

## Charter 8.3 Referrals to Children’s Reporter on Offence Ground

<p><b>Improvement Project Title:</b> Reduce the number of young people referred to the children’s reporter on offence grounds as a result of appropriate and effective interventions.</p>											
<p><b>Executive Sponsor (Chair of Outcome Improvement Group or Locality Partnership):</b> Derek McGowan, Chair of CJ Group</p>											
<p><b>Project Lead:</b> Inspector Lorraine Mackie – Police Scotland</p>											
<p><b>Aim statement (What are we trying to accomplish? Over what time? Numerical target for improvement?)</b></p> <p>Reduce the number of young people (children aged between 8 and 15 (and 16/17 on a CSO) referred to the children’s reporter on offence grounds as a result of appropriate and effective interventions by 10 % by 2021. This figure is based on the current figures and the proposed impact of the change ideas and is achievable.</p>											
<p><b>Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan:</b></p> <p><b>Prosperous People (Children and Young People) Stretch Outcome 8</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Stretch Outcome</th> <th>Key Drivers</th> <th>Improvement Project Aim</th> <th>Key Improvement Measures</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p><b>8. 25% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026</b></p> <p><i>(Baseline data: 965 young people charged in 2015-16; 827 in 2016-17; 698 in 2017/18. A 25% reduction is 175 young people)</i></p> </td> <td> <p>8.1 Young people receive the right help at the right time through provision of a strong universal offer alongside availability of multi-disciplinary targeted interventions (using a trauma-informed approach) to improve outcomes for young people at risk of becoming involved in the Justice System</p> </td> <td> <p>Reduce the number of young people referred to the Children’s Reporter on offence grounds as a result of appropriate and effective interventions by 2021.</p> </td> <td> <p>No. of young people referred to the Children’s Reporter on offence grounds (<i>Baseline data:16/17 – 90;17/18 – 81</i>)</p> <p>No. of young people referred by SCRA to relevant services</p> <p>No. of residential care home workers who are aware of the Police Scotland Protocol in relation to responses to children who are care experienced</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>There is a close link with the Early Intervention and Anti-social Behaviour project charter.</b></p>				Stretch Outcome	Key Drivers	Improvement Project Aim	Key Improvement Measures	<p><b>8. 25% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026</b></p> <p><i>(Baseline data: 965 young people charged in 2015-16; 827 in 2016-17; 698 in 2017/18. A 25% reduction is 175 young people)</i></p>	<p>8.1 Young people receive the right help at the right time through provision of a strong universal offer alongside availability of multi-disciplinary targeted interventions (using a trauma-informed approach) to improve outcomes for young people at risk of becoming involved in the Justice System</p>	<p>Reduce the number of young people referred to the Children’s Reporter on offence grounds as a result of appropriate and effective interventions by 2021.</p>	<p>No. of young people referred to the Children’s Reporter on offence grounds (<i>Baseline data:16/17 – 90;17/18 – 81</i>)</p> <p>No. of young people referred by SCRA to relevant services</p> <p>No. of residential care home workers who are aware of the Police Scotland Protocol in relation to responses to children who are care experienced</p>
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<p><b>Why is this important</b></p> <p>Referral to the reporter is required for some of our children who offend. Where possible however we need to keep our children out of formal systems to secure the best outcomes for them. “Wherever possible providing support without intervening as a ‘justice’ service, since contact with the justice system is known to be one of the biggest factors in continued offending” - <a href="#">Improving life Chances: Common Factors</a>.</p> <p>When a child is charged with an offence there are a number of ways this can be disposed of. In Aberdeen we have a Police Youth Justice Management Unit (YJMU) who assess the most appropriate disposal for offences by children. The YJMU will undertake checks on the child’s offending history, whether they are subject to a compulsory supervision order</p>											

