



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

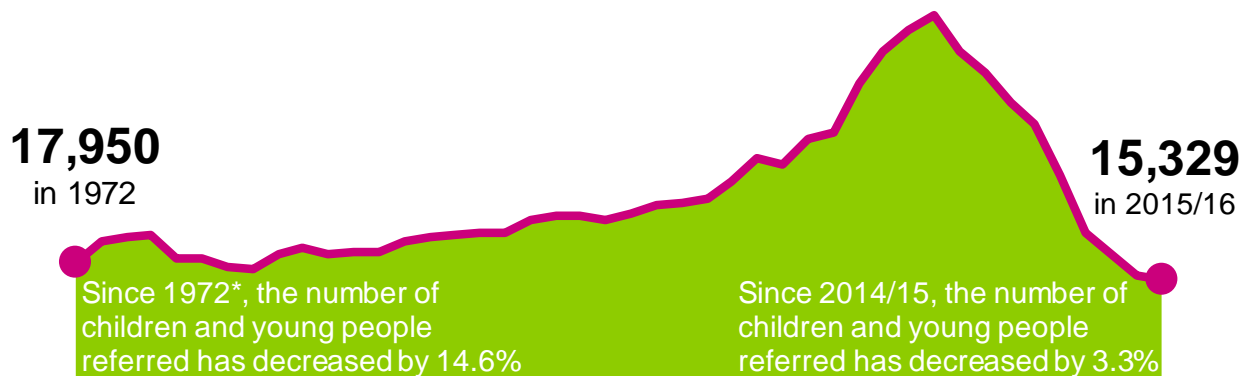
Statistical Analysis 2015/16

Ensuring positive futures for children and young people in Scotland

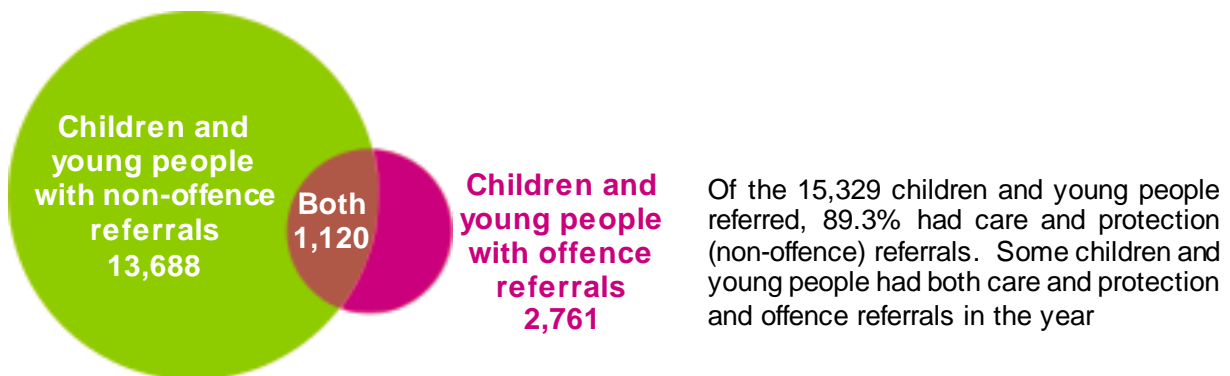


Statistical Analysis 2015/16 - at a glance

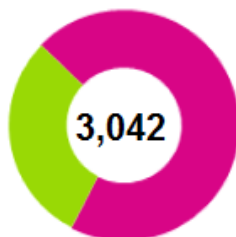
Children and young people referred 1972 to 2015/16



*1972 was the first year of published data for the Children's Hearings System



34,896 Children's Hearings were held for 15,087 children and young people



10,379 children and young people were subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order as at the 31st March 2016. For 3,042 of these children and young people, their order was first made at a Children's Hearing in 2015/16

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This statistical analysis is supported by our online statistical service which provides more in depth information about individual local authority areas. All the information is available on our website www.scra.gov.uk

Introduction

What do these statistics include?

This report covers the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. It presents the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration's (SCRA's) full statistical analysis on children and young people involved in the Children's Hearings System in the year 2015/16. This is an Official Statistics publication and the data has been produced using sound, proven and robust methodologies.

In general, the children and young people reported on within these statistics are aged between 0 and 15. There are however two exceptions to this:

Eight years is the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland. Children and young people under eight years cannot be referred to the Reporter for having committed an offence. Such behaviour in a child or young person aged under eight years may be referred under another ground (e.g. 'beyond control of a relevant person').

Young people aged 16 and 17 years can be referred to the Reporter if they are still subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders, are remitted by a court or if they had an open case which started prior to their sixteenth birthday. This only applies to a small number of young people, therefore age graphs within this report will always show a significant decrease between profiles for children and young people aged under 16 and those over 16. To make this distinction more apparent, young people aged 16 and 17 years are combined to provide an age group of 16+ years in this report.

The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 was implemented in June 2013; as a result, some historical comparisons are either not valid or not available. Where this is the case, this will be noted in the report. All terminology within this report references the 2011 Act unless otherwise stated.

How is this report structured?

This report is designed to follow the process by which a referral for a child or young person is received by SCRA through to a final outcome being made either by the Reporter or by a Children's Hearing. This is based upon the following path:

- Referral for a child or young person received by the Reporter because of concerns about their welfare or behaviour;
- Reporter investigation into the child or young person's case including seeking relevant information from partner agencies;
- Reporter decision as to whether the child or young person requires compulsory measures of intervention based on the information received; and
- Children's Hearing decision on whether compulsory measures of intervention are necessary (in respect of the child or young person) to protect the child or young person and/or address their behaviour. This may also involve:
 - the requirement to convene a Pre-Hearing Panel to consider any special arrangements needed for the Children's Hearing;
 - applications to the Sheriff to determine the grounds of referral; and
 - interim orders granted at Children's Hearings and at court to protect the child or young person during the process.

The process is complex as children can already be subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order at the point of referral and this will be taken into account within the decision making process. Compulsory measures also only last for specific time periods and as such have to be reviewed. This can be seen through the breakdown of Children's Hearings on page 16.

Finally, children and young people and/or their relevant persons can appeal to the Sheriff against decisions made by Children's Hearings. Applications can also be made to the Sheriff to terminate or vary the conditions on a Child Protection Order.

Children and young people referred

This section presents information about the numbers of children and young people referred to SCRA over the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 with comparisons to prior years. It looks at the reason for referral and profiles by age and gender of those children and young people referred.

Key facts:



Children and young people referred decreased by 3.3% from 2014/15



24.9% of children with Child Protection Orders were aged under 20 days

'lack of parental care' was the most common ground of referral

Children and young people referred to the Reporter

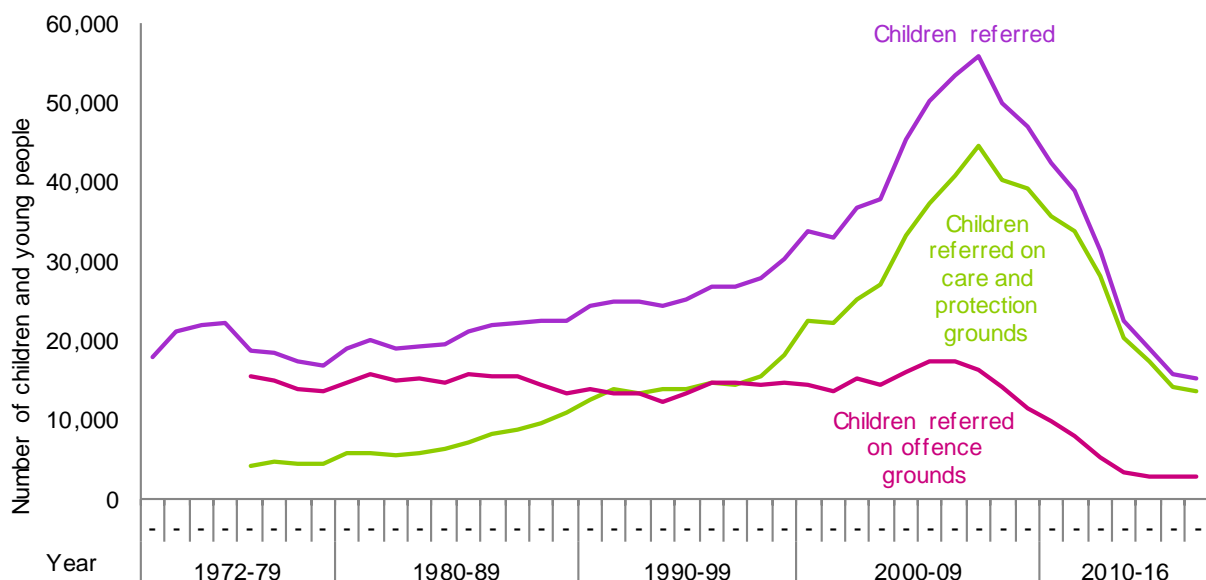
In 2015/16, 15,329 children and young people in Scotland were referred¹ to the Reporter:

- 13,688 on non-offence (care and protection) grounds; and
- 2,761 on offence grounds².

The figure of 15,329 children and young people referred to the Reporter in 2015/16 equates to 1.7% of all children and young people in Scotland³. Within this, 1.5% of all children and young people were referred on care and protection grounds and 0.6% of all children and young people aged between eight and 16 years were referred on offence grounds.

The number of children and young people referred to the Reporter has decreased for the ninth consecutive year. Figure 1.1 illustrates the changing trends within the system over the past 44 years. Operational processes and counting methodologies have changed over time but overall trends are broadly comparable. Year-on-year figures from 2003/04 onwards can be seen on the [Online Statistical Dashboard](#) including splits at a local authority level and rates per head of population.

