

# SCRA STATISTICAL ANALYSIS 2019/20



SCOTTISH  
CHILDREN'S REPORTER

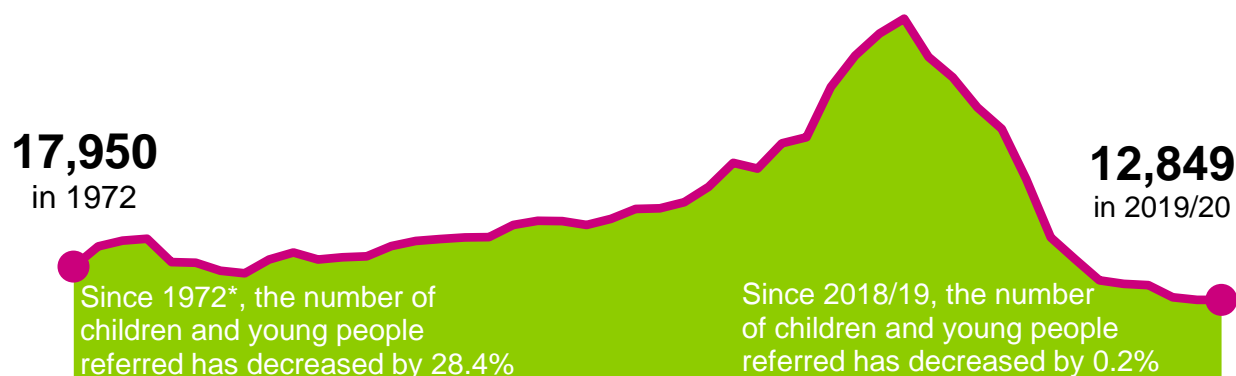
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Ensuring positive futures for children & young people in Scotland



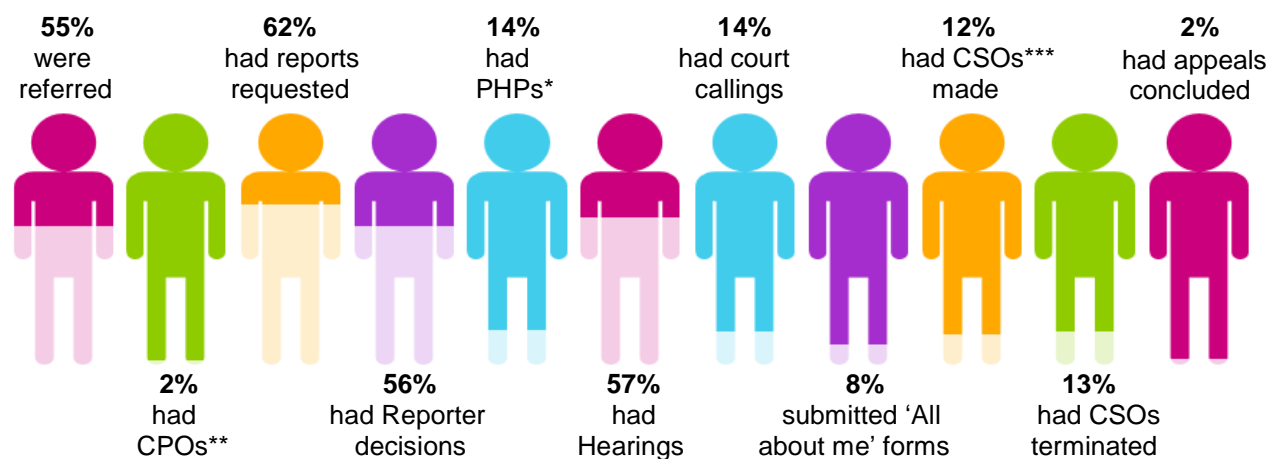
## Statistical Analysis 2019/20 - at a glance

### Children and young people referred 1972 to 2019/20



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

The statistics within this report cover 23,291 children and young people within the Children's Hearings System in 2019/20. Of these children and young people:

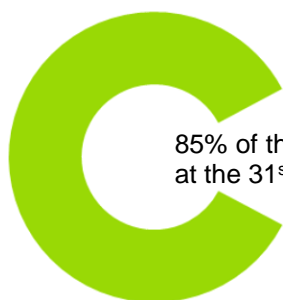


\* Pre-Hearing Panels

\*\* Child Protection Orders

\*\*\* Compulsory Supervision Orders

In 2019/20, 30,363 Children's Hearings were held for 13,316 children and young people



85% of the 8,875 children and young people subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 have only ever been referred on care and protection grounds

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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](http://www.scra.gov.uk).

## Introduction

### What do these statistics include?

This report 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 between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. 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<sup>1</sup>. 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'); and
- 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
  - had an open case which was received 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.

Information about the changes seen within the Children's Hearings System since 2003 is available through a research report released in 2018. The research aimed to answer the following question: Has child protection in Scotland become more complex over time, and if so, how? It can be found here: [Complexity in the lives of looked after children and their families](#).

### 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 a child or young person 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 18.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> The age of criminal responsibility was raised to 12 years under the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019. Since the 29th November 2019 it has only been possible for a Reporter to refer a child aged under 12 to a hearing on care and protection grounds. More information on the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act can be found [here](#).



## Children and young people referred

This section presents information about the numbers of children and young people referred to SCRA over the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 with comparisons to prior years. It looks at the reason for referral and profiles by age and sex of those children and young people referred.

### Key facts:



Children and young people referred decreased by 0.2% from 2018/19



21% 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 2019/20, 12,849 children and young people in Scotland were referred<sup>2</sup> to the Reporter:

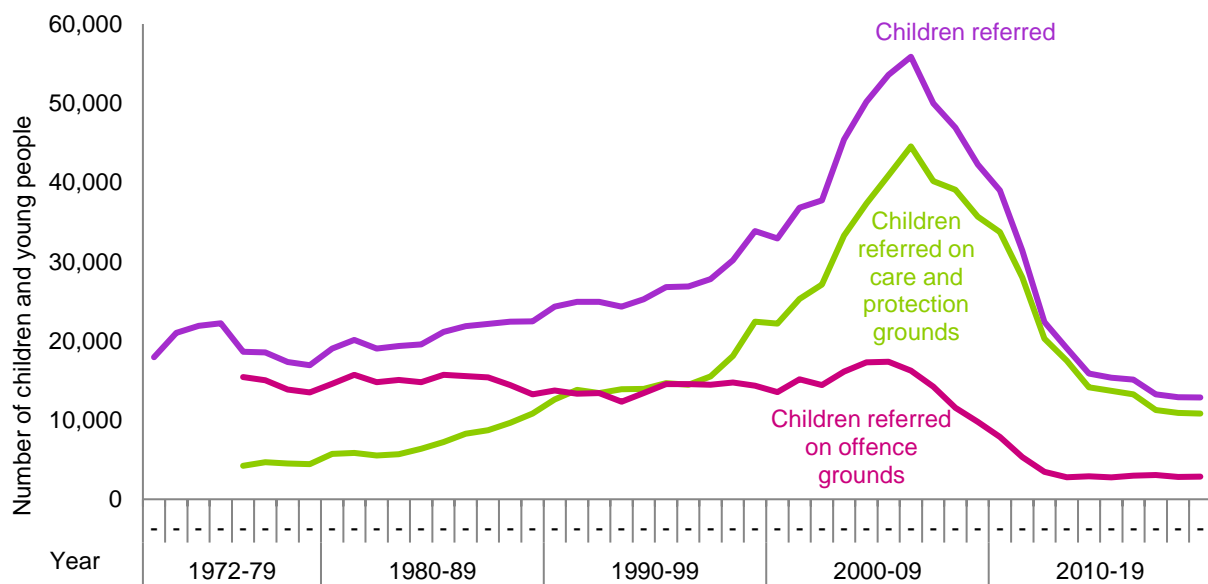
- 10,823 on non-offence (care and protection) grounds; and
- 2,840 on offence grounds<sup>3</sup>.

The figure of 12,849 children and young people referred to the Reporter in 2019/20 equates to 1.4% of all children and young people in Scotland<sup>4</sup>. Within this, 1.2% 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 thirteenth consecutive year. It should be noted though that the change this year is not significant and may be accounted for by error margins. Data throughout this report may also have been impacted by COVID-19 but it is expected that this impact will not be significant as the lockdown in Scotland only covered a week of this analysis (from the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020) and emergency legislation was not in place until April 2020.

Figure 1.1 illustrates the changing trends within the system over time. 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.

<sup>2</sup> Reporters decide the category and the grounds of referral at the time of receipt based on information contained within the referral.

<sup>3</sup> These figures include 814 children and young people who were referred on care and protection and offence grounds.

<sup>4</sup> % of population aged under 16 years, based on mid-year estimates for 2019 from the National Records of Scotland.

The 0.2% decrease in children and young people referred from 2018/19 levels was due to 20 fewer children and young people being referred. There were 58 fewer children and young people referred on care and protection grounds (a decrease of 0.5%) and 16 more children and young people referred on offence grounds (an increase of 0.6%).

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)<sup>5</sup> and Whole Systems approaches. The impact of this is highlighted through the reducing numbers of children and young people referred.

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

### Child Protection Orders

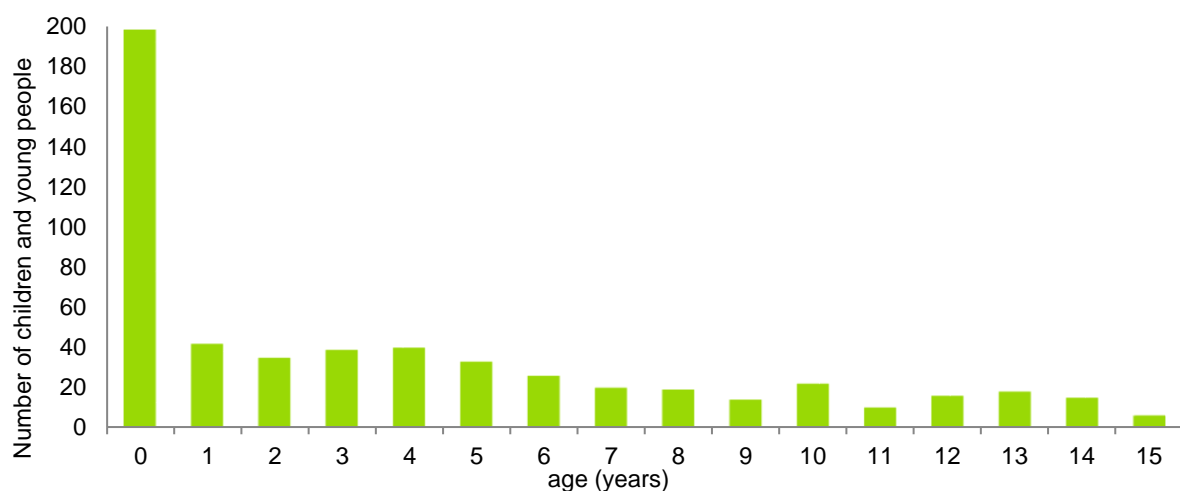
A Sheriff may grant a Child Protection Order to address emergency and/or high risk situations where measures need to be put in place immediately to protect a child or young person. The granting of this order requires the child or young person to be removed to (or kept in) a place of safety away from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

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of children and young people	687	619	562	547

The number of children and young people with Child Protection Orders decreased in the year (down 2.7%), the third year of decrease. The change was most likely due to normal fluctuations around low numbers rather than any specific policy or practice change. Proportionately, more Child Protection Orders are granted for very young children (especially new-born 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 2019/20**



Of the 547 children and young people with Child Protection Order referrals received 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.

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

## 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 Guidelines<sup>6</sup>, 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 4, some young people aged 16 and 17 can be referred to the Reporter under certain circumstances. When the police charge these young people with an alleged offence, they will usually be the subject of a joint report (if it is a very minor offence, the police could report only to the Reporter).

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

Type of joint report	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Children and young people - not in custody	1,158	1,175	1,142	1,224
Children and young people - in custody	34	41	29	45
<b>Total children and young people with joint reports</b>	<b>1,169</b>	<b>1,191</b>	<b>1,147</b>	<b>1,228</b>

