

Child Protection

Focused on children and young people most at risk, SCRA's fundamental purpose is to:

- Make effective decisions about a need to refer a child/young person to a Children's Hearing
- Prepare for and participate in court proceedings where Statement of Grounds or Hearings findings are appealed, and ensure the wellbeing of children and young people – particularly vulnerable witnesses – are protected throughout the court process
- Support Panel Members (though we are not involved in making Hearing decisions) and ensure fair process in Hearings
- Enable children, young people and families to participate in Hearings
- Disseminate information and data to influence and inform the wider Children's Services community
- Provide premises for Hearings to take place
- Work collaboratively with partners to support and facilitate the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda

Child Protection concerns and children 'at risk' of harm

Local authority Child Protection Committees are responsible for multi-agency policy, procedure, guidance and practice – and the core national focus of this work is set by the Scottish Government and occurs within the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) framework. The national Child Protection Guidance (2014) is currently being reviewed and rewritten, and will include guidance for professionals including health professionals in one document for the first time.

If a professional or other person in a local authority has concerns about a child they should follow the child protection procedure for their organisation, which should involve consideration of referral of the child for social work or other assessment.

It may be that a child is in need of emergency protection, and if so, then a child protection order, an exclusion order, a child assessment order or Police powers to remove a child to a place of safety for up to 24 hours may be required.

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/young person. For this measure to be considered, a child/young person must be at risk of significant harm.

In 2019/20, Children's Hearings: Considered the cases of 547 children and young people with CPOs under sections 45 or 46 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.

Proportionately, more CPOs are granted for very young children, reflecting their greater vulnerability and requirement for immediate protection. Of the 547 children and young people with CPO referrals to Children's Hearings in 2019/20, 115 (21.0%) were aged under 20 days at the date of receipt and 237 (43.3%) were aged under two years.

If the child is not in need of emergency protection then further information gathering about the child may be required and it may be that the concerns require multi-agency discussion.

If a child is at risk of 'significant harm' a Child Protection Case Conference may be called. A Child Protection Case Conference will involve professionals from different agencies and a family and will draw up a child protection plan, decide if a child's name should be placed on the child protection register and decide if the child should be referred to the Reporter for the consideration of compulsory measures of supervision. The child protection register is a confidential list.

If a child is referred to the Reporter from a Child Protection Case Conference, then the Reporter will investigate the child's circumstances and determine if there is evidence of a [ground for referral](#) to the Children's Hearing under section 67(2) of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 and if there is a need for a compulsory supervision order – a need for a statutory intervention rather than voluntary work with the family.

Child Protection Research 2015

In 2015 SCRA published a research report looking at Child Protection Orders (CPOs) in Scotland. This research was carried out to look at why children come to have CPOs made and their outcomes following the CPOs. The research looked at SCRA's case information on 175 children, who had CPOs made between 1 October and 31 December 2013. The study covered: The child's history prior to the CPO - the CPO and the six months after the CPO. You can read the full report in the research section of our website.



Ensuring positive futures for children
and young people in Scotland

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