Figure 1.1 Children and young people referred, by year



* please note that offence and care and protection splits are unavailable prior to 1976.

The 3.3% decrease in children and young people referred from 2014/15 levels was due to 529 fewer children and young people being referred; 453 fewer on care and protection grounds (a decrease of 3.2%); and 130 fewer on offence grounds (a decrease of 4.5%).

1 Reporters decide the category and the grounds of referral at the time of receipt based on information contained within the referral.

2 These figures include 1,120 children and young people who were referred on care and protection and offence grounds.

3 % of population aged under 16 years, based on mid-year estimates for 2015 from the National Records of Scotland.

Increasing referral rates were seen in the years leading up to 2006/07. One of the most significant factors in this increase was police referrals for children and young people from families where there had been an incident of domestic abuse.

The volume of such referrals created massive demands within the system and led to concerted efforts by partner agencies to reduce referrals where there was no need for compulsory measures of supervision. It is important to note that there was no suggestion that these children and young people did not require help or support, rather that there was no need for it to be provided on a compulsory basis.

Recent years have seen an increased focus on early and effective intervention, through the prism of the 'getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC)⁴ and Whole Systems approaches. The impact of this is highlighted through the reducing numbers of children and young people referred. There has also been a wider trend in decreasing crime rates within younger age groups. As noted in the 'Evaluation of the Whole System Approach to Young People who Offend in Scotland'⁵, police data shows that offending by young people aged under 18 years has fallen by 45% between 2008/09 and 2014/15.

There are certain types of referrals that indicate greater concern about the child or young person's safety or behaviour. These include Child Protection Orders and Joint Reports.

Child Protection Orders

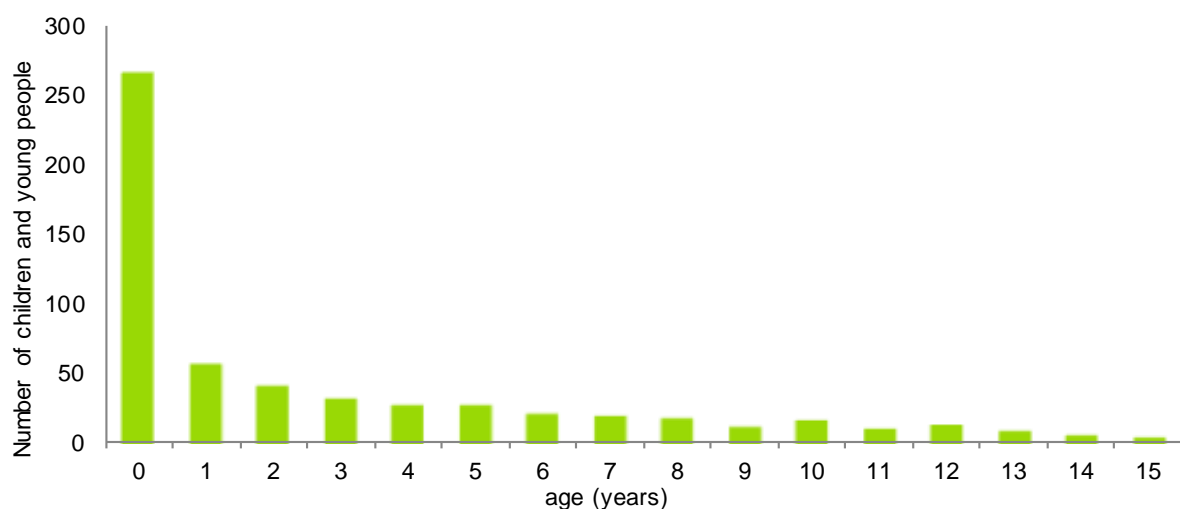
A Sheriff may grant a Child Protection Order to address emergency and/or high risk situations where measures need to be put in place immediately to protect a child or young person. The granting of this order requires the child or young person to be removed to (or kept in) a place of safety away from home. For this to be considered, a child or young person must be at risk of significant harm.

Table 1.1 Children and young people with Child Protection Orders, by year

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Number of children and young people	743	734	754	595

The number of children and young people with Child Protection Orders decreased significantly in the year (down 21.1%). In part, this was due to a focus by partner agencies on ensuring appropriate use of the orders, while normal fluctuations around low numbers may also have had an impact. Proportionately, more Child Protection Orders are granted for very young children (especially newborn babies), than any other age, reflecting their high risk and vulnerability and requirement for immediate protection.

Figure 1.2 Children and young people with Child Protection Orders received, by age, in 2015/16



Of the 595 children and young people with Child Protection Order referrals received in 2015/16, 148 (24.9%) were aged under 20 days at the date of receipt and 323 (54.3%) were aged under two years.

⁴ More information about GIRFEC can be found here - <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/what-is-girfec>

⁵ Prepared by Murray, McGuinness, Burman and McVie - <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00479272.pdf>

Joint reports to the Reporter and Procurator Fiscal

Where a child or young person is alleged to have committed an offence described in the Lord Advocate's Guidelines⁶, the police will make a joint report to the Procurator Fiscal (PF) and the Reporter. Following discussion with the Reporter, the PF will decide whether to deal with the case or refer it to the Reporter.

Joint reports can be categorised into two distinct groups; joint reports where a child or young person has been taken into custody by the police; and joint reports with no custody element.

For children and young people aged under 16, only the most serious alleged offences result in joint reports. As per the note on page 3, some young people aged sixteen and seventeen can be referred to the Reporter under certain circumstances. When the police charge these young people with an alleged offence, they will be the subject of a joint report.

Table 1.2 Number of children and young people with joint reports to the Reporter and PF, by year

Type of joint report	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Children and young people - not in custody	1,210	1,384	1,439	1,308
Children and young people - in custody	122	81	61	63

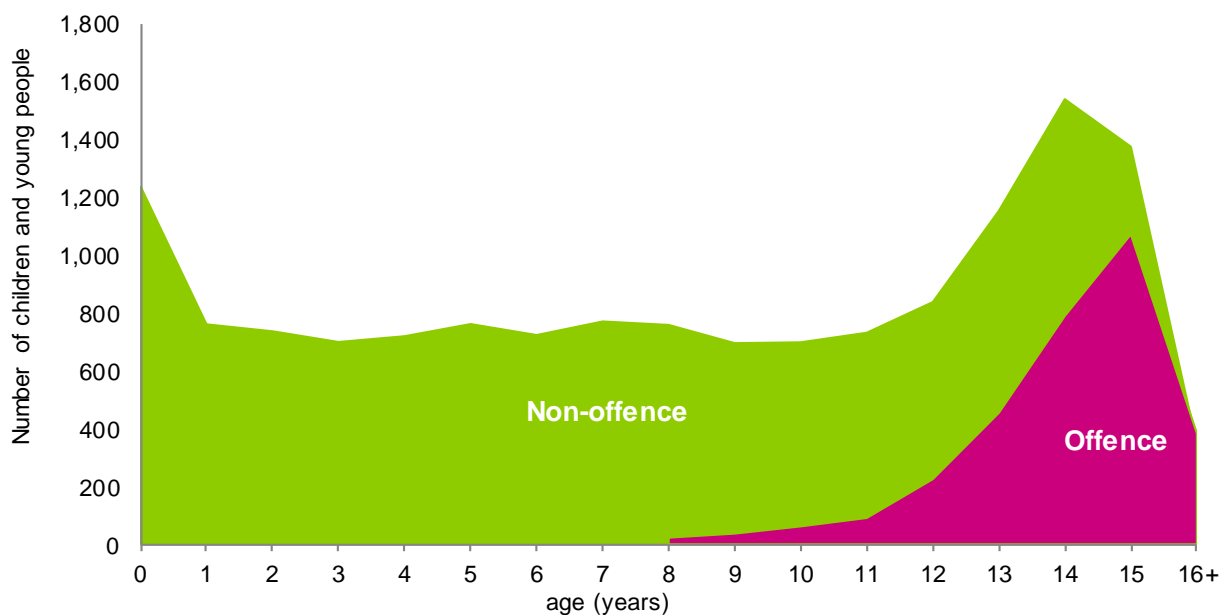
In 2015/16, 1,308 children and young people had 2,767 joint reports made while not in custody (several had joint reports on more than one occasion). Of those joint reports where the PF had made a decision, 65.0% of cases were subsequently referred to the Reporter.

In addition, there were 82 joint reports made for 63 children and young people in custody. Of those joint reports where the PF had made a decision, 86.4% of cases were retained by the PF.

Age of children and young people referred

The most common ages for children and young people to be referred to the Reporter continue to be 14 and 15 years. This applies to both care and protection and offence grounds.

Figure 1.3 Age of children and young people referred on offence and non-offence grounds, in 2015/16



⁶ To Chief Constables: Reporting to Procurator Fiscals of Offences Alleged to have been Committed by Children

Gender of children and young people referred

The number of girls referred to the Reporter fell by 1.9% (from 7,028 to 6,897) while the number of boys referred fell by 4.5% (from 8,830 to 8,432). This was an expected outcome in light of the overall drop of 3.3% in the number of children and young people referred.

While almost evenly split on care and protection grounds, boys continued to make up the majority (77%) of children and young people referred on offence grounds.

