

Report from Scottish Children's Reporter Administration for 2009-10

✘ The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) has just announced that more children are requiring compulsory measures of intervention, with a further rise in the number of children and young people on Supervision.

Yet, SCRA's Annual Report 2009/10, which is published this week, reveals that the overall number of children and young people being referred to the Reporter continues to fall for the third consecutive year.

The number of children and young people referred in 2009/10 was 42,532, compared to 47,178 in 2008/09 – a reduction of 9.8%. Despite this reduction, this is still 4.7% of the Scottish child population.

This continuing decrease is seen partly as the result of partner agencies working together to implement new measures, which are aimed at making sure only children and young people who may be in need of compulsory measures of intervention are referred to the Reporter in line with the purpose of the Children's Hearings System.

SCRA's Chair, Carole Wilkinson said: "For the third year, we have seen a fall in the number of children referred – down by 15.2% on offence grounds and 8.6% on care and protection grounds.

"These continuing trends are welcome, and reflect the changes in referral practice among our partners. This also indicates that the introduction of pre-referral screening and the implementation of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) are having a positive impact."

The vast majority of children and young people are referred to the Reporter because of concerns about their welfare. In 2009/10, 35,735 children were referred on care and protection grounds, while 10,012 were referred on offence grounds (these figures include 3,215 children who were referred on both grounds). The two most common grounds for referral continued to be that the child was a 'victim of a Schedule 1 offence' (16,660 children) and lack of parental care (14,430 children).

The number of children on Supervision Requirements (compulsory measures) increased again this year (from 13,523 in 2008/09 to 13,829 in 2009/10). The number of Children's Hearings held also rose – up from 42,866 Hearings in 2008/09 to 43,614 in 2009/10 – an increase of 1.7%. These are the highest numbers since the Children's Hearings System began.

In addition, there was a slight increase in the number of children with Child Protection Orders (CPOs) – from 661 in 2008/09 to 665 in 2009/10. Of the 665 children with CPO referrals to Children's Hearings in 2009/10, almost half (320 children) were aged under two years.

Commenting on the increase in the numbers of children requiring compulsory measures, SCRA's Chair Principal Reporter/Chief Executive, Netta Maciver, OBE said:

“The aim of the Children's Hearings System is to protect our most vulnerable children and young people who require compulsory measures of supervision. Whilst we welcome that increasing numbers of children are receiving more effective early intervention, there continues to be a growing number of children, in particular, very young children, who require compulsory measures of intervention.

“We have been able to examine how long children remain on supervision, and are in a position now to work positively with all of our partners to ensure that children stay on for no longer than they absolutely need to. This will lead to even

more improvements for children.”

You can read the actual report on the SCRA [website](#)