



AUDIT COMMITTEE

AGENDA

2nd Meeting, 2003 (Session 1)

Tuesday 21st January 2003

The Committee will meet at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 2 to consider the following agenda items:

1. **Dealing with Offending by Young People (in private):** The Committee will consider lines of questioning for the witnesses at agenda item 4.
2. **Items in private:** The Committee will decide whether to take agenda items 6 and 7 in private.
3. **Overview of the National Health Service in Scotland 2001/02:** The Committee will receive a briefing from the Auditor General for Scotland on his report entitled 'Overview of the National Health Service in Scotland 2001/02' (AGS/2003/?).
4. **Dealing with Offending by Young People:** The Committee will take evidence from:

Mr Mike Ewart; Head of Department, Scottish Executive Education Department;

Mr Colin Mackenzie, Convener, Criminal Justice Standing Committee, Association of Directors of Social Work;

Mr Chris Hawkes, Criminal Justice Standing Committee, Association of Directors of Social Work;

Ms Sandra Paterson, Children and Family Standing Committee, Association of Directors of Social Work;

Mr Alan Miller, Principal Reporter, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration;

on its inquiry into the report by the Auditor General for Scotland entitled 'Dealing with Offending by Young People' (AGS/2002/8).

5. **Dealing with Offending by Young People (in private):** The Committee will consider the evidence taken at agenda item 4 and further arrangements for the inquiry.

6. **Overview of the National Health Service in Scotland 2001/02:** The Committee will consider its approach to the report by the Auditor General for Scotland entitled 'Overview of the National Health Service in Scotland 2001/02' (AGS/2003/1).
7. **How Government Works in Scotland:** The Committee will consider a revised draft report on its inquiry into the report by the Auditor General for Scotland entitled 'How Government Works in Scotland' (AGS/2002/6).

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The papers for this meeting are as follows:

Agenda Item 1

Briefing Papers

PRIVATE PAPER

Agenda Item 3

Report by the Auditor General entitled 'Overview of the National Health Service in Scotland 2001/02' [AGS/2003/1](#)

Note from the Auditor General [AU/03/02/1](#)

Agenda Item 4

Report by the Auditor General entitled 'Dealing with Offending by Young People' – *members are reminded to bring their copy* [AGS/2002/8](#)

Written Statement from the Scottish Executive Education Dept [AU/03/02/2](#)
TO FOLLOW

Written Statement from the Association of Directors of Social Work [AU/03/02/3](#)
TO FOLLOW

Written Statement from the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration [AU/03/02/4](#)
TO FOLLOW

Agenda Item 5

Briefing Paper

PRIVATE PAPER

Agenda Item 6

Briefing Paper

PRIVATE PAPER

Agenda Item 7

Revised Draft Committee Report

PRIVATE PAPER

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT AUDIT COMMITTEE**MEETING 21 JANUARY 2003****REPORT BY THE AUDITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND****OVERVIEW OF THE NHS IN SCOTLAND 2001/02**

Supplementary information on the consolidated outturn of the NHS in Scotland 2001/02

The Scottish Executive Consolidated Resource Accounts include the income and expenditure and assets and liabilities of the Scottish Executive Health Department and NHS bodies responsible for the planning, promotion and commissioning of health care e.g. health boards. The published figures do not distinguish between the financial outturn within individual NHS bodies and that of the Department. Each Consolidated Departmental Outturn Statement provides an analysis of gross expenditure, income applied and net expenditure compared with budget for each of:

- The **Departmental Expenditure Limit** containing public expenditure within departmental programmes which form multi-year budget plans against which departments manage their expenditure
- **Annually Managed Expenditure** containing public expenditure within departmental programmes but outside the Departmental Expenditure Limit and managed annually because it cannot be reasonably be subject to firm multi-year limits, or should be subject to special handling
- **Other Expenditure** including receipts from the National Insurance Fund towards the cost of the NHS in Scotland

The Scottish Executive Consolidated Resource Accounts indicate that net expenditure within the Departmental Expenditure Limit on the NHS in Scotland in 2001/02 amounted to £6.051 billion against a budget of £6.056 billion, representing a variance between outturn and budget of less than one per cent. The total gross expenditure, inclusive of annually managed expenditure and other expenditure, amounted to £6.362 billion with net expenditure amounting to £5.625 billion against a budget authorised by the Scottish Parliament of £5.603 billion. The Consolidated Departmental Outturn Statement for 2001/2002 for the Scottish Executive Health Department is shown at Annex 1.

