



The Children's Hearings System -

an information resource for
advocacy workers



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Contents

Page 3

Knowledge of the Children's Hearings System and the role of the Children's Reporter

Page 4

Preparing for the Hearing

Page 5

Obtaining and reflecting views

Page 6

Rights

Page 7

Information materials

Page 8

SCRA website

Introduction

Going to a Hearing can sometimes be a difficult experience for many children, young people and their families. This guide is designed to support advocacy workers (or those supporting people attending a Hearing), and complements existing materials for professionals on our website.

It provides information on how to help prepare a child, young person or relevant person coming to a Hearing, and it also includes links to the SCRA resources available to support you in your role with children, young people or relevant persons.

For further copies of any of the materials or if you have a general inquiry, please contact communications@scra.gov.uk

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Knowledge of the Children's Hearings System and the role of the Children's Reporter

It is really important that if you are representing a child, young person or relevant person, that you have an understanding of the Children's Hearings System, how it operates, and children's, young people's and relevant persons' rights within the system.

Advocacy workers may have already received training in this area, however, if you would like to find out more, SCRA offers complimentary training on the Children's Hearings System to all partners, and we have a dedicated 'professionals area' on our website, with a large suite of information materials, research and guidance at www.scra.gov.uk.

The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act (2011) can be found on the [Scottish Government's website](#).

Free training is available

If you would like to arrange training to be delivered to your organisation please contact SCRA's Participation Officer Jennifer Orren via Jennifer.Orren@scra.gov.uk

Preparing for the Hearing

Explain why the Hearing is happening, and how it aligns with other types of meetings.

Discuss who will be there and their respective roles. For example, there will be a Reporter, three independent Panel Members, a social worker, and carers and/or relevant persons (who may also bring legal representatives). There may also be other professionals present, such as a teacher.

Support children, young people and relevant people to access our website and other information sources to familiarise themselves with what to expect. SCRA has a variety of leaflets and films for young people and their families, and we also have a set podcasts on our website aimed at young people. You may wish to help them to access this if they would like.

Encourage and support the child, young person or relevant person to attend a pre-Hearing visit if they may find this helpful, even if they have been to a Hearing before.

Support children, young person or relevant person to reflect their views and wishes in a variety of ways, and ensure that this information reaches the Hearing well in advance where possible.

Explain their rights to the child, young person or relevant person, and make them aware of the rights of others. There is a lot of information about rights on our website, and there are further details contained later in this booklet.

Children and young people are entitled to legal representation, as are relevant persons. In most cases, this is free. A solicitor may be found by accessing the Scottish Legal Aid Website at:

www.slac.org.uk

Obtaining and reflecting views

You will not be sent a copy of the young person's or relevant person's panel papers (children under the age of twelve do not receive panel papers), which includes the report from the Local Authority. However, the child, young person or relevant person may wish to share them with you. It's essential that you are able to obtain the views of the child, young person or relevant person, and reflect them coherently at the Children's Hearing. You can obtain these views in a variety of ways.

Some of the options provided by SCRA to reflect views of children, young people and relevant persons include:

- the age-appropriate All About Me form, sent out in the notifications
- writing to the Reporter
- emailing the Reporter
- telephoning the Reporter

They may do this in person, or they may ask you to do this on their behalf.

Children, young people and relevant persons may provide their views in other ways, like drawing a picture, writing a letter to the Panel Members, or using technology where appropriate.

If a child, young person or relevant person wishes to submit their views in writing, it's really important that these are submitted in good time so that they can be distributed in the panel papers. It is also important that they understand that these views will be discussed at the Hearing.

Rights

It is important that children, young people and relevant persons are aware of their rights before the Hearing, as well as during and after a Hearing. Some important rights to make people aware of:

- they can submit their views in advance of the Children's Hearing,
- they can bring a representative, such as an advocacy worker or trusted person with them to the Hearing,
- they can bring a legal representative,
- they can bring both a representative and a legal representative if they wish,
- they can appeal against the decision of the Children's Hearing,
- they can ask for the decision to be reviewed after three months,
- they can complain if they are unhappy with how they have been treated

There are also things that a child, young person or relevant person can ask for, and the Panel Members will consider it. For example, they can ask to speak to Panel Members on their own, or only with someone they want to be there or to take a break from the Hearing.

Information and support after the Hearing:

Panel Members will make their decision at the Children's Hearing and explain their reasons for it. These will also be sent in writing to the child, young person or relevant person. However, some may not fully understand what the decision means for them.

It can be helpful to explain the decision of the Children's Hearing to the child, young person or relevant person and be aware of their rights.

Information materials ...

SCRA has a suite of information materials for children, young people and parents/carers. We have age-specific leaflets, as well as short films about going to a Hearing and going to court.

