and then how we can improve the information that we provide to children and families guided by this.
- An integrated learning programme will continue to be developed and rolled out for staff across Rights, Inclusion, and Corporate Parenting:
  - We will deliver refreshed training for staff on what Corporate Parenting is and means – and how it links to the Promise. We will support this with a Corporate Parenting Guide.
  - We will roll out of the Trauma Training Programme across our full staff group through e-learning, group and teamwork and, individual learning.

- There will be a real focus on collaborative delivery - working with others to ensure the outcomes for children are positive.
  - There will be more revamped Hearings Centres – another six planned for next year and we will do this in partnership with young people to make sure we are getting it right!
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## Through our research we will be:

- Supporting the use of the Disability Toolkit that has been developed and piloted by SCRA's Research Team. This is the first such toolkit that: 1) allows for the identification of additional needs that could have substantial and long-term impacts upon a child's ability to carry out normal day to day activities; and 2) provides an indicator of wider vulnerability and contextual factors that were pertinent to understanding child protection risk.
- Exploring the possibility of using the research toolkit of indicators of child sexual exploitation (CSE) with SCRA, the Scottish Government and expert partners. This toolkit was developed by SCRA and Barnardo's Scotland for their research on CSE in Scotland, and technology to support Reporter decision making.
- Planning ways to test the Rogon Wellbeing Toolkit to measure children's wellbeing at individual and aggregated levels to assess the impact on interventions on children's wellbeing.
- Progressing research into Virtual Hearings and Siblings in Prison and completing work on the Age of Criminal Responsibility and Children under 12 in residential care in Scotland.



During a period that came with so much challenge, it gives me a real sense of optimism to see what our staff – operational and support, have continued to deliver, progress and remain absolutely committed to.

The RICP strategy provides a fusion of three critical areas – that in coming together only strengthen what they can deliver – and how they can support us, as a statutory body, to deliver that service in a way that is right – rights respecting, inclusive and with compassion.

An incredible amount of work has gone in to driving forward this agenda, already delivering tangible and lasting change and improvement – and with a hugely ambitious plan ahead - as we work towards Keeping The Promise, being rights defenders and ensuring that inclusivity and diversity is part of our organisational DNA.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. We hope you found it informative and inspiring. If you have any questions or comments, please [get in touch](#). We would love to hear from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Hunter'.

