

Offence Grounds

Information for children and young people

The Reporter has sent you this note because they have arranged a Children's Hearing for you, and one of the reasons, is that the Reporter says you have committed an offence.

The Reporter has sent you information about the offence. This is called the "statement of grounds". That is the reason why you have been referred to the Hearing.

It is important that you read the statement of grounds and this leaflet carefully before your Hearing.

Disclosure

When you come to the Children's Hearing you will be asked whether you agree with the 'statement of grounds'. It is important that you answer truthfully and that you are sure about your answer. If you are not sure, or if you don't understand, you should say so.

If you agree at the Hearing that you have committed an offence (or if the Hearing asks the sheriff to decide and the sheriff says you have committed an offence) you might have to let people know about it.

- the law says that most of the time you don't have to tell anyone that you have committed an offence,
- but for a while after the Children's Hearing you will have to tell if asked,
- and if you apply for certain jobs you will always have to tell.

The law about this is in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. If you want to find out more about the Act you can contact the Reporter (the address and phone number are on the letter telling you about the Hearing). If you want advice it is better to get this from a lawyer.

DNA and forensic evidence

When you were arrested, the police may have taken DNA from you - maybe from the inside of your mouth using a swab. Or they may have taken other evidence (such as fingerprints) from you.

There are special rules about what the police are allowed to do with this evidence and how long they can keep it for. It depends on two things:

1. What offence you are alleged to have committed
2. Whether or not you agree at the Hearing that you have committed an offence (or if the Hearing asks the sheriff to decide and the sheriff says you have committed an offence)

If you want more information about this, you can contact the Reporter (the address and phone number are on the letter telling you about the Hearing). If you want advice it is better to get this from a lawyer.

Where to get advice

You can speak to a lawyer – advice will be free. You can go to the Scottish Legal Aid Board's website www.slab.org.uk or call **0131 226 7061** to get the name of a lawyer in your area.

You can phone the Scottish Child Law Centre's free advice line on **0800 328 8970**

You can contact a children's representation/rights officer (the Reporter can tell you if there is one available in your area).

www.scra.gov.uk