Table 1.3 Gender of children and young people referred in 2015/16, by referral type

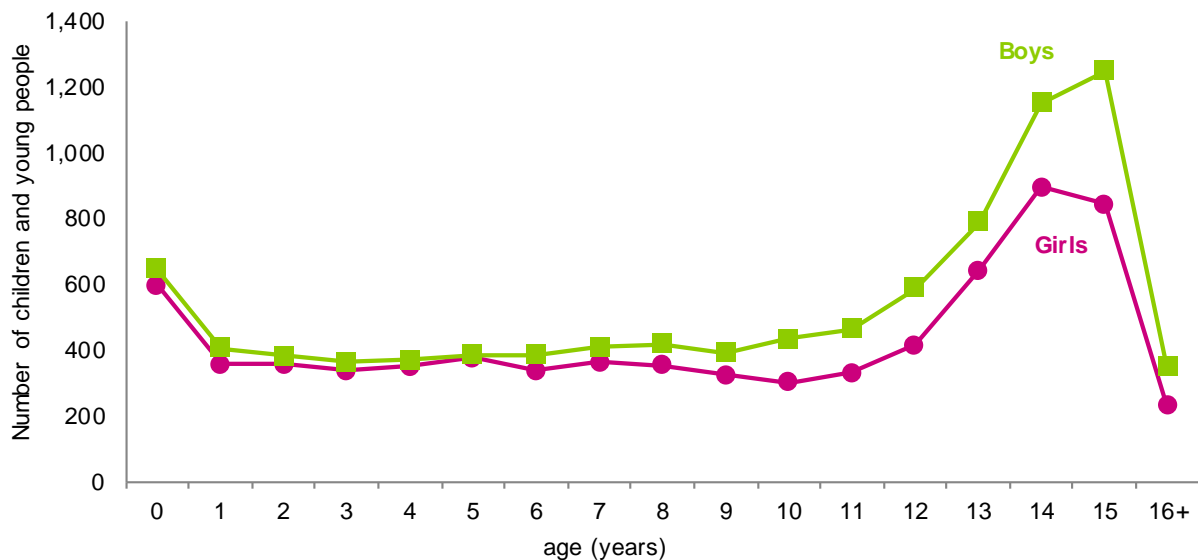
	Non-offence*		Offence*		All grounds	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Number of children and young people	6,602	7,086	644	2,117	6,897	8,432
Proportion by gender	48%	52%	23%	77%	45%	55%
Change from 2014/15	-1.6%	-4.6%	-4.2%	-4.6%	-1.9%	-4.5%

* Some children and young people were referred on both offence and non-offence grounds. These totals count every child or young person referred to the Reporter during the year once

Age and gender of children and young people referred

In line with Child Protection Orders, significant numbers of children and young people were referred in 2015/16 before their first birthday. For the majority of children who were aged under one year, the referral was on grounds of lack of parental care or having close connection with a person who has carried out domestic abuse. Referral rates then remain reasonably consistent before increasing from ages 12 to 15 years.

Figure 1.4 Age of children and young people referred, by gender, in 2015/16



Grounds on which children and young people were referred to the Reporter

The reasons (grounds) on which children and young people are referred to the Reporter are those set out in section 67(2) of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, and are summarised in Table 1.4. The table also includes splits to show whether children or young people were subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order at the point of referral.

'Lack of parental care' was the most common ground of referral followed by 'offence', 'close connection with person who has carried out domestic abuse' and 'exposure to persons whose conduct likely to be harmful to child'.

Table 1.4 Number of children and young people referred in 2015/16, by section 67 ground and Compulsory Supervision Order status at the point of referral

Section 67 ground	On order	Not on order	Total
(a) Lack of parental care	502	5,145	5,606
(b) Victim of a Schedule 1 offence	224	1,656	1,874
(c) Close connection with a Schedule 1 offender	42	585	627
(d) Same household as a child victim of Schedule 1 offender	40	436	476
(e) Exposure to persons whose conduct likely to be harmful to child	276	1,678	1,950
(f) Close connection with a person who has carried out domestic abuse	306	2,203	2,498
(g) Close connection with Sexual Offences Act offender - Parts 1, 4 & 5	14	175	189
(h) Accommodated and special measures needed	34	67	100
(i) Permanence order and special measures needed	2	11	13
(j) Offence	1,125	1,781	2,761
(k) Misuse of alcohol	79	151	229
(l) Misuse of a drug	53	75	126
(m) Child's conduct harmful to self or others	700	1,233	1,862
(n) Beyond control of a relevant person	388	826	1,183
(o) Failure to attend school without reasonable excuse	37	1,037	1,069
(p) Pressure to enter into civil partnership (or same household as such a child)	0	0	0
(q) Force to marry (or same household as such a child)	0	0	0
Total children and young people referred*	2,496	13,194	15,329

*A child or young person may be referred to the Reporter more than once in the year on the same and/or different grounds and may be on Compulsory Supervision Order at the point of referral at one time and not on Compulsory Supervision Order at another. These totals count every child or young person referred to the Reporter during the year once.

Children and young people referred on care and protection grounds

The average age of children and young people referred on care and protection grounds are outlined below. The grounds codes are described in full in Table 1.4 on page 8.

Figure 1.5 Average age of child referred on non-offence grounds in 2015/16

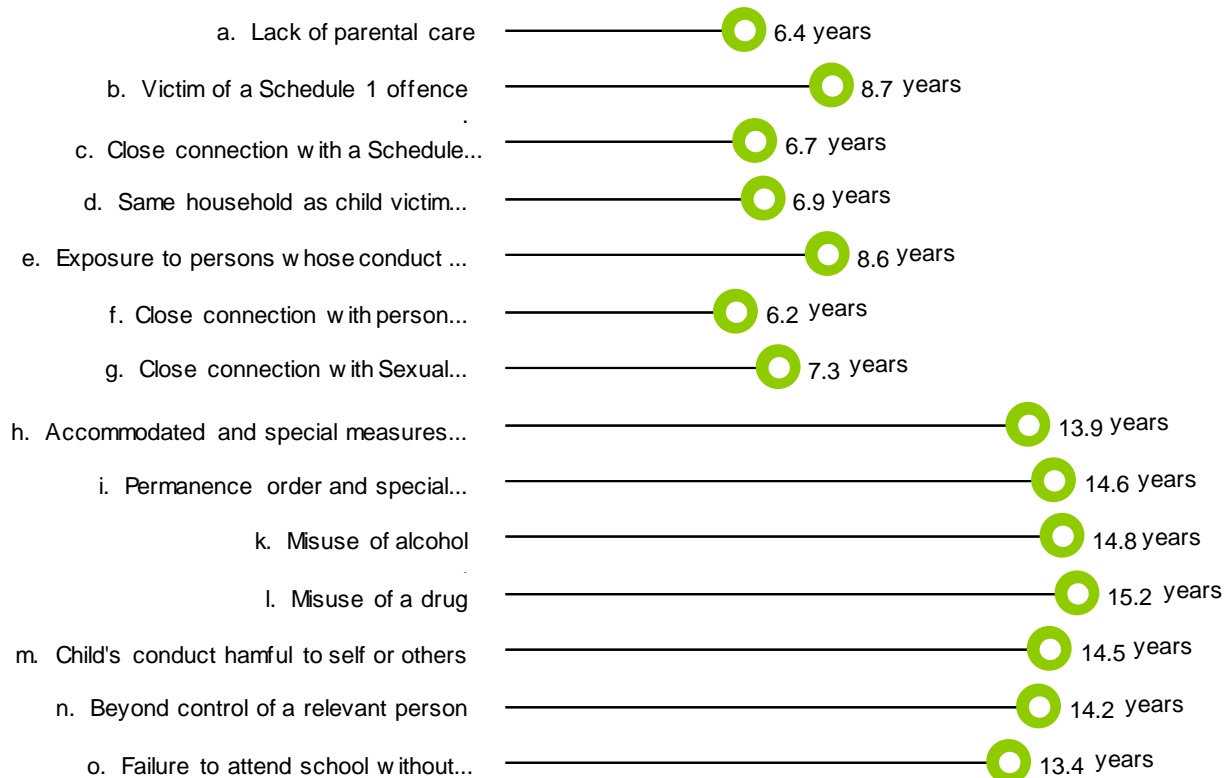


Figure 1.5 shows that there is a clear split in age profiles between a – g grounds which have a younger average age and the other care and protection grounds where the average age is older.

For the most common ground, lack of parental care, children and young people of all ages were referred but numbers generally decreased with age. More children were referred in the first year of their life than any other age (853). This was 15.2% of the children and young people referred on this ground.

The number of children and young people referred under 'close connection with person who has carried out domestic abuse' again generally decrease with age, with very young children more likely to be referred on this ground, with more referred in the first year of their life than any other age (352). This was 14.1% of children and young people referred on this ground.

Other common grounds of referral such as 'exposure to persons whose conduct likely to be harmful to child' and 'victim of Schedule 1 offence' were common throughout the childhood years but were highest for 13 – 15 year olds.

There were notable differences in the ages of children and young people referred to the Reporter on several other care and protection grounds. Older children and young persons were more likely to be referred on the grounds of, 'beyond control of a relevant person', 'child's conduct harmful to self or others', 'misuse of alcohol' and 'misuse of a drug'. The most common ages for referral on these grounds were 14 and 15 years. For children and young people referred on the grounds of 'failure to attend school without reasonable excuse', 13 and 14 years were the most common ages.

Children and young people referred on offence grounds

In 2015/16, 2,761 children and young people aged between eight and 17 years were referred to the Reporter on offence grounds. These children and young people were referred for 11,021 alleged offences on 6,685 referrals. The offences have been mapped this year to the standard police crime groupings⁷ to provide consistency with other publications.

