



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Virtual Children's Hearings – Q&As

We have been getting asked a lot of questions about virtual Hearings, so we thought it would be helpful to prepare a set of questions and answers.

If you have any specific questions about your own Hearing, please contact your Reporter. As our offices remain closed due to Coronavirus, please contact us via email for the time being. A list of email addresses for each local team is available [here](#).

Q) What is a virtual Hearing?

A) A virtual Children's Hearing is a Hearing that takes place online. Children's Hearings centres are closed because of Coronavirus, so we are using technology to help people attend their Children's Hearings by attending meetings using their smartphone, tablet or computer. In a virtual Hearing you can participate and see and hear what is being said.

Q) Are Hearings still taking place?

A) Yes, Children's Hearings are still taking place, but only Children's Hearings that must go ahead. If your Children's Hearing needs to take place, you will be sent a letter (sometimes called a Hearing notification) from the Reporter. The letter will tell you when it is happening and will include information to help you prepare for it and submit your views.

Q) Can I participate in my Hearing virtually?

A) We are trying to make it possible for as many people as possible are able to participate in a virtual Hearing – but you don't have to if you don't want to. You will be sent information in your Hearing notification letter telling you how you can do this.

Q) What kind of technology are you using?

A) We are using Vscene. You can download this on to your smartphone, computer or tablet.

Q) Why can't I use Zoom, Skype or WhatsApp or another kind of technology?

A) Vscene is a more secure platform. Children's Hearings are private meetings and we need to protect your information, so we can't use technology that isn't as secure.

Q) If I am joining my Hearing virtually, what happens?

A) You will receive a letter from the Reporter letting you know about the time and date of your Hearing. There will also be information letting you know how to attend your Hearing virtually if you would like to.

You will need to contact our Virtual Hearings team (their email address and telephone number will be in the notification letter). They will provide you with support and instructions to help you get set up, and will help you with a test run so that you're fully prepared.

Q) Is there a guide or information that will help me with my virtual Hearing?

A) Yes, if you decide that you would like to attend your Hearing virtually, you will need to contact our Virtual Hearings Team who will give you an information guide and login details. They will talk to you about how it works and what to expect, and will also send you detailed set up instructions and information to support and help you during your virtual Hearing.

It is really important that you do this in plenty of time to allow your connection to be tested, to get some support, to have time to think about what you want to say and whether you would like to bring a representative, advocacy worker or lawyer to your Children's Hearing. Doing this at least a week before your Hearing, or earlier, would be best to give you enough time to think about all of these things

Q) Will it cost me to take part in my Hearing virtually?

A) If you have Wi-Fi, attending your Children's Hearing virtually will be free. If you don't have Wi-Fi, depending on your phone package, attending the Hearing could use up a lot of your data. This is because Vscene, like many virtual meeting platforms, uses a lot of data. We can help you with this, and will provide you with additional data by purchasing it in advance and sending it to you. You will get more information on how this works when you speak to the Virtual Hearings Team.

Q) Who can help me with my virtual Hearing?

A) There are lots of ways to get help with your virtual Hearing. The Reporter and the Virtual Hearings Team will give you information on how to prepare and what to expect. You can also

have a representative and/or a lawyer attend your virtual Hearing. A representative could be a trusted adult, friend or professional advocate and a lawyer is a legally trained person.

You can contact an advocate through Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance on 0131 510 9410 or visit www.siaa.org.uk. You can contact the Scottish Legal Aid Board on 0131 226 7061 to get the name of a lawyer in your area or visit www.slab.org.uk

We always encourage children, young people and parents/carers to have a representative and/or a lawyer at their Hearings, but we especially encourage you to think about it for your virtual Hearing. An advocate or lawyer can help and support you through the process and submit your views on your behalf if you are finding it difficult to say how you feel.

Q) I don't have a laptop, tablet or a mobile, can I still give my views to my Hearing?

A) Yes, you can. There are lots of options available to you. You, or someone representing you (such as a lawyer or an advocate), can email your views to the Reporter. The Reporter will give the email to the Panel Members. You can also appoint an advocate and/or a lawyer who will be able to attend the Hearing on your behalf and let the Children's Hearing know what your views are. It's important that you do this as far in advance of your Hearing as possible to make sure that there is enough time to get your views to the Hearing.

Q) What about my rights in a virtual Hearing, are they different than a normal Hearing?

A) Your rights at a virtual Hearing are the same as they are at a normal Hearing. You can find more information about your rights [here](#).