Overview of NHS bodies 2001/02

The Auditor General's report provides an overview of the main issues arising from the 2001/02 audits of NHS trusts and health boards, and from the performance audit work undertaken since the previous overview report.

The report concludes that overall financial stewardship in the NHS continues to be of a good standard. There were no qualifications to the 'true and fair' opinions provided by auditors on the 52 NHS bodies subject to audit in 2001/02. However, because of continuing difficulty in obtaining sufficient evidence that primary care expenditure and income were incurred and applied in accordance with enactments and guidance, auditors qualified their regularity audit opinions in respect of the 2001/02 accounts of all primary care trusts and health boards. The Common Services Agency, which is responsible for making payments in this area, has made progress in improving its overall control environment over primary care payments and in introducing robust payment verification checks. It is important, however, that further progress is pursued vigorously if similar regularity qualified audit opinions are to be avoided on the 2002/03 accounts.

The report indicates that 24 of the 28 trusts achieved all three financial targets for 2001/02 (five more than in the previous year), and only three trusts failed to achieve the primary financial target of break-even (compared to eight in 2000/01). The overall net surplus for trusts at 31 March 2002 was £18.6 million compared to a net deficit of £31.9 million the previous year.

The report finds, however, that the overall improvement in the financial position of boards and trusts can be attributed, at least in part, to an additional £90 million which the Scottish Executive made available in September 2001. Simply based on the figures on the accounts, 15 trusts would have found it difficult to achieve break-even without this additional funding. Such one-off funding does not represent a long-term solution to the financial problems faced by NHS bodies. Auditors reported that many NHS areas will continue to face financial difficulties in 2002/03 and remain dependent on non-recurring income or savings plans to achieve financial break-even. In particular, auditors expressed concern about the ability of three trusts (Lothian University Hospitals NHS Trust, Argyll and Clyde Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and Grampian University Hospitals NHS Trust) to deliver their financial plans for 2002/03.

The report notes that the Scottish Executive is to make available an additional £2.7 billion available to the NHS in Scotland over the three years to 2005/06. Whilst this additional funding may ease financial pressures at least in the short-term, it is clear that NHS bodies will also be required to deliver improved healthcare for their local populations with the extra money provided. The need for NHS boards to prepare balanced budgets and to manage prudently their finances will, therefore, remain, but there is no guarantee that health bodies will find it any easier to balance their books. In this respect, the role of the new unified boards will be crucial to achieving financial equilibrium in the NHS. The Scottish Executive will also need to ensure that its revised performance assessment framework is sufficiently developed to be able to identify the healthcare improvements being provided with the additional funds.

ANNEX 1

The Scottish Executive Health Department

Consolidated Departmental Outturn Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2002

2000/01 Outturn £000s	PROGRAMME	Gross Expenditure £000s	Income Applied £000s	Outturn £000s	Budget £000s	Variance £000s
	Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL)					
5,366,443	Hospital, Community & Family Health Services	6,091,202	117,274	5,973,928	5,919,910	54,018
50,500	Other Health Services	55,173	1,182	53,991	117,057	-63,066
19,493	Community Care	23,745	0	23,745	19,457	4,288
5,436,436	Total DEL	6,170,120	118,456	6,051,664	6,056,424	-4,760
	Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)					
166,619	Other Capital Charges	192,016	0	192,016	227,602	-35,586
166,619	Total AME	192,016	0	192,016	227,602	-35,586
	Other Expenditure					
-599,158	National Insurance Contributions	0	618,544	-618,544	-681,009	62,465
-599,158	Total Other Expenditure	0	618,514	-618,544	-681,009	62,465
5,003,897	TOTAL	6,362,136	737,000	5,625,136	5,603,017	22,119



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AUDIT COMMITTEE: DEALING WITH OFFENDING BY YOUNG PEOPLE

Thank you for letter of 10 January seeking a statement for the Audit Committee for its forthcoming inquiry into the report by the Auditor General for Scotland “Dealing with Offending by Young People”. The report was welcomed by the Executive on its publication on 5 December. It provides an important contribution to the work being done to improve Scotland’s systems of youth justice.

You asked for a statement on two questions:

- 1. The Auditor General’s report highlights strengths and weaknesses in the systems for dealing with young offenders. Could you give the Committee your views on the performance of the system for children/young adults?**

As the committee will be aware the issue of youth crime has been the subject of much debate. There has also been a lot of action to build on the outcome of the June 2000 Advisory Group report on youth crime “It’s a Criminal Waste”, the Executive Action Programme to reduce Youth Offending, and the Executive Action Plan on youth crime.