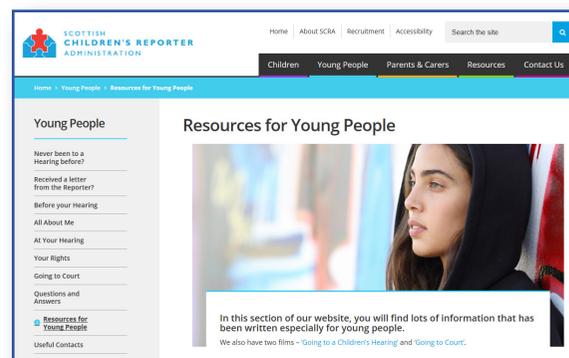
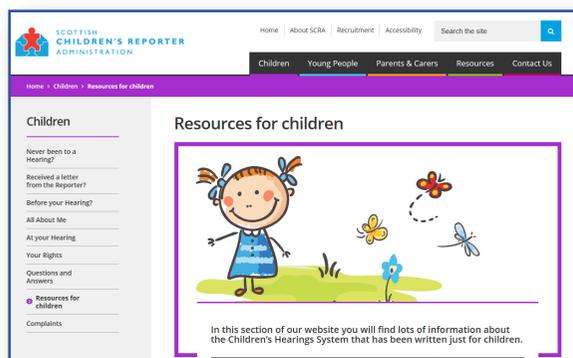
Here's what's available for children

All About Me form – this is aimed at children 11 years and under. They should receive a printed copy with their panel papers.

Leaflet for children - this leaflet is aimed at children aged 11 and under going to a Hearing.

Chloe and Billy storybook – This is aimed at children aged 4 to 7 years and tells the story of a sister and brother, Chloe and Billy, going to a Hearing.

Colouring in book – the storybook is also available as a colouring in book.



Here's what's available for young people

All About Me form – this is aimed at children aged 12 years and over.

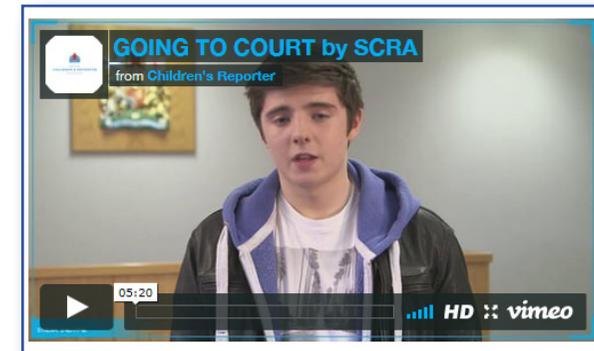
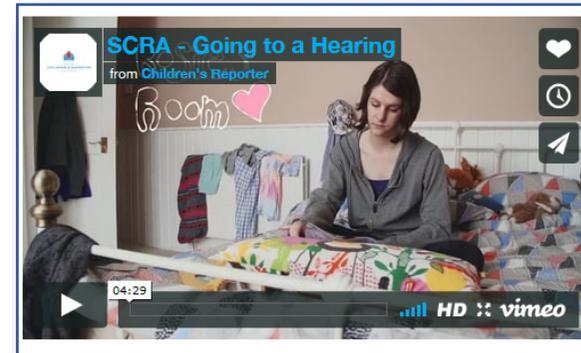
Leaflet for young people - This leaflet is for young people aged 12 years and over going to a Hearing.

Your Rights flyer - This provides information about children's rights, how to appeal etc.

All about Compulsory Supervision Orders - When a Compulsory Supervision Order has been made.

Secure Accommodation flyer - When a Hearing decides to place a child or young person in secure accommodation.

Films and podcasts - We have a number of films for young people and their families, and we also have a set podcasts on our website aimed at young people.

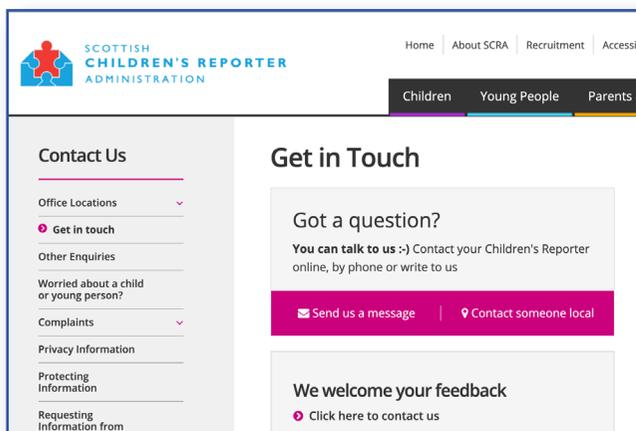
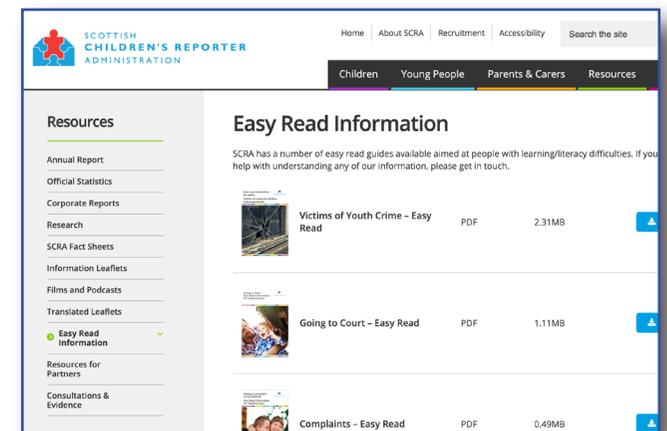


SCRA website



For more information, please visit our website - www.scra.gov.uk – there is a special section for parents/carers.

We also have an easy read section and a set of easy read guides.



If you have an inquiry, you can email communications@scra.gov.uk or you can contact your local office. An A-Z of offices is available in the contact us section of our website.