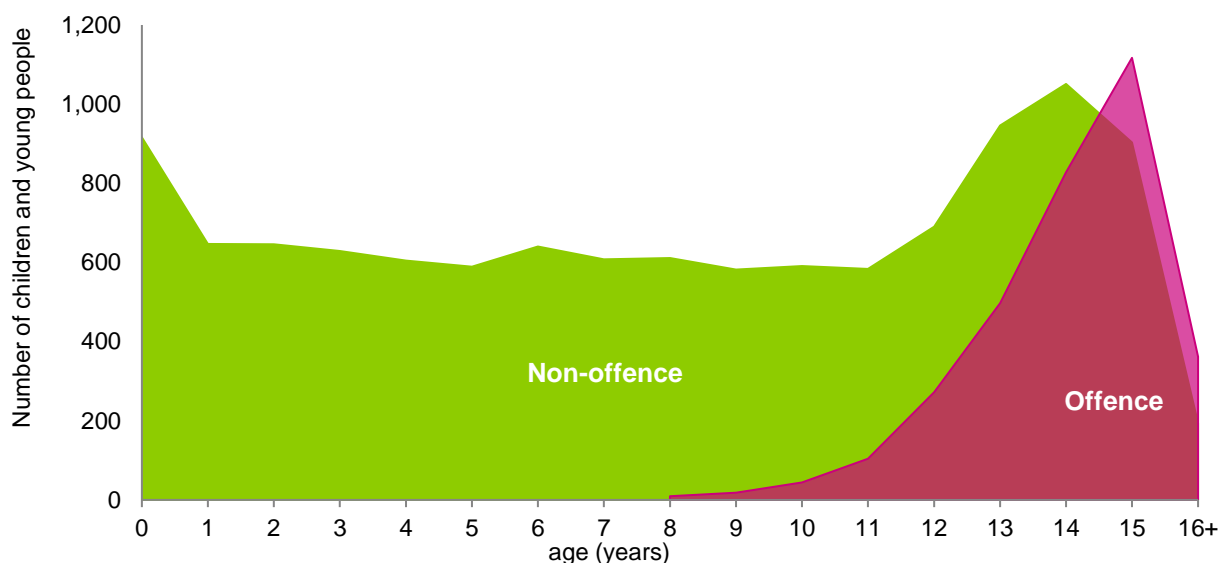
In 2019/20, 1,228 children and young people had 2,639 joint reports to the Reporter and the PF in the year. Of the joint reports received, 45.4% (1,199) were for children and young people aged 16 or over while 54.6% (1,440) were for children and young people aged under 16.

The majority of joint reports were made while the child or young person was not in custody, 1,224 children and young people with 2,574 reports, (several had joint reports on more than one occasion). Of these joint reports where the PF had made a decision, 75.2% of cases were subsequently referred to the Reporter. In addition, there were 65 joint reports made for 45 children and young people in custody. Of those joint reports where the PF had made a decision, 69.8% 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 remain 14 and 15 years. Historically this was the case for both care and protection and offence grounds but for the past two years, 13 and 14 are the most common ages for care and protection grounds as shown in figure 1.3 below.

**Figure 1.3 Children and young people referred on offence and non-offence grounds, by age, in 2019/20**



<sup>6</sup> [To Chief Constables: Reporting to Procurator Fiscals of Offences Alleged to have been Committed by Children](#)

## Sex of children and young people referred

The number of females referred to the Reporter fell by 2.7% (from 5,656 to 5,505) while the number of males increased by 1.9% (from 7,199 to 7,338)<sup>7</sup>. These changes occurred due decreases for females referred for care and protection and offences (2.6% and 4.8% respectively) while males referred for both care and protection and offence referrals increased (by 1.5% and 2.4% respectively).

**Table 1.3 Sex of children and young people referred in 2019/20, by referral type**

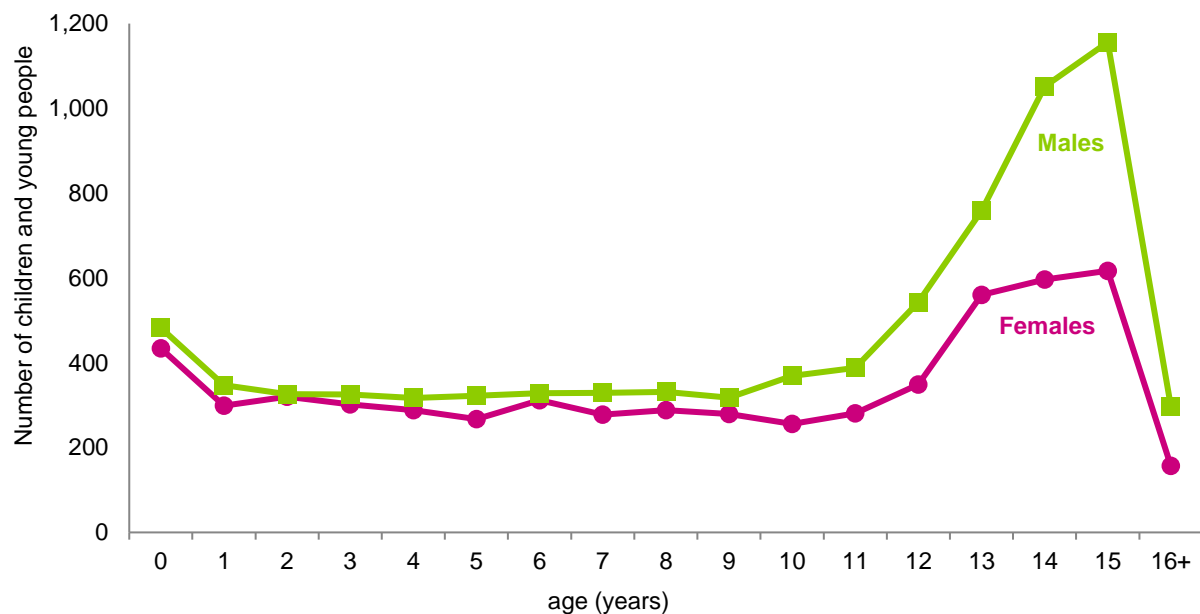
F = Female M = Male	Non-offence*		Offence*		All grounds	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
Number of children and young people	5,083	5,734	679	2,161	5,505	7,338
Proportion by sex	47.0%	53.0%	23.9%	76.1%	42.9%	57.1%
Change from 2018/19	-2.6%	+1.5%	-4.8%	+2.4%	-2.7%	+1.9%

\* 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 sex of children and young people referred

In line with Child Protection Orders, significant numbers of children and young people were referred in 2019/20 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. Children and young people referred, by sex and age, in 2019/20**



<sup>7</sup> Six children and young people had no sex recorded on SCRA's Case Management System.