Ministers have set out their views and policies publicly in Parliament and on other occasions over the last few years. They have explained that an effective system needs to support and develop ways of diverting young people from trouble and deal with offending as soon as it occurs. That means supporting programmes that show they cut crime and programmes that take into account the needs of victims. An effective system would work quickly, deliver the right processes effectively, stop re-offending and be cost-effective.

As the Audit Scotland report has identified, there are targets for the time to deliver each stage of the children’s hearings process. These were developed by the Time Intervals Working Group and have been in place since 1999. Since these standards were introduced, the average time to disposal in the hearings system has fallen from 141 days to 123 days. That is an improvement of 12%, but still some way off the Executive overall target.

The Executive agrees with Audit Scotland that all agencies involved in the system should monitor their own performance against these and other standards. In addition the Executive regularly

requests information from SCRA, local authorities and the police to monitor progress against the time standards. Information was last circulated in December 2001. Updated information for 2001-02 has been collected and the Executive has already indicated its commitment to making the results publicly available.

The Executive published national standards in December 2002. These set out how all parts of the hearings system should meet the improved target of 80 days by 2006. Fast-track Hearings will start shortly and will deliver quicker interventions for persistent offenders.

Speed of processing is only one aspect of effectiveness. Ministers have stressed the importance of co-ordinated working by all partners, such as police, local government, Reporters, children's panel members, voluntary organisations, parents and schools. To date, three-year funding of £25m has enabled each authority area to set up a team specifically to tackle youth offending. The Executive has asked these teams to work in a joined-up way, to examine and analyse patterns of offending in their areas and introduce a range of programmes and disposals, including restorative justice, to meet their local needs. The feedback from local teams on this work, which followed Audit Scotland's enquiries, was mapped by the Executive and published in September 2002. Examples of best practice in a dozen areas were also published at that time.

Related activities by partner agencies such as the Safer Scotland police campaign have also received Executive support. That campaign included police work with local youth projects. Research has also been commissioned on improving community safety and in delivering effective police cautions and warnings.

Ministers recognise that it is important to ensure effective programmes can continue and be replicated in other areas. They have stressed that programmes should follow the "what works" principle. Following the Scottish Budget, commitments were made to continue existing funding, and increase this by up to £33m by 2006. Funding to local teams includes an allowance to evaluate programmes to assess their effectiveness. Where the Executive has introduced and funded programmes such as Freagarrach these have been evaluated and the results published so that they may rolled-out more widely.

The Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre for Scotland also provides a forum to share evidence about the most effective methods for tackling offending. It was established in 1999 following recommendations from SWSI reports on sex offenders and on women offenders, and extended to include Youth Justice in 2000 following publication of the strategy report *It's a Criminal Waste: Stop Youth Crime Now*. The Development Centre has been one of the contributors to the regular national network seminars which the Executive has funded to enable frontline workers and managers to exchange information about best practice.

The Executive has also introduced the Youth Crime Prevention Fund and the Intensive Support Fund. The Youth Crime Prevention Fund (£11.9m over 4 years) will enable national and local voluntary organisations to widen the range of projects for young offenders and increase the support available for their parents and victims. This will include reparation, mediation and restorative justice programmes, diversionary activities and early intervention projects. The Intensive Support Fund (£5.5m over 4 years) will enable both local authorities and voluntary organisations to increase the level of community-based supervision of young offenders and improve support for those returning to their communities from secure accommodation. In 2002-03 alone, an extra £3m has gone to local youth justice teams to support the development of fully comprehensive action plans to tackle offending locally and to ensure that every persistent young offender can be placed in an effective programme which will help prevent re-offending.

Detailed evaluation of performance of the youth justice system has been hampered by the shortage of comprehensive national information. The Audit Scotland team made good use of what is available to provide a picture of provision and ask important questions. However, more detailed and consistent data will be required to support the monitoring and improvement in performance to achieve national standards. The Executive investment in the new national IT system for the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration which was started in 2000 is designed to provide standard data across the country which will give a much improved picture of processes and outcomes. The roll-out of the new system is now complete and the system is fully operational. In addition the Executive backed up its December publication of agreed national standards for the effectiveness of the system with £3.5m investment to help local government and the police enhance their own IT systems to provide better performance monitoring information.