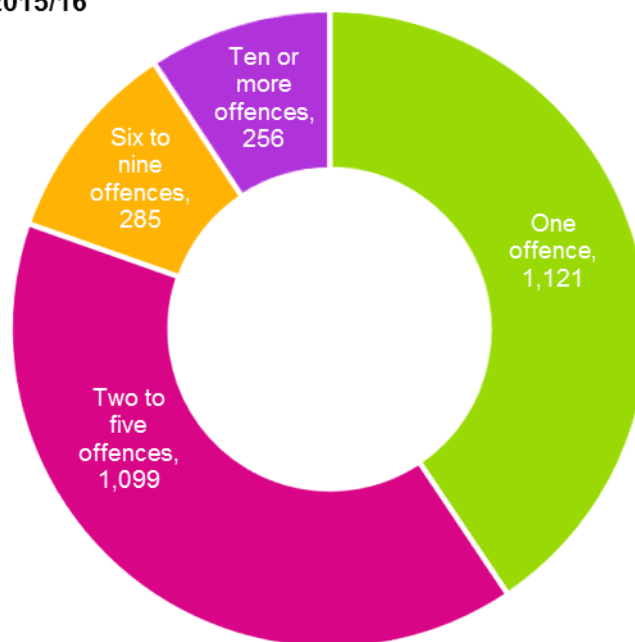
Table 1.5 Number of alleged offences in 2015/16, by police crime grouping

Police offence code group	Count
Non-sexual crimes of violence	99
Sexual crimes	405
Crimes of dishonesty	1,803
Fire-raising, vandalism etc.	1,889
Other crimes	984
Miscellaneous offences	5,431
Motor vehicle offences	410
Total alleged offences	11,021

Within these groupings, the most common types of alleged offences were threatening or abusive behaviour, assault and vandalism. The Reporter has the power to change the type of alleged offence based upon information received during the course of an investigation.

Figure 1.6 shows that there was almost an equal split between children and young people with a single alleged offence in the year (40.6%) and those with two to five offences (39.8%) in 2015/16. Similarly, there was an almost equal split between children and young people with six to nine offences (10.3%) and ten or more offences (9.3%).

Figure 1.6 Number of alleged offences per child or young person referred on offence grounds in 2015/16



⁷ Further detail on crime groupings can be found here: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/09/5338/318230>

Referrals to the Reporter

This section presents information about the numbers of referrals received by SCRA over the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 with comparisons to prior years. It looks at the types of referral, the source of referrals and whether the child or young person was subject to compulsory measures of supervision when the referral was received.

Key facts:



Referrals received decreased by 0.7% from 2014/15



75% of referrals were from the police



69% of referrals received were for children and young people not subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order

Referrals received

In 2015/16, 27,340 referrals were received by the Reporter, this was a 0.7% decrease from 2014/15 levels. Care and protection referrals increased by 0.2% to 20,655 while offence referrals decreased by 3.6% to 6,685.

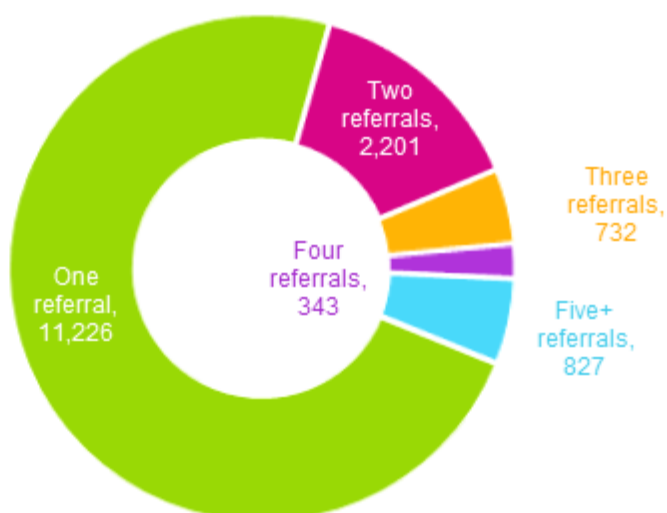
Since 2006/07, care and protection referrals have decreased annually. The slight increase in 2015/16 may point to a stabilisation in the levels of care and protection referrals being received as was the case with offence referrals received in 2014/15. The figures have also been impacted by an issue with pre-referral screening within a police area which resulted in significant numbers of additional referrals being received by SCRA.

Table 2.1 Numbers of referrals received, by type and year

Type of referral	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Offence	8,066	6,818	6,932	6,685
Non-offence	27,454	25,497	20,606	20,655
Total referrals⁸	35,492	32,315	27,538	27,340

Most children and young people (73.2%) were referred only once in the year, with 5.4% referred five or more times.

Figure 2.1 Number of referrals received per child or young person in 2015/16



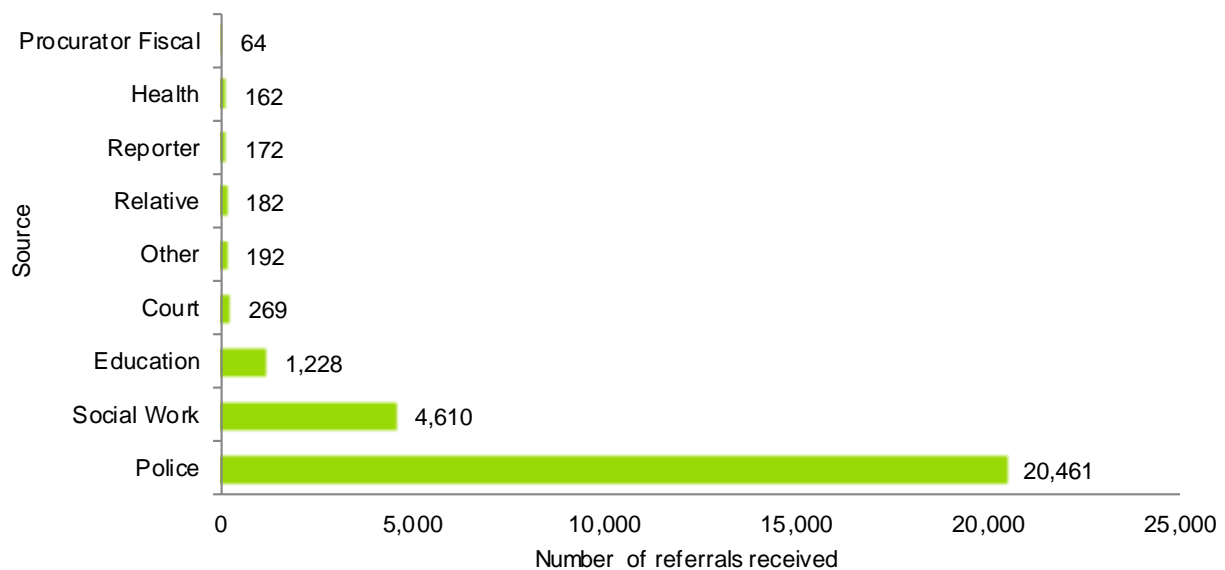
Referrals per child or young person varies depending on the type of referral. For care and protection referrals, 77.3% had a single referral in the year, this compares with 57.7% of children and young people referred on offence grounds having a single offence referral in the year.

⁸ The totals are not the sum of referrals on offence and care and protection grounds as a single referral can contain both type of grounds.

Source of referrals

The police are the main source of referrals, comprising 74.8% of all referrals to the Reporter in 2015/16 - 99.1% of all offence referrals and 67.0% of all care and protection referrals.

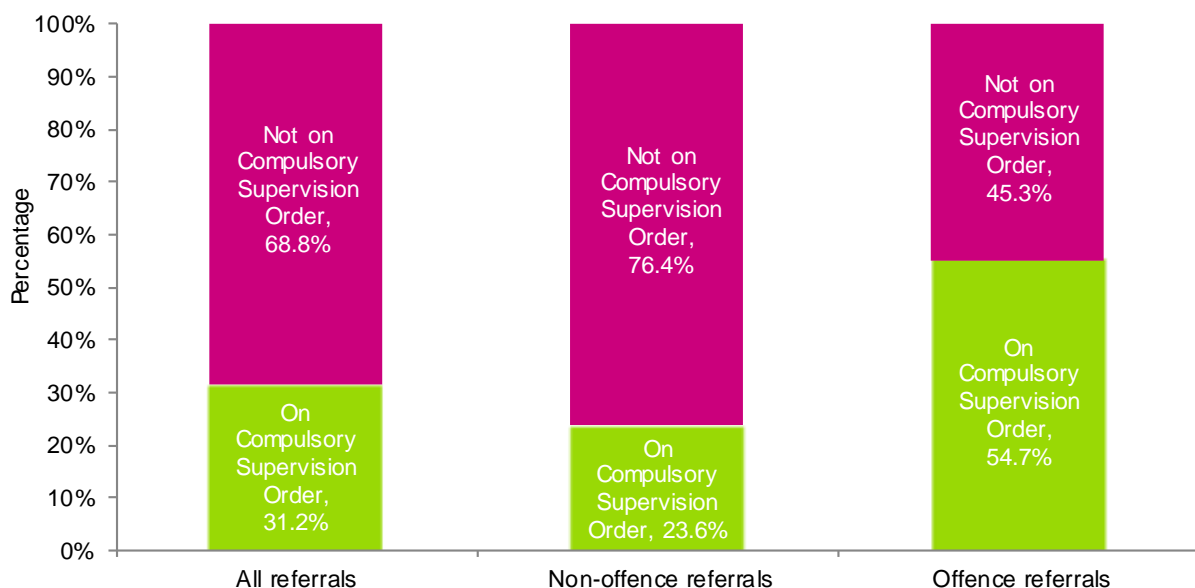
Figure 2.2 Referrals received in 2015/16, by source



Referrals received by Compulsory Supervision Order status

In most cases, the child or young person was not subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order at the point of referral, see Figure 2.3. Overall, 31.2% of referrals received (8,542) were for children and young people subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order at the point of referral. This was the case for 23.6% of care and protection referrals (4,882) and 54.7% of offence referrals (3,660). Page 19 contains more information about Compulsory Supervision Orders.