## 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 'child's conduct harmful to self or others'.

**Table 1.4 Number of children and young people referred in 2019/20, 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	285	3,967	4,230
(b) Victim of a Schedule 1 offence	109	1,032	1,138
(c) Close connection with a Schedule 1 offender	35	448	483
(d) Same household as a child victim of Schedule 1 offender	20	276	296
(e) Exposure to persons whose conduct likely to be harmful to child	170	728	894
(f) Close connection with a person who has carried out domestic abuse	269	2,900	3,156
(g) Close connection with Sexual Offences Act offender - Parts 1, 4 & 5	12	119	131
(h) Accommodated and special measures needed	6	49	55
(i) Permanence order and special measures needed	0	8	8
(j) Offence	1,019	1,951	2,834
(k) Misuse of alcohol	21	21	42
(l) Misuse of a drug	20	19	39
(m) Child's conduct harmful to self or others	461	1,019	1,440
(n) Beyond control of a relevant person	92	205	294
(o) Failure to attend school without reasonable excuse	27	1,000	1,027
(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	5	5
<b>Total children and young people referred*</b>	<b>1,825</b>	<b>11,272</b>	<b>12,849</b>

\* 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 a Compulsory Supervision Order at the point of referral at one time and not on a 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 ages of children and young people referred on care and protection grounds are outlined below. Grounds codes (p) and (q) are excluded due to low or zero counts. The grounds codes are described in full in Table 1.4 on page 9.

**Figure 1.5 Average age of children and young people referred on non-offence grounds in 2019/20**

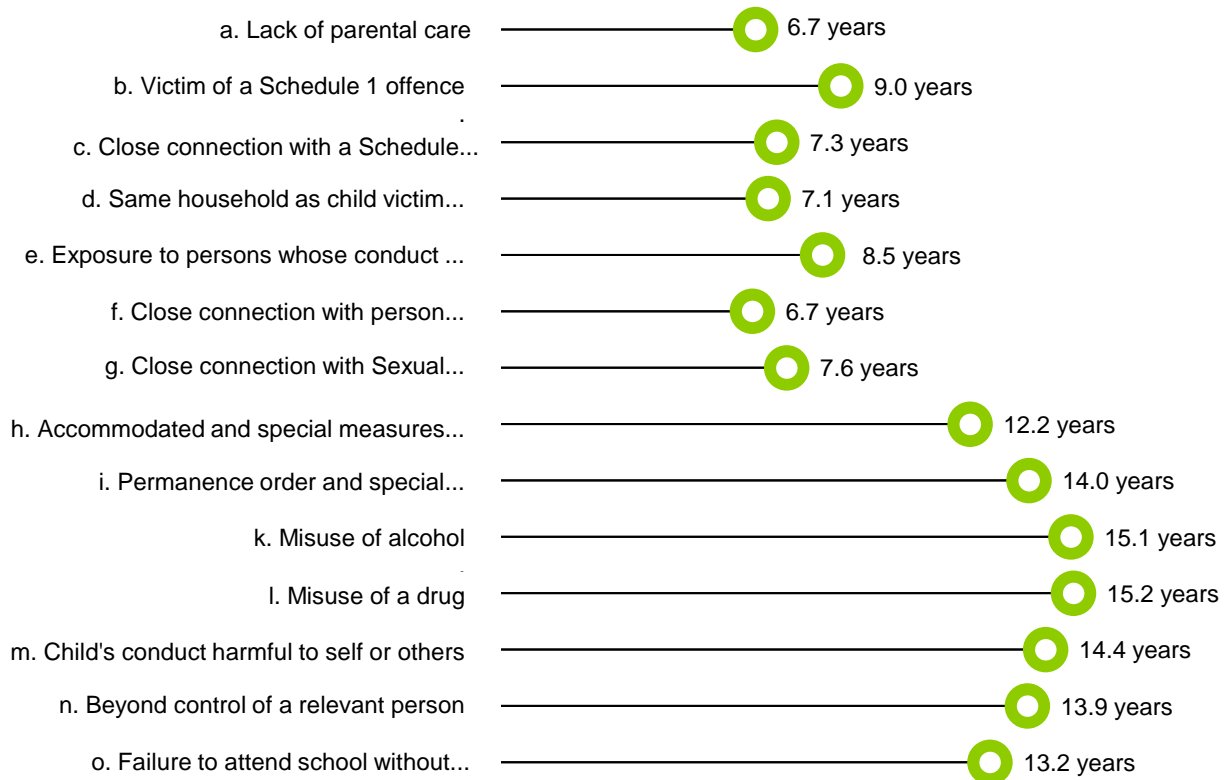


Figure 1.5 shows that there is a clear split in age profiles between a – g grounds which have a younger average age and the other care and protection grounds where the average age is older.

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 (554). This was 13.1% 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 decreased 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 (323). This was 10.2% of children and young people referred on this ground.

Other common grounds of referral such as 'victim of Schedule 1 offence' and 'exposure to persons whose conduct likely to be harmful to child' were common throughout the childhood years but were highest for 13 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 2019/20, 2,840 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 12,557 alleged offences on 6,978 referrals. The offences have been mapped to the standard police crime groupings<sup>8</sup> to provide consistency with other publications.

**Table 1.5 Number of alleged offences by police crime grouping and year**

Police offence code group	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Non-sexual crimes of violence	186	215	183	226
Sexual crimes	380	422	482	479
Crimes of dishonesty	2,049	2,837	2,487	1,953
Fire-raising, vandalism etc.	2,318	2,337	2,044	1,769
Other crimes	1,140	1,355	1,302	1,461
Miscellaneous offences	5,990	7,134	6,864	6,370
Motor vehicle offences	352	315	278	299
<b>Total alleged offences</b>	<b>12,415</b>	<b>14,615</b>	<b>13,635</b>	<b>12,557</b>

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 a similar split between children and young people with a single alleged offence in the year (36.8%) and those with two to five alleged offences (42.5%) in 2019/20. Also, there was an almost equal split between children and young people with six to nine alleged offences (10.1%) and ten or more alleged offences (10.5%).

**Figure 1.6 Number of alleged offences per child or young person referred on offence grounds in 2019/20**



<sup>8</sup> Further detail on crime groupings can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-scotland-2017-18>

## Referrals to the Reporter

This section presents information about the numbers of referrals received by SCRA over the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 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 4.2% from 2018/19



75.0% of referrals were from the police



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

### Referrals received

In 2019/20, 22,157 referrals were received by the Reporter, this was a 4.2% decrease from 2018/19 levels. Care and protection referrals decreased by 1.3% to 15,179 while offence referrals decreased by 10.1% to 6,978.

Care and protection referrals have decreased annually since 2006/07, the exception to this being a slight increase in 2015/16. Offence referrals decreased significantly between 2005/06 and 2012/13, since then year on year changes have been smaller.

While the annual decreases in care and protection referrals continue, at a local authority level there are significant differences when comparing 2019/20 to 2018/19. Care and protection referrals in Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling increased by 145%, 106% and 54% respectively while North and South Ayrshire both saw decreases of over 40%. As with offence referrals, below, when significant changes are occurring, multi-agency discussions take place to better understand the reasons for the changes. Full details of referral rates alongside other SCRA statistics over time can be accessed through SCRA's [Online Statistical Dashboard](#).