The Executive publishes the information it receives about performance and delivery and will continue to keep information requirements under review to ensure that all agencies are able to assess the effectiveness of the processes.

Hearings need full information on the needs and risk assessment of the young person. They need information about the options and programmes available to address these needs and tackle offending behaviour. Once they have made their decision, local authorities are legally required to implement that decision, subject to discretion about use of secure accommodation. Information about the effectiveness of each of these stages in the process is limited, but what we do have suggests that there is considerable variation across the country.

The report highlights the shortage of qualified social work staff. However, recent statistics show that, between 1999 and 2001, the number of qualified social workers working with children and families increased by 13% and the number of fieldwork staff increased by 30%. Within that time, many people have moved from area teams to specialised projects, sometimes in the voluntary sector. This shows that the sector has been growing, but not fast enough to keep up with the rapid growth in ambition and investment by central and local government.

The Executive has taken action to boost recruitment further, to tackle the perception of the profession, and to assist staff development. The results so far show that the Scottish Social Services Council has had a ten-fold increase in enquiries about the profession and numbers applying for training have increased each year. The numbers completing courses are now 35% higher than in 1999. Results from System Three surveys show an 11% increase in the number of people who believe workers in care services do a worthwhile job and an increase in the numbers of those who consider it an appealing career. SWSI has begun discussions with local authorities, Audit Scotland and the voluntary sector on how the recommendation on maintaining information on social work vacancy and sickness rates may be most speedily and effectively actioned.

When considering the effectiveness of any justice system we need to look at the effect on offending and re-offending. SCRA makes data on offence referrals public in its annual reports. This shows that fewer than 2% of Scots children under 16 are referred on offence grounds in a year, and that this is 19% lower than 3 years ago. Fewer referrals are now made than 25 years ago. Some aspects, however, show an upward trend, particularly persistent offending by the 0.1% of young people who commit 10 offences or more in a year. That is why Ministers have identified the need for fast track hearings and youth courts to provide effective solutions to the problems posed to communities and this group of young people themselves by their offending behaviour. Preparations for both are well advanced.

In addition, the information we have about those programmes which have been evaluated points to a reduction in re-offending. For example Barnardo's CHOSI project in North Lanarkshire led to a reduction in offending of nearly 60% with 33 young people over the age of 14 in 1999/2000. At the Freagarrach scheme for 12-18 year old persistent offenders in the former Central region, the overall rate of offending by the young people decreased between 20% and 50%, compared with the previous year. Direct savings to the criminal justice system of about £2.4 million can be estimated over a 10-12 year period from this work. Use of restorative senior police cautions is made in the Breaking the Cycle project in East Lothian and has contributed to nearly 9 out of 10 of young people not re-offending. In Fife, independent evaluation of the SACRO-run victim mediation scheme showed that 62% of the 82 young people involved in the project were not referred to the Reporter again during the following 2 months.

When they launched their Action Programme to reduce youth crime, Ministers stressed that a key aim was to increase confidence in the youth justice system. Increased confidence might lead to increased referrals, and this will need to be taken into account when analysing future trends in offending.

The Audit Scotland report identified that the cost of the process is cheaper in the hearings system, whilst the cost of disposal can be lower in the court-based system. This reflects the different structures and processes involved. While these differences are important, they are only one element in any analysis of cost effectiveness which would also need to look at long term costs and impacts.

2. What needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of the system?

The Audit Scotland report endorses the principles of both the children's hearings and the criminal justice systems. It makes a number of recommendations for the way ahead to improve the effectiveness of the system. Our earlier answer sought to highlight the key issues for the Executive and set out areas where progress towards a fully effective system will be kept under review.

In their response to publication of the report, Ministers indicated their broad acceptance of the findings. Twenty-seven of the recommendations have already been implemented or are underway. Six of the others have been accepted in principle and action is in train.

There are a small number that need more careful consideration. Audit Scotland asked Ministers to consider whether funding in the children's hearings system should be ring-fenced in the same way as for adult offending and the courts system. The youth justice system involves a large number of agencies, currently funded in a variety of ways. This issue therefore raises a number of questions which Ministers will consider.

The report also raised the question of independent inspection of the system. The First Minister announced on 14 January that all public services would be subject to independent inspection and reporting. Ministers are considering the detailed implications for this for each element of the public service, and will respond to the Audit Scotland recommendation as part of that process.

