



Stage 2 - Investigation

The Children's Reporter investigates the child's case by requesting information from different sources: such as social work, police, school, health and voluntary organisations.

Reporter Decision

On the basis of the information provided, the Children's Reporter decides if a child needs to come to a Hearing.

Stage 3 - The Hearing*

Each Hearing comprises of three Panel Members, all trained volunteers from the local community. It is important that the child and their family or carers, take part in the discussion at the Hearing. The role of the Reporter is to make sure the Hearing is recorded correctly and to advise the panel on legal matters. The Reporter takes no part in the Panel Members' discussions and decision-making. Decisions are made openly during the Hearing.

* Hearings will only go ahead once the grounds for referral are accepted by the young person and their parent(s) or, if necessary, once the court has decided they have been established on the basis of evidence presented by the Reporter.

Stage 4 - Outcome

The most common outcome from a Hearing is a Supervision Requirement. Supervision Requirements can have conditions, for example, for the child to attend a children's centre or to live away from home. Temporary emergency measures will sometimes be necessary to keep a child safe. Local authorities have a legal responsibility to carry out the decisions made by Children's Hearings. Hearings may also decide that formal supervision measures are not required and discharge the case.

Further Information for Children:

Childline
Freepost 1111
Glasgow
G1 4BR
Telephone 0800 1111 (Free telephone call)

Scottish Child Law Centre
For free legal advice for under 18s call - 0800 328 8970
For other enquiries call - 0131 667 6333 or www.sclc.org.uk

Further Information for Families:

Your local Children's Reporter is the person who organises the meeting and who can help with any questions you may have about the Hearing. You can find out more at www.scra.gov.uk

Other useful websites:

www.childrenshearings.co.uk
www.children1st.org.uk
www.nspcc.org.uk
www.barnardos.org.uk



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Information for

Children and Families

when going to a Hearing



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What is a Children's Hearing? ~ Who will be there? ~ What will we talk about?



Information for Children

What is a Children's Hearing?

A Children's Hearing is a meeting that children are asked to go to with their families or carers to help them sort out their problems. Many children get asked to go to a Hearing and this is called being 'referred'. Children can be referred to a Hearing for lots of reasons:

- If they are having problems at school
- If they have been in trouble with the police
- If a doctor thinks their health is not as good as it should be
- If a social worker thinks they may not be safe
- If a family member or friend is worried about them

You have been asked to go to a Children's Hearing; maybe your attendance at school is not good, you might be worried about one of your friends or somebody in your family, or perhaps they are worried about you. You must remember that you are the most important person at the Hearing and that the people who are there want to listen to you and will try to help you.

So who will be there?

- You
- The people who look after you
- Three Panel Members – these are people who know a lot about children and they will make the decisions
- A Children's Reporter – who will record what is talked about at the Hearing
- A Social Worker
- There may also be a Safeguarder there – this is someone who helps the Panel Members make the best decisions for you
- The Children's Reporter can also ask other people who know you to attend the Hearing - your school teacher for example

What will we talk about?

Everybody at the Hearing will get a chance to speak and that includes you. You should talk to the people at the Hearing about the things that are worrying you or tell them your views. The Panel Members want to hear what you have to say.

If you feel a bit shy, you can take somebody with you to help you speak to the Panel Members. This can be a friend, relative, social worker - anyone you want. Everybody at the Hearing wants to help you.

How long will I be there?

Most Hearings last for less than an hour – about as long as your lunch break at school.

What decisions can the people at the Hearing make about me?

The Panel Members will try to do something to help you and your family. There are a few different decisions that can be made by the panel:

- They may decide that you are able to sort out your problems yourself, with the help of the people who look after you.
- They may feel that they need to get more information about you and your situation before they can make a decision. They may ask a Safeguarder, who is independent from the panel, to meet you and your family and to provide more information. If this is the case you will be asked to come back to another Hearing on a different day.
- If the Panel Members are worried about your safety, they may decide to issue something called a warrant. This means that you may be taken to a safe place to live, until the next Hearing.

Panel Members can also decide to make a Supervision Requirement. This is a legal order which means you must do as it says. It may decide where you have to live. If a Supervision Requirement is made for you, you will have to come to another Hearing in the future so that the Panel Members can see how you are getting on.

What can I do if I am not happy with the Hearing decision?

You should tell the person who looks after you, or your social worker or the Children's Reporter as soon as you can. They will help you to talk to someone about why you do not like the decision and help you decide if you would like to go to court to appeal the decision.

Ajay, aged 9

"I kept missing school because I was being bullied and getting into fights, so I had to go to a Hearing with my Mum. The people at the Hearing were friendly and they listened to what I had to say, they really wanted to help me."

Marie, aged 6

"When Mum gets ill I have to look after my little sister. The people at the Hearing were worried about us as they think a grown-up should be doing this stuff for us. They helped to make sure that we were looked after properly."

Billy, aged 15

"I was always in trouble with the police for being drunk and vandalising cars. The people at the Hearing made me understand that if I carried on like that I would end up in jail. There's no way that I wanted that to happen."

Information for Families/Guardians

How the Children's Hearings System works ...

The Children's Hearings System provides a safety net for vulnerable children, and makes decisions which meet the needs of each individual child involved, and which will help to build stronger families and safer communities.

Stage 1 - Incident

An incident happens – for instance, a child commits an offence, or perhaps a child's welfare may be at risk, or a child may have suffered abuse or neglect.

Referral to the Children's Reporter

The referral* of a child or children to the Children's Reporter should happen because there may be a need for a service to help the child on a compulsory basis, rather than a voluntary basis.

* (The reason for the child being at the Hearing and the facts to support it)