In addition, the Principal Reporter chairs the Advancing the Whole Systems Approach group, a multi-agency group responsible for implementing one strand of the Scottish Government's Youth Justice Strategy. As part of the group's work it considers data from SCRA on various matters in relation to offending by children.

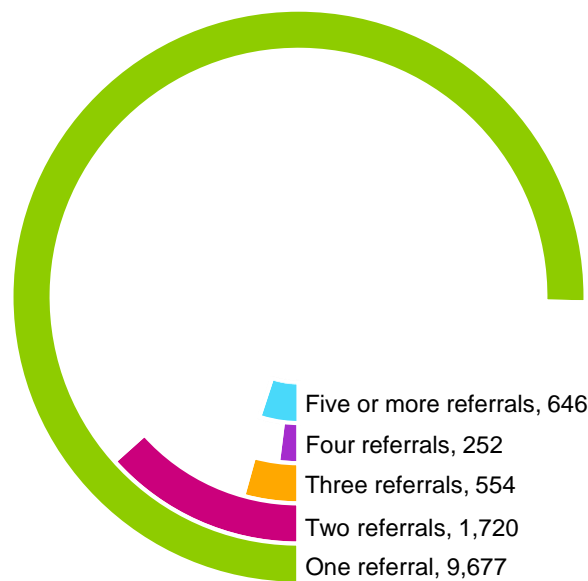
Having noted an increase in the number of children and young people being referred to the Reporter on offence grounds during 2017/18, SCRA began to provide the group with more detailed data showing the number of referrals on a local authority basis. The group is continuing work to better understand and address changes in offence referrals at national and local level.

**Table 2.1 Numbers of referrals received, by type and year**

Type of referral	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Offence	7,168	8,548	7,763	6,978
Non-offence	19,672	16,583	15,377	15,179
<b>Total referrals</b>	<b>26,840</b>	<b>25,131</b>	<b>23,140</b>	<b>22,157</b>

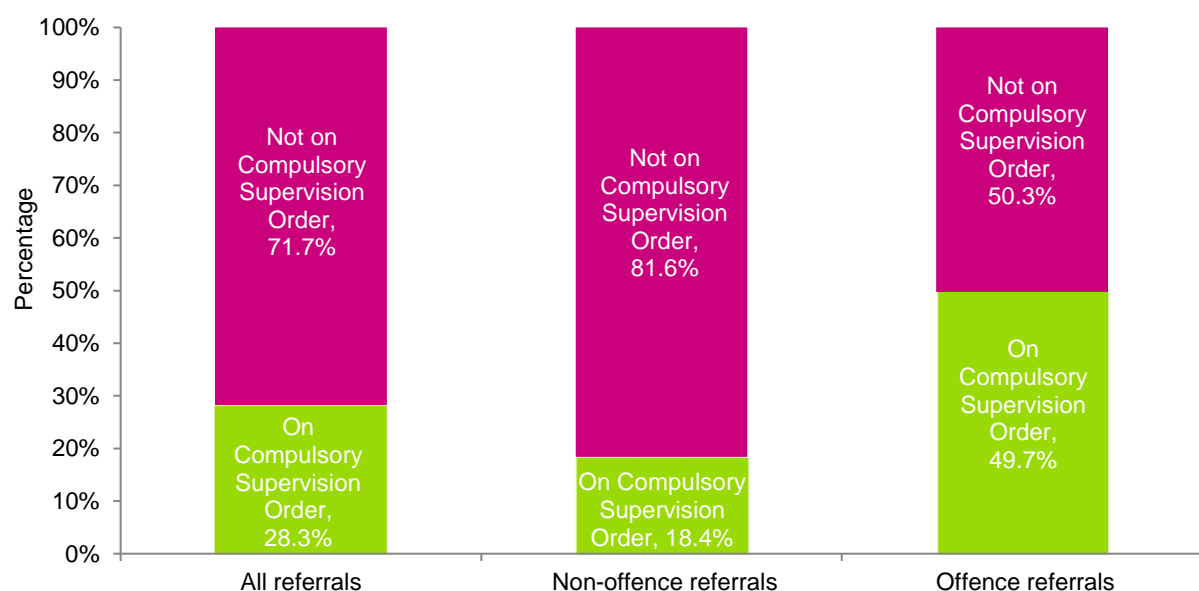
Referrals per child or young person varies depending on the type of referral. For care and protection referrals, 81% had a single referral in the year, this compares with 57.4% of children and young people referred on offence grounds having a single offence referral in the year.

Overall, most children and young people (75.3%) were referred only once in the year, with 5.0% referred five or more times. The number of referrals received per child or young person in 2019/20 is shown in Figure 2.1 on page 13.

**Figure 2.1 Number of referrals received per child or young person in 2019/20**

### 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 2.2. Overall, 28.3% of referrals received (6,263) were for children and young people subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order at the point of referral. This was the case for 18.4% of care and protection referrals (2,795) and 49.7% of offence referrals (3,468). This reflects Early and Effective Intervention guidance that says that there is a presumption that where the police charge a child or young person on a Compulsory Supervision Order with an offence, they will refer the child to the Reporter. Page 22 contains more information about Compulsory Supervision Orders.

**Figure 2.2 Referrals received by Compulsory Supervision Order status at receipt in 2019/20**

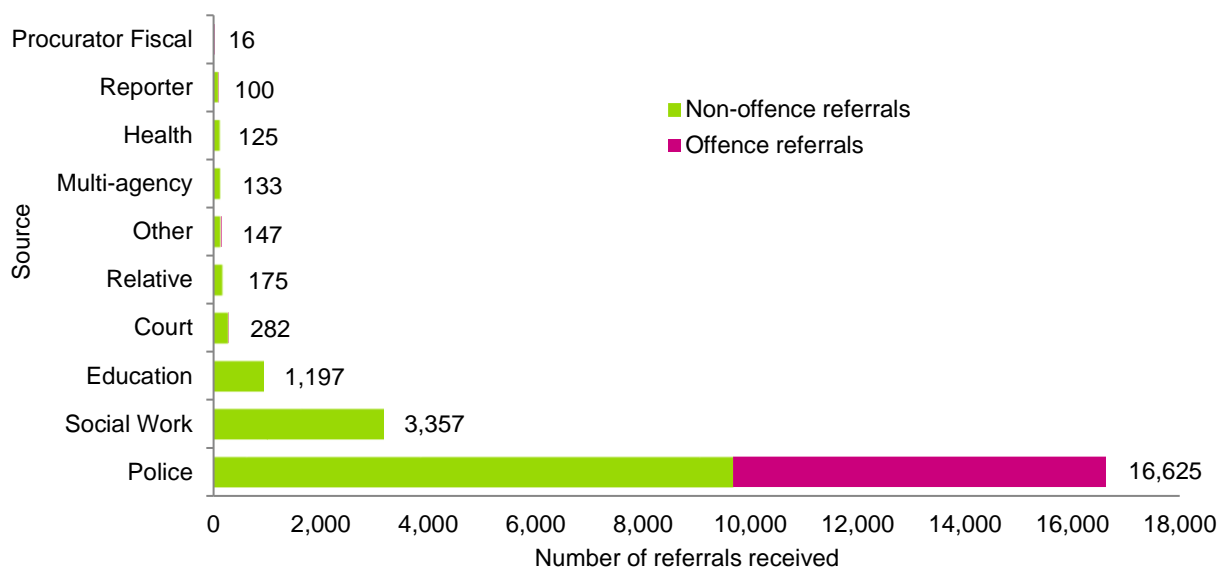
Males were more likely to be subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order at the point of receipt of a referral (30.5%) than females (24.9%). The difference is mainly due to the fact that a greater proportion of referrals for males are on offence grounds than for females and that, as described above, children and young people referred on offence grounds are more likely to be subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order at the receipt of the referral than is the case for care and protection referrals.