Figure 2.3 Referrals received in 2015/16, by Compulsory Supervision Order status at receipt



Boys were more likely to be subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order at the point of receipt of a referral (33.6%) than girls (28.0%). Girls were however more likely to be subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order at the point of receipt of offence referrals (60.6%) than boys (53.2%).

Reporter decisions on children and young people referred

This section presents information about the investigations Reporters within SCRA undertake with partner agencies to make decisions on children and young person's cases along with the decisions which have been made over the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.

Key facts:



Communications requested decreased by 9.9%



26%

of children and young people had a Reporter decision to arrange a Hearing

'no indication of a need for compulsory measures' was the most common Reporter decision

Reporter investigations

Reporters investigate where necessary when a referral is received to assist them in considering the likely need for compulsory measures. They do so by obtaining information on the child or young person and their circumstances from relevant agencies. Some of this information may now be provided at the point of referral rather than requiring to be requested.

There is a wide network of partner agencies that Reporters can ask for information, with the main agencies outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Number of communications requested by the Reporter, by receiving agency* and year

Agency	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Social Work	44,464	31,895	27,188	24,701
Education	22,956	12,405	10,034	8,823
Health	1,791	3,009	2,963	2,936
Restorative Justice	44	53	36	72
Other	64	879	466	125
Total requests**	69,499	48,241	40,687	36,657

* Please note that the change in systems during 2012 and 2013 means data from 2012/13 is not comparable with data from 2013/14 onwards.

** A large proportion of these requests are for information not relating to referrals such as Compulsory Supervision Orders. A small percentage of requests are also cancelled before being sent.

The level of information required in each report can vary significantly. For social work requests, depending on the report type, the Reporter can request anything from background information about the child or young person referred, to a comprehensive assessment of the child or young person's situation that would involve social work contacting the family as well as any other agencies involved in the child or young person's upbringing.

Education authorities can be asked by the Reporter to provide information about a child or young person's attendance at school or about their behaviour.

Health (utilising information from health visitors, community psychiatric nurses and Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) can provide relevant information on the impact on the child or young person or family of particular health issues. The information that health visitors provide is especially important as it can indicate if the child or young person is failing to thrive (through growth centiles and developmental measures).

If the child or young person has committed an offence, Restorative Justice reports can be used to assess the suitability and willingness of the young person to engage with the Restorative Justice Service.

Reporter decisions on children and young people referred

The family is invited to provide any relevant information when they are notified that a referral has been received by the Reporter. This allows the family to inform the Reporter of any factors that may affect a Reporter decision on the referral i.e. any changes in circumstances or any measures the family have taken as a result of the referral.

Reporter decision making

Once any required information has been received, the Reporter will analyse the situation and make a decision about whether to arrange a Children's Hearing based on:

- whether a section 67 ground applies in relation to the child or young person i.e. whether there is sufficient evidence such that there is a realistic prospect of the ground being proven in court; and
- whether, if sufficient evidence exists, it is necessary to have compulsory intervention in the child or young person's life.

Where the Reporter has arranged a Children's Hearing, they will, if they have not previously done so, request a report for information about the child or young person from the local authority.

Reporters have other options available to them to find the right help for children and young people. The other decisions that a Reporter may make in relation to a referred child or young person include asking the local authority to provide voluntary advice, guidance and assistance to the child or young person, to take no action because there is insufficient evidence, or to take no formal action because other intervention is more appropriate (e.g. family support or diversion).

Table 3.2 Number of children and young people with reporter decisions in 2015/16*, by decision

Reporter decision	Non-offence	Offence	Total
Arrange a Children's Hearing (on new grounds)	3,847	280	4,059
No indication of a need for compulsory measures	4,715	1,027	5,574
No Hearing - refer to local authority	3,504	538	3,871
No Hearing - measures already in place	2,444	1,254	3,061
No Hearing - insufficient evidence to proceed	1,294	210	1,489
No Hearing - family have taken action	711	76	774
No Hearing - diversion to other measures	23	49	68
Total	14,270	2,816	15,874

* Data in this table relates to cases decided in 2015/16 as opposed to referrals received in 2015/16.

** The totals do not equal the sums as children and young people can be referred more than once in the year and may have multiple Reporter decisions. The totals count each child or young person once.

In 2015/16, 25.6% of children and young people (4,059) with cases decided had a Reporter decision to arrange a Children's Hearing on at least one referral. For 35.1% of children and young people (5,574), Reporters decided that there was no indication of a need for compulsory measures on at least one of their referrals.

Children's Hearings and court work

This section presents information about the work undertaken by Children's Hearings and courts over the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 with comparisons to prior years. It also covers the reasons for Pre-Hearing Panels and Children's Hearings and the outcomes of court work.

Key facts:



Pre-Hearing Panels decreased by 4.8% from 2014/15



Children's Hearings decreased by 5.4% from 2014/15



% of applications for proof had the grounds established

Pre-Hearing Panels held

Pre-Hearing Panels are convened before some Hearings to consider any special arrangements needed for the Hearing. These are:

- whether to deem/undeed an individual as a relevant person⁹;
- whether to excuse a child or young person or relevant person from the obligation to attend the Children's Hearing; and
- whether it is likely the Children's Hearing will consider making a Compulsory Supervision Order with secure accommodation authorisation.

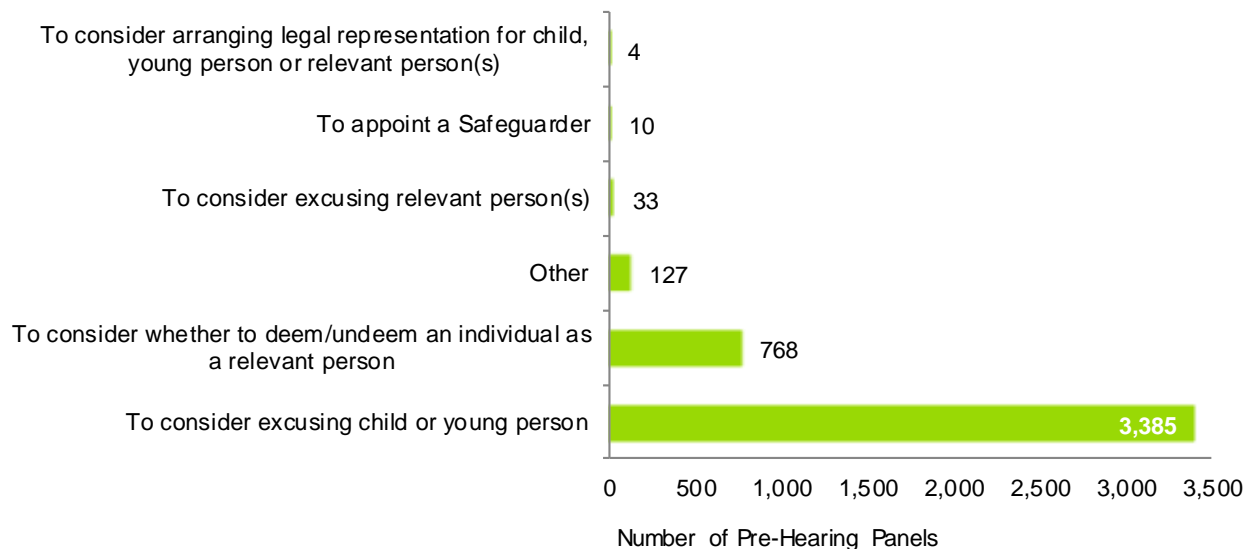
In addition, Pre-Hearing Panels can also appoint a Safeguarder for the child or young person or arrange legal representation for a child, young person or relevant person.

Table 4.1 Business Meetings / Pre-Hearing Panels held, by year

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Number of Pre-Hearing Panels/Business Meetings*	3,683	5,601	4,305	4,098

* Due to the introduction of the new act, 2013/14 information uses a combination of Pre-Hearing Panels and Business Meetings from the 1995 Act to provide an overall figure. Years prior to 2013/14 are calculated using Business Meeting volumes.

Figure 4.1 Pre-Hearing Panels held in 2015/16*, by reason



* Children and young people can have more than one reason considered at a single Pre-Hearing Panel. The totals in Table 4.1 count each Pre-Hearing Panel / Business Meeting once.

In 2015/16, 4,098 Pre-Hearing Panels were held for 3,411 children and young people, this is a 4.8% drop from the previous year. It again reflects the decreasing requirement to transfer individuals who had been treated as Relevant Persons under the 1995 Act to being deemed Relevant Persons under the 2011 Act (a 42.6% drop from 1,337 Pre-Hearing Panels in 2014/15 to 768 in 2015/16).

⁹ Prior to the 2011 Act, Reporters could deem individuals as relevant persons.