(CSO, an order that places responsibility with the local authority for looking after and helping the young person) or have open referral to SCRA and if they are open to social work. The YJMU are bound by the [Lord Advocates](#) guidelines that determine if a case is to be jointly reported to SCRA and COPFS. (A separate project is taking forward work to increase the % of young people who are jointly reported who are offered robust alternatives to entering the statutory system.) The YJMU have a range of disposal options available where the offence doesn't meet the Lord Advocates guidelines. YJMU can refer to SCRA where it is assessed there is sufficient need or other options have been explored. These other options are: Police Direct Measure or Police warning letter. Police Direct Measures's include Early and Effective Intervention (EEI), this may include referral to education, social work, Scottish Fire and Rescue or 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisation such as Barnardos.

In simplest terms levels of disposals can be ranked as follows:

Early Effective intervention (EEI) –where there is anti-social behaviour but no or very low level crime detected
Police Direct Measure (PDM) – where a child has been charged with a crime however it can be disposed of to social work, 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector organisation, education etc.
SCRA – higher level offences or persistent or escalating offending
COPFS – or joint reported with SCRA – offences that fall within the Lord Advocates guidelines.

The chart below details the numbers of referrals made to SCRA between 2015 and 2019. These figures show an increase in the number of young people reported to the reporter on offence grounds between 2015 and 2019. Information from SCRA states that for 2019/2020 “across the year the most common disposal for offence referrals is *no further action – current measures.*” This is representative of the work already in place with young people to address their offending. Referrals that don't end in a hearing are still stressful for children as they will be aware of the referral. There is also a great deal of worker time required in gathering the required data to determine if a hearing is required.

Financial Year	Offenders 8 - 15 years	Offenders 16/17 on CSO	Referral to SCRA	Joint Report 8 – 15 years	Joint Report 16/17 on CSO	Police Direct Measure (8 – 15 years only)
2015/16	834	106	90 11%	38	80	690 83%
2016/17	854	45	174 20%	60	34	601 71%
2017/18	598	39	110 18%	20	27	451 76%
2018/19	659	45	211 32%	37	41	418 64%
2019/20	629	24	165 26%	61	19	405 65%

The figures above also represent the number of young people YJMU have dealt with during each time period. A young person will have been counted on each occasion they have offended and each offending outcome will be recorded separately. Police Direct measures are only recorded for 8 – 15 year olds.

The total percentages do not add up to 100% as some offence referrals have been closed as non- investigation due to local agreements.

Data shows shifting trends in the numbers of offences disposed of through Police Direct Measures (PDM's) and Diversion from Prosecution (DfP). For 8-15 year olds we see a decrease in the numbers of disposals through PDM's. The numbers of cases discussed/considered for DfP have fluctuated however appear to be increasing. The reasons behind these changes need to be explored. There are offences that fall under the Lord Advocates guidelines that aren't able to be disposed of through PDM's. The type of offence will go some way to determine the type of disposal. All cases could not have been disposed of without referral to SCRA and/or COPFS without a change in procedure.

Locally we have successful examples of multi-agency approaches to supporting young people involved in offending behaviour. For example in 2019 Dyce was identified as an area that had high levels of youth annoyance and anti-social behaviour calls to police, a number of which resulted in crimes being recorded and children referred to the children's reporter. (A separate project is focusing on prevention of, and effective response to, ASB. *(Add link to that project)*)

Partnership working between Police early intervention worker, Denis Law Street Sports and the Active Schools co-ordinator led to the development of a youth diversionary activity over the summer holidays which took place in summer 2019. Over the course of the summer holidays 100 young people aged between 8-16 years signed up to the session, with an average of 60-70 young people attending each week.

Police Scotland were actively involved in sessions and positive relationships were built between officers and young people. This period saw a reduction in youth annoyance or anti-social behaviour calls in the Dyce area which may otherwise have resulted in PDM or referral to the reporter. The success of this project resulted Street Sport making this a permanent session.