## Source of referrals

The police are the main source of referrals, comprising 75.0% of all referrals to the Reporter in 2019/20 - 99.6% of all offence referrals and 63.8% of all care and protection referrals.

**Figure 2.3 Referrals received by source in 2019/20**



## Additional and duplicate referrals

In addition to the referrals reported on above, SCRA also receives referrals which are classified as duplicates or additional. For a referral to be recorded as such, the following criteria should be met:

### Duplicate referral

- There is an open referral with any ground;
- It relates to the same incident or similar broad concerns as the open referral; and
- There is no significant additional information.

### Additional referral

- There is an open referral which reflects an on-going concern or pattern of behaviour;
- It relates to the similar broad concerns as open referral; and
- It includes significant additional information.

In practice, these referrals still require work and the information in them will be taken into account in Reporter's decisions about whether to arrange a Children's Hearing for a child or young person. Therefore, the decision has been taken to include these within the statistics as a separate table. The split between additional and duplicate referrals is shown below. These counts are not included in the other referral receipt or child and young person counts.

**Table 2.2 Numbers of additional and duplicate referrals received, by type and year**

Type of referral	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Additional	1,572	1,836	2,086	2,328
Duplicate	1,043	840	615	655
<b>Total referrals</b>	<b>2,615</b>	<b>2,676</b>	<b>2,701</b>	<b>2,983</b>

Please note that offence referrals should not be categorised as additional or duplicate referrals in line with practice guidance but in reality, some offence referrals are recorded as such.

## 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 2019 to 31st March 2020.

### Key facts:



Communications requested decreased by 6.1% from 2018/19



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	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Social Work	23,404	22,666	20,570	19,828
Education	8,134	8,049	7,610	6,889
Health	2,880	2,943	2,486	2,072
Restorative Justice	60	63	48	57
Other	113	79	66	44
<b>Total requests*</b>	<b>34,591</b>	<b>33,800</b>	<b>30,780</b>	<b>28,890</b>

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

These reports were requested for 14,552 children and young people in 2019/20. 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 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.

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). If the Reporter considers that the referral does not justify any action (compulsory, voluntary or informal) by virtue of its age, triviality or irrelevance then they can make a "no indication of a need for compulsory measures" decision.

**Table 3.2 Number of children and young people with reporter decisions in 2019/20\*, by decision**

Reporter decision	Non-offence	Offence	Total
Arrange a Children's Hearing (on new grounds)	3,366	155	3,468
No indication of a need for compulsory measures	3,120	1,093	4,098
No Hearing - refer to local authority	3,403	696	3,931
No Hearing - measures already in place	1,433	1,158	2,188
No Hearing - insufficient evidence to proceed	760	178	929
No Hearing - family have taken action	499	94	587
No Hearing - diversion to other measures	7	32	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,100</b>	<b>2,844</b>	<b>13,011</b>

\* Data in this table relates to cases decided in 2019/20 as opposed to referrals received in 2019/20.

\*\* 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 2019/20, 26.7% of children and young people (3,468) with cases decided had a Reporter decision to arrange a Children's Hearing on at least one referral. For 31.5% of children and young people (4,098), Reporters decided that there was no indication of a need for compulsory measures on at least one of their referrals.

Please note that prior to 2017/18, the non-offence offence split was calculated using the referral category (offence or non-offence). Further analysis has shown that it is more accurate to use the ground of referral, especially for decisions on offence grounds.

In many cases, for children and young people who are referred for offending where the Reporter decides compulsory intervention is necessary, the Reporter adds an additional non-offence ground and it is this which is taken to the Children's Hearing. In 2019/20, this changes the number of children and young people with an arrange Children's Hearing decision on offence grounds from 208 to 155.

## Children's Hearings and court work

This section presents information about the work undertaken by Children's Hearings and courts (in relation to Children's Hearings) over the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 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 increased by 1.7% from 2018/19



Children's Hearings decreased by 4.1% from 2018/19



% of applications for proof had the grounds established

### Pre-Hearing Panels held

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

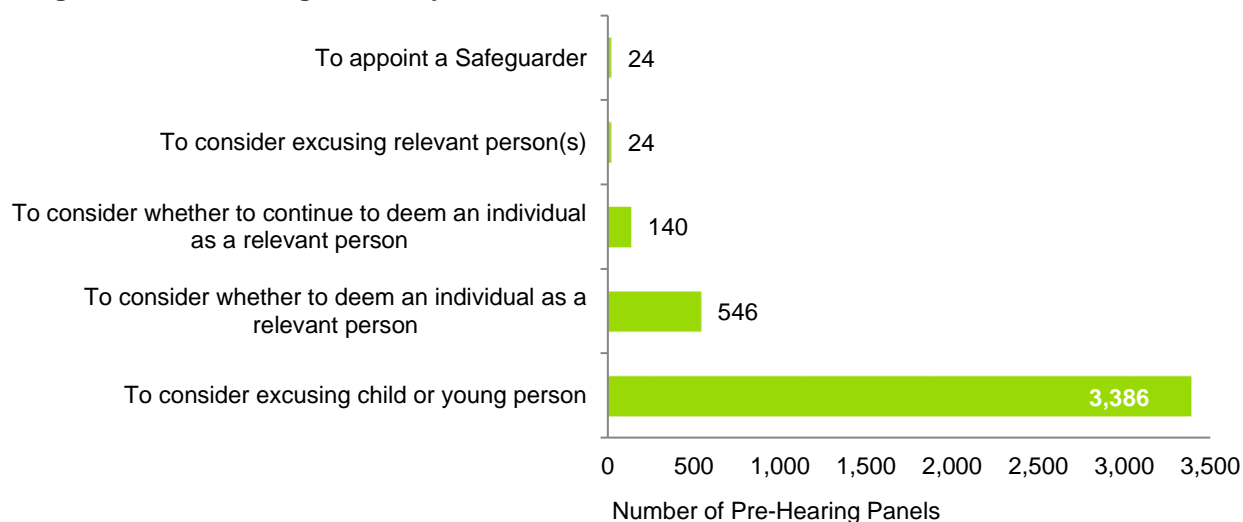
- whether to deem/undeed an individual as a relevant person; and
- whether to excuse a child or young person or relevant person from the obligation to attend the Children's Hearing.