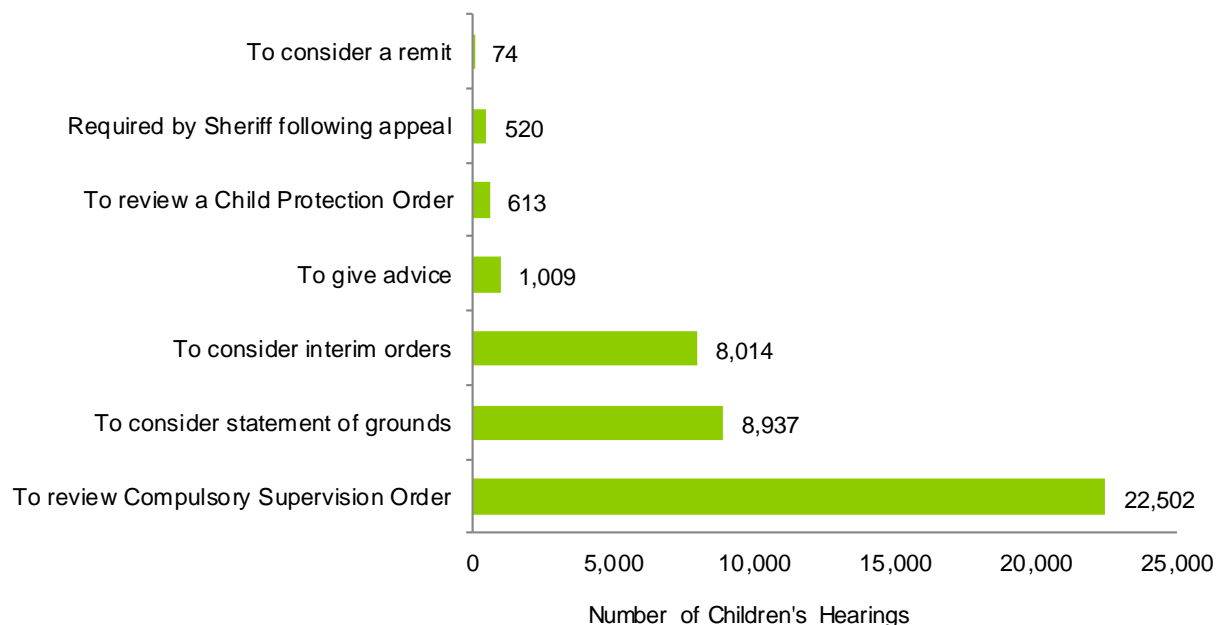
Children's Hearings held

Children's Hearings decide whether compulsory measures of intervention are necessary (in respect of the child or young person) to protect the child or young person and/or address their behaviour. The reasons for Children's Hearings being arranged are shown in Figure 4.2 below. The two most common reasons are: to review an existing Compulsory Supervision Order; or where the Reporter has decided, after investigating a referral, that the child or young person requires compulsory measures of intervention.

Table 4.2 Children's Hearings held, by year

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Number of Children's Hearings held	38,316	36,200	36,904	34,896

Figure 4.2 Children's Hearings held in 2015/16*, by reason



* Children and young people can have more than one reason considered at a single Children's Hearing. The totals in Table 4.2 count each Hearing once.

In 2015/16, 34,896 Children's Hearings were held for 15,087 children and young people. This was a 5.4% decrease from 2014/15. The decreases were influenced by:

- the falling number of Child Protection Orders as noted in page 5;
- the falling number of Compulsory Supervision Orders and hence less reviews (see page 19); and
- the falling number of Children's Hearings required to continue interim orders (which has been influenced by changes to legislation about the number of interim orders a Children's Hearing can make whilst a proof application is outstanding).

Of the children and young people with Children's Hearings in the year, 42.4% had a single Hearing, with 10.7% having five or more Hearings.

Of the 34,896 Children's Hearings in 2015/16, 11.3% (3,960) related to new grounds. 22,502 (64.5%) Hearings were linked to review Hearings for Compulsory Supervision Orders. Initial review Hearings made up 71.3% (16,034) of this number with the remainder (28.7%) deferred review Hearings. A Compulsory Supervision Order must be reviewed at least once annually.

4,977 Children's Hearings (14.3%) related to grounds that were not disposed at the initial Hearing stage, the majority of these were due to applications to the Sheriff to establish the grounds for referral. Of the remaining Hearing types, interim orders were the most common (8,014) followed by advice Hearings (1,009) and Child Protection Order Hearings (613).

Child Protection Orders and interim orders

Many short-term decisions made by Children's Hearings will be to address emergency and/or high risk situations where measures have to be put in place immediately to protect children and young people or address their behaviour. These may include Children's Hearings arranged as a result of the Sheriff granting a Child Protection Order.

In 2015/16, Children's Hearings:

- Considered¹⁰ the cases of 595 children and young people with Child Protection Orders under sections 45 or 46 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011; and
- Made, varied or continued 7,269 interim orders as defined under sections 86 and 140 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 for 2,785 children and young people.

Interim orders in the form of Interim Compulsory Supervision Orders can be used to protect the child or young person whilst grounds for referral are in the process of being determined at proof. Interim Variations of Compulsory Supervision Orders can also be made which can change the measures attached to a current Compulsory Supervision Order.

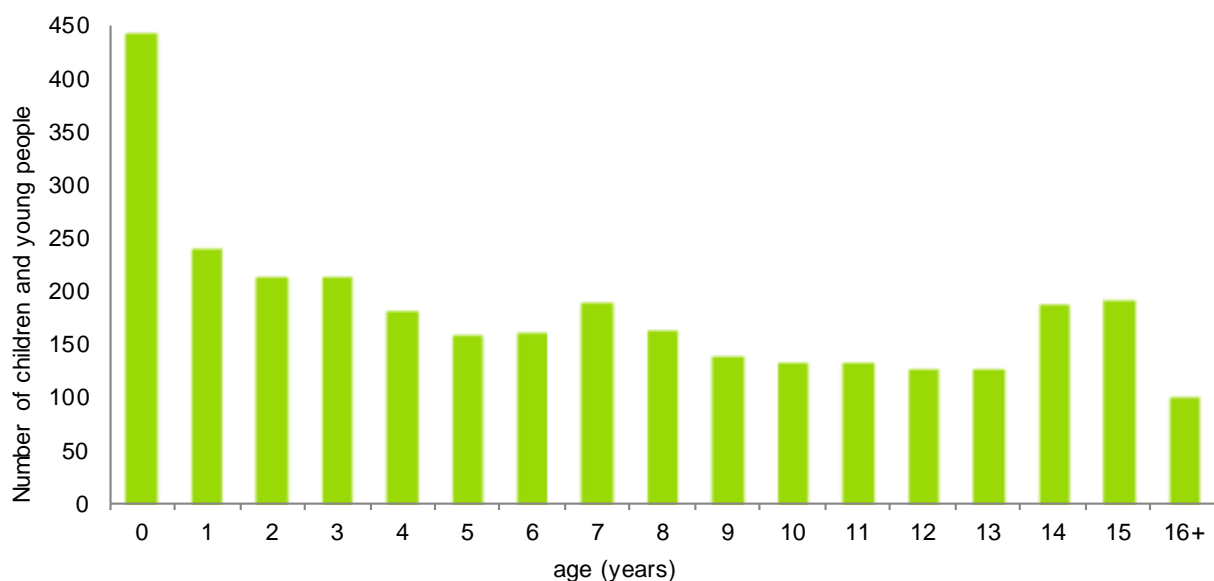
Table 4.3 Children and young people with interim orders / Place of Safety Warrants made, by year

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Number of children and young people*	1,968	2,418	2,670	2,785

* Due to the introduction of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 in June 2013, 2013/14 information uses a combination of interim orders and Place of Safety Warrants from the 1995 Act to provide an overall figure. Years prior to 2013/14 are calculated using Place of Safety Warrant volumes.

Interim Compulsory Supervision Orders and Interim Variations of Compulsory Supervision Orders are more flexible in their application than Place of Safety Warrants, which at least partly accounts for the differences in numbers between current and prior years. Interim orders numbers are highest for children aged under one, but are also common for older age groups.

Figure 4.3 Children and young people with interim orders made by Children's Hearings in 2015/16



¹⁰ The Hearing may continue a Child Protection Order, which has already been approved by a Sheriff, with or without a variation to the condition(s). The Hearing may also decide not to continue a Child Protection Order.

Applications to the Sheriff for proof

If the child or young person and/or their relevant persons do not accept some or all of the statement of grounds for referral which form the basis of the Children's Hearing, or the child or young person does not or cannot understand the grounds, the Children's Hearing may direct the Reporter to apply to the Sheriff to establish the statement of grounds for referral (sections 93 and 94 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011). Overall, 3,068 applications were determined in 2015/16 and 92.0% were held to be established by the Sheriff.

When an application to the Sheriff for proof has been established, the grounds are referred back to a Children's Hearing to decide what/if compulsory measures are necessary.

Table 4.4 Applications to the Sheriff for proof determined, by year

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Number of applications determined	3,655	2,903	3,054	3,068

The number of concluded applications for proof has increased for the second consecutive year.

Applications for proof may require several callings (court dates) before the application is determined. In 2015/16 there were 10,648 callings for the 3,068 determined applications.

In addition, courts made, varied or continued 3,894 interim orders in 2015/16. Interim orders in the form of Interim Compulsory Supervision Orders can be used to protect the child or young person whilst grounds for referral are in the process of being determined at proof. Interim Variations of Compulsory Supervision Orders can also be made which can change the measures attached to a current Compulsory Supervision Order. These orders related to 1,379 children and young people.

Compulsory Measures of Supervision

This section presents information about Children's Hearings decisions and Compulsory Supervision Orders in force in 2015/16. It also covers the number of secure authorisations and non-disclosure measures put in place by Children's Hearings in 2015/16 with comparisons to previous years.