#### **Measures:**

- **Outcome measures**

Number of young people (under 18) referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds. Comparison of Police Scotland Crime and SCRA Statistics of number of referrals before and after project.

- **Process measures**

- Number of referral discussions and impact of the discussions.
- Number of referrals to Social Work as an alternative to reporting to SCRA;
- Number of referrals to SCRA where no action taken

- **Balancing measures**

**Change ideas**

1. Trial a single point of contact for dedicated discussion between Police and SCRA in relation to whether a referral is required?
2. Discussion between police and scra as to whether a referral is required
3. Explore and enhance the role of the third sector to ensure full understanding of interventions available to address offending behaviour.
4. A Review a sample of cases requiring referral to SCRA to where no action has been taken by them is ongoing. What can be learned and where is the gap? *Change ideas to be sought from this*
5. Explore and enhance the role of Social Work in opening children as an alternative to referral to reporter? Do they meet the threshold for social work. A single point of contact within reception team to allow a consistent approach. *Change ideas to be sought from this*

The following could also be incorporated:

- Engagement with School and School Based Officer around educational inputs directed towards communication/sexual/crimes of violence/dishonesty

**Potential risks and/or barriers to success & actions to address these**

- Restrictions on SCRA and Police with procedures and Lord Advocates Guidelines in relation to offences that must be reported;
- No dedicated Reporter to allow case discussions pre referral
- Currently services are unable to work in schools for early intervention and crime prevention work.

**Project Team:**

Inspector Lorraine Mackie – Police Scotland (Delegated Project Leader)  
 Gail Walker – Youth Justice Manager  
 Julia Milne – Barnardos  
 Andrea McGill – Social Work Service Manager for Children’s services  
 Val Vertigans – Community Justice Officer  
 Roma Bruce-Davies - SCRA  
 Elaine Law - Education

**Outline Project Plan**

<b>Project Stage</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>Getting Started</b> (Project Score 1-3)	<b>What initial activities are required to get started?</b>  Understanding data regarding types of offending, areas of offending, gender and age of offenders.	

	<p>Identify how many cases have been referred to SCRA and no action has been taken. From those, review a sample of these cases. What can be learned and what change ideas can be developed?</p> <p>-Identify gaps in service provision based on analytical work and results.</p>	By December 2020
<p><b>Designing and Testing Changes</b> (Project Score 4-7)</p>	<p><b>What activities are required to start testing changes?</b></p> <p>-Develop a plan for 'test of change' ideas to be delivered and implement initial testing.</p> <p>-This will include identifying dedicated SPOC's for YJMU, SCRA and SW Reception team.</p> <p>-Outline the required information needed to allow for meaningful discussions/decisions to be made between SCRA/YJMU/SW.</p> <p>-SCRA to carry out review of a sample of cases where no action has been taken by SCRA and provide anonymised feedback to the project team.</p> <p>-Identify what educational inputs are provided in schools currently in relation to crime prevention. Identify any gaps in provision.</p>	<p><b>When do you expect to complete this stage?</b></p> <p>February 2021</p>
<p><b>Implementing and sustaining changes that demonstrate improvement</b> (Project Score 7-10)</p>	<p><b>What actions would be required to implement and sustain the changes that have resulted in improvement?</b></p>	<p><b>When do you expect to complete this stage?</b></p>

	<p>-Awareness raising/learning sessions to be developed and delivered jointly between Police/YJMU/SCRA and SW. This will take place before the testing stage commences.</p> <p>-plan and complete further testing following review of SCRA cases.</p>	<p>April 2021</p>
<p><b>Spreading Changes</b> (Project Score 9-10)</p>	<p><b>What actions are required to reach the full scale of the project?</b></p> <p>-When results are known, establish if the changes have had a positive impact. Consider what we have learned and if there is value in continuing these changes and extend the learning into other areas.</p>	<p><b>When do you expect to complete this stage?</b></p> <p>December 2021</p>