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. As well as the reasons for Pre-Hearing Panels, figure 4.1 shows the instances of Safeguarder appointments within the year.

**Table 4.1 Pre-Hearing Panels held, by year**

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of Pre-Hearing Panels	3,859	3,888	3,809	3,873

**Figure 4.1 Pre-Hearing Panels by reason\* in 2019/20**



\* 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 once.

In 2019/20, 3,873 Pre-Hearing Panels were held for 3,361 children and young people, this is a 1.7% increase from the previous year. This reflects increases in Pre-Hearing Panels arranged to consider whether to consider excusing a child or young person (up 2.0%).

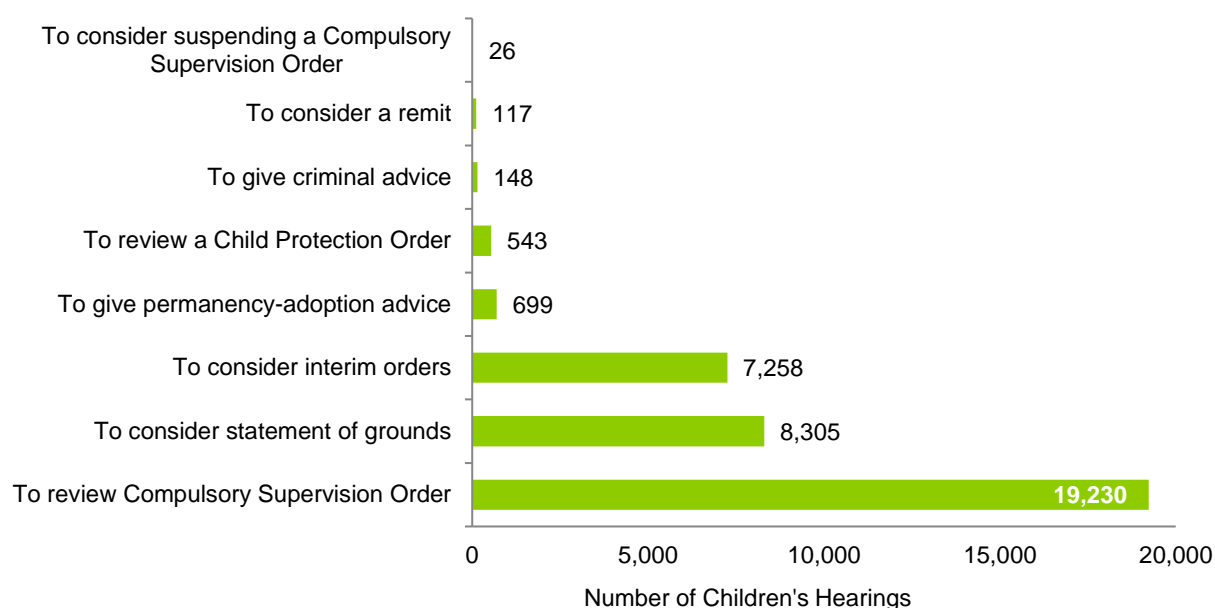
## Children's Hearings held

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**

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<b>Number of Children's Hearings held</b>	34,106	32,553	31,653	30,363

**Figure 4.2 Children's Hearings by reason\* in 2019/20**



\* 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 2019/20, 30,363 Children's Hearings were held for 13,316 children and young people. This was a 4.1% decrease from 2018/19. The decreases resulted from the falling number of Compulsory Supervision Orders and hence less reviews (see page 22) as well as fewer Child Protection Order, ground and permanence-adoption advice Hearings. Both remit and criminal advice Hearings saw increases in the year.

Prior to a child or young person attending a Children's Hearing, they are able to express their views either through SCRA's All about me form or through social work's child views form. In 2019/20 SCRA recorded receipt of 2,572 of these forms for 1,884 children and young people. This was a 6.0% decrease from 2018/19 (163 fewer forms).

Of the children and young people with Children's Hearings in the year, 43.8% had a single Hearing, with 10.3% having five or more Hearings.

Of the 8,305 Children's Hearings to consider statements of grounds, 43.6% (3,619) related to new grounds while 56.4% (4,686) 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 19,230 Hearings linked to review Hearings for Compulsory Supervision Orders, initial review Hearings made up 69.8% (13,432) of this number with the remainder (5,798) deferred review Hearings. A Compulsory Supervision Order must be reviewed at least once annually.