Key facts:



Compulsory Supervision orders at the 31st March 2016 decreased by 3.3% from the previous year-end

'with parent/relevant person' was the most common type of Compulsory Supervision Order

Children's Hearings decisions on grounds

Compulsory Supervision Orders are the most common form of compulsory intervention made by Children's Hearings. They are also the only longer-term option available to Hearings. It is the statutory responsibility of local authorities to implement Compulsory Supervision Orders.

At Children's Hearings in 2015/16, 3,185 children and young people had a new Compulsory Supervision Order made on grounds referred, see Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Number of children and young people with Children's Hearings decisions in 2015/16, by type

Children's Hearing decision	Non-offence	Offence	Total
Grounds accepted/established and new Compulsory Supervision Order made	3,088	133	3,185
Grounds accepted/established and considered in review of existing Compulsory Supervision Order	104	63	160
Grounds discharged	313	88	396
Total*	3,468	238	3,654

* The totals do not equal the sums as children and young people can have more than one Hearing decision on different grounds contained within a referral or may have more than one referral on new grounds sent to a Hearing during the year. The totals count each child or young person once.

Children and young people subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders

At 31 March 2016, 10,379 children and young people were subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders. This is 1.1%¹¹ of all children and young people in Scotland.

Table 5.2 Number of children and young people with Compulsory Supervision Orders in place at 31 March, by type and year

Types of Compulsory Supervision Orders	2013	2014	2015	2016
With parent/relevant person	5,952	5,163	4,751	4,522
With other approved foster parent	3,187	3,264	3,106	3,018
With relative/friend - other	1,312	1,355	1,294	1,345
With relative/friend - approved foster parent	797	681	661	615
Children's unit	358	342	352	332
Residential school	287	255	247	229
Other residential placement	187	203	234	243
Other	75	50	35	45
Other non-residential placement	5	11	19	17
None recorded	354	96	34	13
Total	12,514	11,420	10,733	10,379

¹¹ % of population aged under 16 years, based on mid-year estimates for 2015 from the National Records of Scotland.

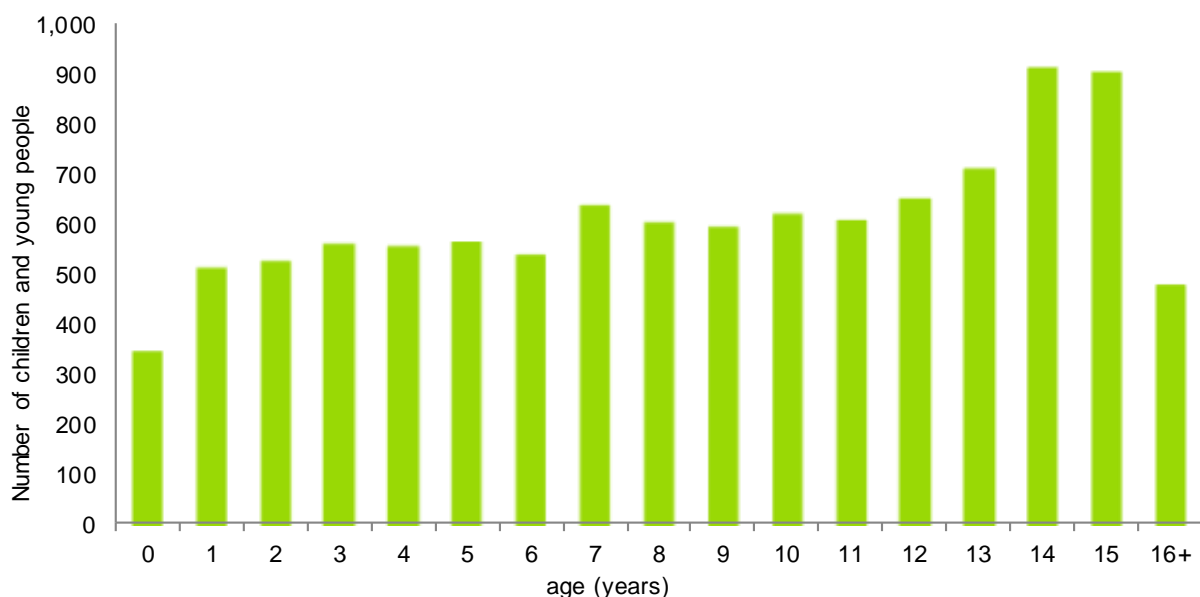
The number of children and young people subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders has decreased for a sixth consecutive year. The types of Compulsory Supervision Orders in place at 31 March 2016 are shown in Table 5.2. 'With parent/relevant person' continues to be the most common type of Compulsory Supervision Order though significant year-on-year decreases are shown for this type of order.

Children and young people aged under eight subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders at 31 March 2016 decreased by 3.1% to 4,272, while children and young people aged eight and over decreased by 3.4% (to 6,107).

Compulsory Supervision Orders by age

The most common ages of children and young people subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders continue to be 14 and 15 years. Figure 5.1 shows the number of Compulsory Supervision Orders by age at Compulsory Supervision Order made.

Figure 5.1 Children and young people with Compulsory Supervision Orders in force at 31 March 2016



Length of time subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders

The link between decisions made at Children's Hearings and the number of Compulsory Supervision Orders is shown in Table 5.3. This shows that the most common length of time to be subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order is under one year but that many children and young people have been on supervision for a longer period of time. This means that Compulsory Supervision Orders have been reviewed at Children's Hearings on at least one occasion.

Table 5.3 Number of children and young people with Compulsory Supervision Orders in place at 31 March 2016, by length of order

Length of Compulsory Supervision Order	Count
Under 1 year	3,042
1 – 2 years	2,147
2 – 3 years	1,316
3 – 4 years	971
4 – 5 years	733
5+ years	2,170
Total	10,379

Secure Authorisations made by Children's Hearings

Secure Authorisations can be included in interim orders or Compulsory Supervision Orders. The criteria by which they can be made are set out in sections 83(5) and 83(6) of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.

Table 5.4 Number of children and young people with Secure Authorisations made by Hearings, by year

Secure Authorisation measure	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Within Interim Orders	135	n/a*	135	127
Within Compulsory Supervision Orders	112	124	127	128

* Numbers of children and young people with Secure Authorisation measures within interim orders was not available in 2013/14 due to a system recording issue.

Children and young people with Secure Authorisations included in interim orders decreased by 5.9%. Numbers of children and young people with Secure Authorisations included in Compulsory Supervision Orders increased by 0.8%. Please note that the 2014/15 figures have been re-stated due to a correction of Secure Authorisations which had been wrongly recorded.

Non-disclosure Measures

A non-disclosure measure is a special provision attached to a child or young person's order in instances when it is considered necessary to protect the address at which a child or young person is required to reside by virtue of the order, due to significant concerns about their safety.

Table 5.5 Number of children and young people with non-disclosure measures in place at 31 March, by type and year

Order type measure attached to	2013	2014	2015	2016
Interim Order	n/a*	124	118	114
Compulsory Supervision Order	1,238	1,153	1,153	1,105
Total non-disclosure measures¹²	n/a	1,269	1,260	1,207

* As per Table 5.4, non-disclosure measures attached to interim orders are also not available for 2013.

As at the 31st March 2016, 1,105 children and young people had non-disclosure measures attached to Compulsory Supervision Orders and 114 children and young people had non-disclosure measures attached to interim orders. Overall, 53 fewer children and young people (4.2%) had non-disclosure measures in place at the year-end than was the case at the 31st March 2015.

¹² Some children and young persons had both Compulsory Supervision Orders and interim orders in place at the year-end with non-disclosure measures attached to both.

Appeals and Child Protection Order applications

This section presents information about appeals to the Sheriff against decisions made by Children's Hearings in 2015/16 with comparisons to previous years. It also covers the number of applications to recall, vary or terminate Child Protection Orders.

Key facts:



Children and young people with appeals concluded decreased for the first time in nine years



of children and young people with appeals had an appeal refused (Children's Hearing decision upheld) in the year

Appeals

Children and young people and/or their relevant persons can appeal to the Sheriff against decisions made by Children's Hearings. In 2015/16, 777 children and young people had appeals concluded. The 9.7% decrease in the year was the first for nine years.

Table 6.1 Number of children and young people with appeals to the Sheriff

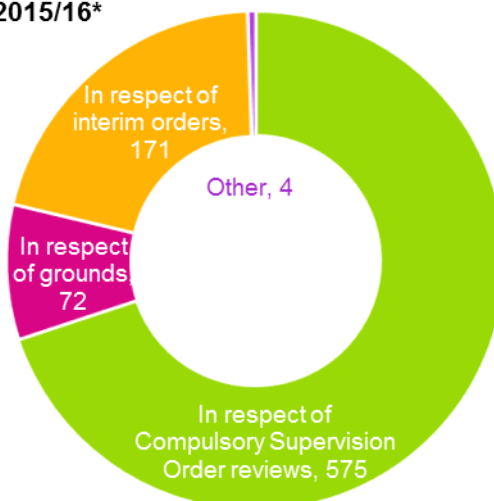
Appeal outcomes	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Number of children and young people*	792	805	860	777
% with Hearings' decisions upheld (appeal refused)	67%	62%	65%	64%

* Please see the note on error margins within appeals on page 25.

At appeal, 64.5% of children and young people had Children's Hearings decisions upheld (the appeal was refused) by the Sheriff on at least one appeal in the year. Where a Children's Hearing decision wasn't upheld, the most common outcome was for the Sheriff to require the reporter to arrange a Hearing (for any purpose for which a Hearing can be arranged).

The types of appeals against Children's Hearings decisions are displayed in Figure 6.1. The most common type of appeal is in respect of Compulsory Supervision Orders, either in terms of the review of the order or the ground outcomes leading to the order being made. This is expected in the context of Compulsory Supervision Orders being the most common outcome of Hearings. Several children and young people have had more than one appeal type in the year.