MIKE EWART





**ADSW Criminal Justice Standing Committee
Submission to Audit Committee of the Scottish Parliament**

**Auditor General Accounts Commission Performance Audit Report Dealing with
Offending by Young People.**

1. The Association of Directors of Social Work welcomes the report which comprehensively outlines the Commission's findings in relation to work carried out with young people involved in offending behaviour. Its recommendations provide a useful agenda for local youth justice steering groups who are addressing the issues. The report is also helpful in putting the level of offending into perspective and recognising that a large proportion of offences are committed by a small number of young people. ADSW shares the concern about the impact of that behaviour on communities.
2. The additional funding made available by the Scottish Executive for development, provides opportunities and means to address the issues, which are the responsibility of a number of agencies. The key to successful services is a joint approach and shared information using comparative data.
3. The Association acknowledge that until recently there was not enough focus on challenging offending behaviour with young people under 16. The youth justice teams are beginning to address this and local authorities are undertaking more focused assessments on offending behaviour and developing programmes on the consequences of this offending behaviour.

It needs to be recognised that young people who offend often have a multiplicity of problems and live in very chaotic circumstances. They often require an intensity of support. The new funding does allow opportunities to develop a range of services that can begin to meet these needs.

4. We share concern about the length of time taken to reach decisions on children and young adults who have offended, although much of the process is not in the control of local authorities. The Social Work response to young people appearing before the adult courts is usually within agreed timescales. We accept that timescales within the children's hearing system have been poorer. The practice in criminal justice social work is in part explained by the expectations laid out in the guidance on 'National Objectives and Standards for Social Work Services in the Criminal Justice System'. Similar advice has not been available for children's services, although the National Youth Justice Steering Group has now issued guidance. That will lead to improvements in practice.

The serious shortage of Social Workers however, particularly Children and Family Social Workers does contribute to delays. That is a problem that has been recognised by the Scottish Executive and their Action Plan for the Staffing Services Workforce is a start in helping to address some of the barriers to recruitment. The situation is not going to be easily resolved and shortage of suitably qualified staff will remain a problem for the foreseeable future.

5. Local Youth Justice Steering Groups offers opportunities to look at other ways of tackling the problem. This is not just a Social Worker responsibility but shared with relevant voluntary organisations, Education, the Police, Leisure Services and Health Services. Groups will draw on expertise from a number of sources to put together appropriate packages to support young people.
6. However responsibility for assessment and case management must lie with qualified Social Workers. Social Work training offers an important understanding of the individual in society, of child development and family dynamics, the impact of social and economic factors on lifestyle and behaviour. They are best qualified to undertake comprehensive assessment and draw up action plans, to review progress and access a range of appropriate supports.
7. We are concerned about the variations in decision making. Local co-ordination will offer opportunity for consistency in practice, shared definitions of the problem and development of complementary information systems. The development of Integration of Scottish Criminal Justice Information Systems will be part of this process. Additional funding available from the Executive will allow further development. Work is already underway to develop appropriate specifications. This and annual reporting frameworks will help to reduce variations in practice.
8. Service development must be based on what works. Services should be aimed at the most appropriate young person e.g. those minimally involved in offending and low risk of future offending should be offered diversion, either through the voluntary organisations or youth or leisure services activity. Young people whose behaviour is persistent and at high risk of re-offending should be offered intensive support. We should learn from research that if we place a young person in inappropriate services we could increase risk.
9. Although we are moving towards the 3rd year of funding for Youth Justice Services, most authorities have had to set up an infrastructure from a very low base. The impact of these services is only beginning to take shape and we believe that the follow up studies by Audit Scotland will begin to show a shift in the effectiveness of the services.
10. Joint working and shared decision making should create opportunities to shift the balance of expenditure. However the current Adult Criminal Justice system is an expensive system and the effectiveness of the whole system needs looked at. The findings of the National Group reviewing summary justice in Scotland may provide advice on how to address this.
11. The Report raises inconsistency in GAE distribution for funding children's services, a concern shared by ADSW. Although ring fencing of Criminal Justice Social Work Service expenditure has led to significant improvements in service, there are issues created by the lack of flexibility in these budget arrangements and this is not necessarily a more effective way of dealing with budgetary difficulties as it can lead to a degree of inflexibility in managing local priorities.
12. ADSW however believes that the Scottish Executive could do more to ensure coherence in the different Executive initiatives particularly in helping to sign post opportunities available through different funding streams for tackling some of the barriers to effective joint work.