Figure 6.1 Number of children and young people with appeals against Children's Hearings decisions in 2015/16*



* Children and young people can have more than one appeal or appeal type in the year. The totals in Table 6.1 count each child or young person once.

In addition, applications can be made to the Sheriff to terminate or vary the conditions on a Child Protection Order. 14 children and young people had applications to recall/terminate or vary Child Protection Orders in the year.

Performance

This section presents information about operational performance within SCRA during 2015/16, with comparisons to previous years. Detailed performance against targets contained within our Corporate and Business Plans will be reported through SCRA's Annual Report 2015/16. It will also include commentary around performance as well as wider progress against SCRA's plans and will be published on the 27th October 2016¹³.

Key facts:



Performance improved
in three of the four time
interval standards

123 days
care and
protection

average working days
from referral receipt to
Hearing decision

75 days
offence

Time taken to progress referrals through the Children's Hearings System

The Time Interval (TI) Standards for the Children's Hearings System were published in 2001¹⁴. There are 14 standards covering various aspects of the process within the Hearings System and the different agencies involved. Those of most relevance to SCRA are shown below.

Table 7.1 Performance against Time Interval Standards in 2015/16

Time Interval (TI) Standard	Total number	Number on time	% on time
Standard TI4 – The Reporter will make a decision about a referral within 50 working days of receipt	28,255 referrals	21,524 referrals	76%
Standard TI6 – Hearings will be scheduled to take place within a maximum of 20 working days of the Reporter's decision	5,049 referrals	3,601 referrals	71%
Standard TI8 – All relevant people, information and resources will be available to Hearings to ensure that continuations are kept to a minimum	17,944 Hearings	13,759 Hearings	77%
Standard TI14 – The child and family will be sent written notification of the outcome of a Hearing within 5 working days of the Hearing.	33,491 Hearings	31,530 Hearings	94%

Performance against the Time Interval Standards has improved significantly within 2015/16 as a result of work throughout SCRA to improve performance, with TI4, TI6 and TI14 all showing improvement from 2014/15.

Table 7.2 Performance against Time Interval Standards, by year

Time Interval (TI) Standard	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
TI4	74%	59%	67%	76%
TI6	73%	73%	68%	71%
TI8	77%	80%	78%	77%
TI14	90%	70%	87%	94%

Table 7.2 shows that performance in TI4 and TI14 has improved above those levels seen prior to the introduction of the Case Management System and the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 during 2013.

¹³ SCRA's 2015/16 Business Plan can be accessed here: <http://www.scra.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Business-Plan-2015-16.pdf>

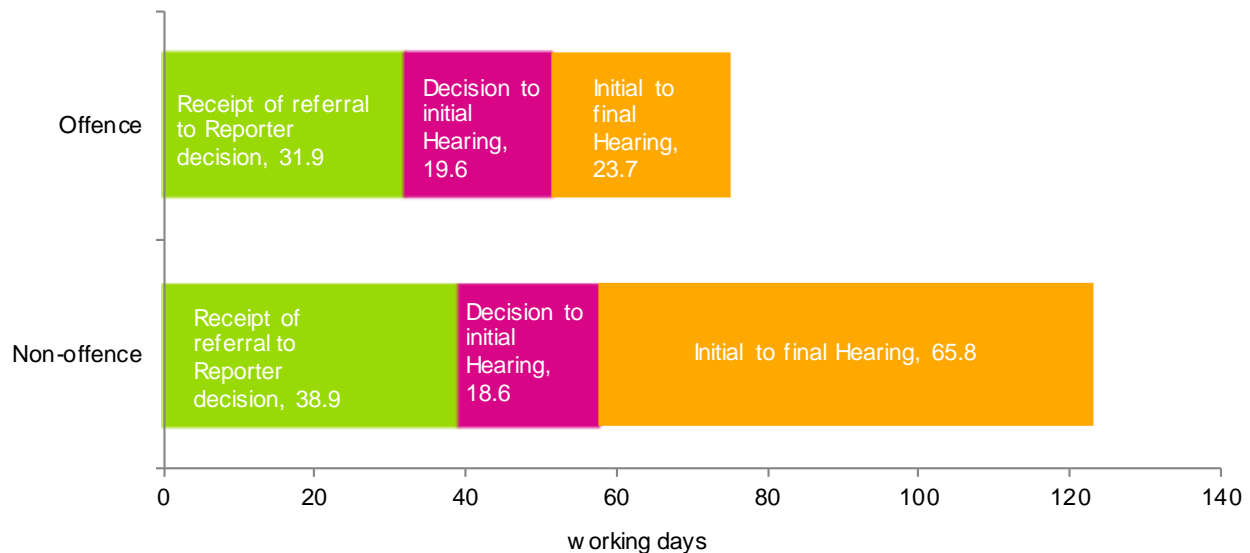
¹⁴ Scottish Executive (2001) Blueprint for the Processing of Children's Hearings Cases. Inter-agency Code of Practice and National Standards.

Working days from referral receipt to Hearing decision

Of the 3,468 children and young people with care and protection based Hearing decisions and the 238 children and young people with offence based Hearing decisions (Table 5.1), the average working days from referral receipt to Hearing decision were 123 and 75 days respectively, see Figure 7.1.

Working days are split by the main stages in the process. The differences in profiles between care and protection and offence referrals reflect the added complexities that can occur in making Reporter decisions and establishing grounds for care and protection referrals.

Figure 7.1 Average working days from referral receipt to Children's Hearing decision in 2015/16



The median for offence referrals was 60 days against an average of 75 days, while the median for care and protection referrals was 111 days against an average of 123 days.

The difference between the average and the median (15 days for offence referrals and 12 days for care and protection referrals) illustrates the effect that prolonged cases have on the overall performance on this measure.

SCRA's performance against targets in 2015/16

Performance against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) contained in the 2014-17 Corporate Plan has been positive, with five of the nine reportable indicators met for the year and the remaining four indicators being close to target. Improvements have been seen against decisions within 50 days, Hearing scheduling and property standards. Table 7.3 shows the performance against targets with the change from the previous year expressed as percentage points (pp).

Fuller information around performance is included in SCRA's 2015/16 Annual Report.

Table 7.3 SCRA's performance against targets in 2015/16

Outcomes for Children and Families	Target 2015/16	Performance 2015/16	Change from 2014/15
The percentage of Hearings scheduled to take place within 20 working days.	74%	71%	up 3.4pp
The percentage of decisions on referrals made within 50 working days of receipt	73%	76%	up 9.1pp
Outcomes for Panel Members, Partners and Staff	Target 2015/16	Performance 2015/16	Change from 2014/15
The degree to which SCRA core properties comply with SCRA property standards	90%	87%	up 0.7pp
The percentage of initial Hearings proceeding to disposal	75%	77%	down 1.3pp
Organisational Efficiency Outcomes	Target 2015/16	Performance 2015/16	Change from 2014/15
Variance in annual revenue spends as a percentage of the available revenue budget	Within 1%	0.1%	n/a
Variance in annual capital spends as a percentage of the available capital budget	Within 5%	1.3%	n/a
The Scottish Government efficiency savings target will be met	Meet target	Target met	n/a
The percentage of revenue savings achieved in the year	2.8%	2.7%	n/a
The percentage of working days lost to absence	4%	5.3%	up 0.7pp

For enquiries or feedback about this publication please contact:
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We are also continually seeking to improve our Official Statistics and would be grateful if you could fill in the following short survey [here](#)

Appendix 1 - error margins

In line with Official Statistical guidance, error margins around the key areas within this report are included below.

Referral data

Referral receipt based data has been impacted by two key factors, the use of non-standard grounds within a referral and also the processing to decision of cases which are not categorised as standard referrals. The non-standard ground issue has largely been resolved in 2015/16, so referrals are unlikely to be over-counted. It is most likely that they are under-counted due to the exclusion from the count of non-standard referrals. This has led to a maximum potential undercount within the report of **5.2%**, but in reality, this is more likely to be around **2.0%**.

Reporter decisions

Similarly to referral receipt data, reporter decision data has been impacted by the use of non-standard grounds within a referral and also the processing to decision of cases which are not categorised as standard referrals. Reporter decisions count all referrals with a valid decision. If non-standard referral categories were excluded, there may be a potential **1.0%** decrease within the report.

Pre-Hearing Panels and Children's Hearings

For PHPs, there are issues with multiple PHPs for a child or young person recorded on the same day. At a data level, it is difficult to tell whether these are valid meetings or recording issues. For Hearings, there have been issues around the removal of cancelled Hearings from the system, in addition there are some cases where children or young people have multiple Hearings on the same day. Removing multiple meetings leads to a potential decrease of **0.2%** within the report.

Compulsory Supervision Orders

Some Compulsory Supervision Orders are still awaiting a the updating of the Hearing decision, this will lead to an undercount as the new Compulsory Supervision Order start and end dates are not on the system. The error margin for this is minimal (**0.1%**).

Appeals

Appeals have been under-recorded from 2013/14 onwards due to issues around recording some appeal types under the 2011 Act. This was a particular issue in 2013/14 but the recording of short-notice appeals remains problematic due to the timescales within which they require to be processed. We are unable to estimate the extent to which under-recording is occurring other than that it is unlikely to materially impact the high level trends.

Please note that all error margins calculated above have been done so using national data, data at a local level may be affected to a greater or lesser extent, also, within different categories of data, such as joint referrals or specific care and protection grounds, the error margin level may deviate from the overall referral value.

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