Dealing with Offending by Young People:

Statement to Audit Committee of the Scottish Parliament prepared by Alan. D. Miller, Principal Reporter

17th January 2002

Introduction

I have confined my comments in this statement to the 5 main areas of concern identified in the report: time taken, decision making, service provision, spend on youth justice, staffing in children's services.

The following comments are offered in the context of the Auditor General's statement on page 69 of the report:

*"The case for continuing investment and support
in the Children's Hearings System is strong."*

Time Taken:

- The Children's Hearings System (CHS) has had clearly defined national time standards in place since 1st April 1999.
- ***Dealing with Offending by Young People*** highlights 2 main delays in the system - police submitting referrals¹ to the Reporter at the start of the process and social work submitting requested reports².
- The report recognises that the CHS is far quicker than the average time in the CJS. Against a standard of 84 working days the CHS takes (on average) 123 working days to process a case. The CJS has no overall time standard and takes an average of 167 to 190 days.
- The CHS is reducing the time taken for children referred for offending to reach a Children's Hearing – since records began in 1997 there has been a 17 day reduction, despite increased referrals and Reporter workloads.
- In the next 12-months, SCRA will establish fully integrated IT links with Scotland's police forces and with local authorities.
- In November 2002, SCRA completed the 2-year national rollout of the Referrals Administration Database (RAD) – a casework management system that allows

¹ Only once force (Tayside) came close to meeting time interval standard 1 - Reports will be delivered to the Reporter within 14 calendar days of caution and charge.

² Standard 3 - 75% of social work reports should be with the Reporter within 20 working days of the request.

faster and more accurate information on all children referred, tracking of children in the Hearings System and improved casework practice.

- Fast Track Hearings pilots will be launched shortly in the pilot areas (Ayrshire, Dundee and East Lothian/Scottish Borders). SCRA will monitor and help evaluate the effectiveness of these pilots.

SCRA will continue to monitor and report progress towards the time standards set by Youth Justice System Working Group, and the national target for reducing the numbers of persistent young offenders.

Variation in Decision Making:

- Audit Scotland has recognised that Reporter decision making is a strength in the system.
"Flexibility of Reporter Decision making should be retained and Reporters should be supported in the decisions they make." Audit Scotland Summary Report, Page 11, paragraph 30.
- Reporter decision-making is affected by a number of factors: geography, patterns and nature of offending and of referral, social inclusion, quality and timeliness of reports, availability and effectiveness of services.
- SCRA is developing a series of service initiatives to improve the quality and speed of its casework, including piloting a decision-making framework in the fast-track areas
- The new information systems will enhance the flow of information between services, and bring about improved consistency in decision making.
- SCRA will carry out a National Practice Audit in 2003/04 to review decision-making practices.

Variation in Service Provision:

- The Auditor General's findings reaffirm the welfare and child-centred ethos of the CHS.
- The Report states that there is a consistent need for more and better services in community settings. Its Literature Review shows that there is no evidence that custody reduces offending but that programmes and services for young people living at home were effective. SCRA welcomes the commitment to develop more programmes around this 'what works' principle.
- Greater inter-agency working as recommended by the Child Protection Review *"It's Everyone's Job to Make Sure I am Alright"* (November 2002), will aid decision making in the CHS and improve outcomes for children.
- SCRA will enhance its planning and partnership working over the next 2 years to ensure effective co-ordination of resources and services takes place especially at a local level.

Spend on Youth Justice:

- The CHS is cost effective. Audit Scotland identified the cost per case in the Children's Hearing System as £945, compared to £1400 to £12,400 in the Criminal Justice System.
- Integrated working with key children's services in the public and voluntary sector will ensure that funding continues to be spent well at the point of need.

Staffing in Children's Services:

- SCRA fully endorses the urgent need for the shortage of children and families social workers to be tackled.
- In the short term, SCRA has established a number of local arrangements with a range of service agencies to improve service delivery to children.

The **Children's Hearing System** is performing well in a period of change with ever-increasing pressures on children and their families and heightened awareness of children's rights and protection. Between 1991 to 2000-01:

- 24% increase in children referred to Reporters on care and protection and offence grounds (from 24,941 to 32,938 children).
- No change in children referred for offending or the pattern of offending:
 - 13,462 children referred for offending in 1991, and 13,545 in 2000-01
 - Most children (55%) referred for one offence, in any one-year.
 - 5% children referred for 10 or more offences, in 1991 and 2000-01