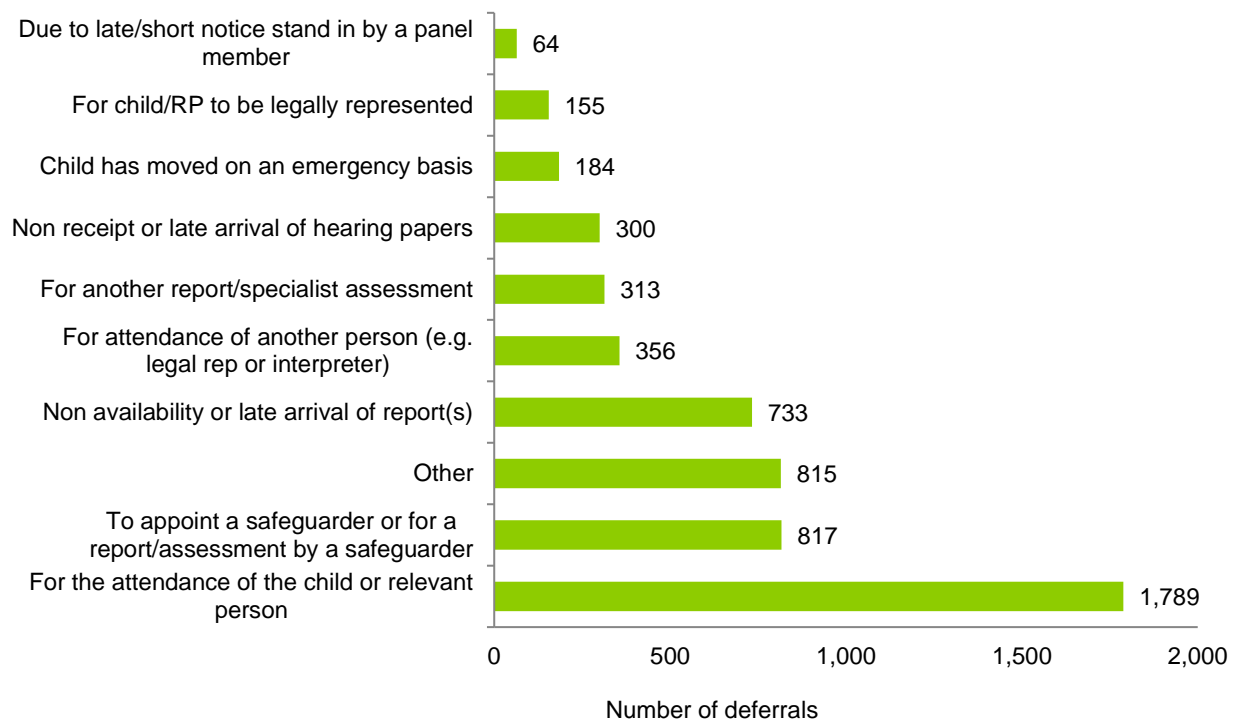
Of the remaining Hearing types, interim orders were the most common (7,258) followed by permanency/adoption advice Hearings (699) and Child Protection Order Hearings (543).



## Children's Hearings deferred

In most Children's Hearings, Panel Members can defer (postpone) the Children's Hearing until a later date if required. Figure 4.3 shows these reasons.

**Figure 4.3 Reasons for deferral of Children's Hearings in 2019/20**



Multiple reasons for deferral can be recorded within a Children's Hearing, equally, not all Children's Hearings which were deferred had a deferral reason recorded on SCRA's Case Management System. Overall, 5,141 Children's Hearings had deferral reasons recorded during 2019/20 while 24.9% of Children's Hearings (7,564) were deferred.

## Children's Hearings unable to proceed

At a grounds hearing, the Children's Hearing may decide not to proceed and instead will require the Reporter to arrange another grounds Hearing. This will normally happen if the child or young person has not attended and has not been excused in advance at a Pre-Hearing Panel, or if a relevant person has not attended. In 2019/20, there were 534 such decisions.

## Children's Hearings warrants to secure attendance

Section 123 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 empowers a Children's Hearing to grant a warrant to secure the attendance of a child or young person at a Children's Hearing. In 2019/20, Children's Hearings granted 30 warrants to secure attendance under section 123 for 27 children and young people.

## 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 2019/20, Children's Hearings considered the cases of 540 children and young people with 543 Child Protection Orders under sections 45 or 46 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011;

Of these Child Protection Orders:

- 290 were continued without variation to the order;
- 242 were continued with variation to the order; and
- 11 were not continued.

The numbers above differ slightly from those in page 6 due to Child Protection Orders granted near to the year-end which can result in the granted date of the orders being in a different year than the Children's Hearing held to consider them. Applications can be made to the Sheriff to terminate or vary a Child Protection Order. Four children and young people had applications to recall/terminate or vary Child Protection Orders in the year.

Children's Hearings also made, varied or continued 6,868 interim orders as defined under sections 86 and 140 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 for 2,499 children and young people in 2019/20.

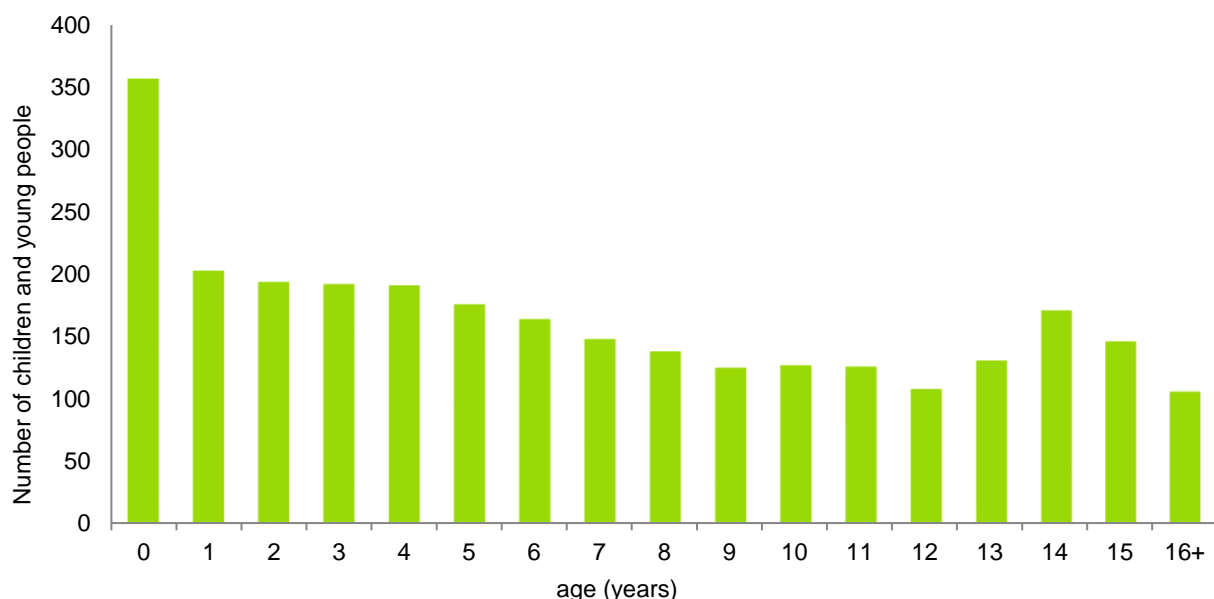
Interim orders in the form of Interim Compulsory Supervision Orders can be used to protect the child or young person whilst grounds for referral are in the process of being determined at proof. Interim Variations of Compulsory Supervision Orders can also be made which can change the measures attached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

**Table 4.3 Children and young people with interim orders, by year**

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of children and young people	2,787	2,631	2,614	2,499

Interim orders numbers are highest for children aged under one, but are also common for all age groups. Numbers are showing a downwards trend.

**Figure 4.4 Children and young people with interim orders made by Children's Hearings, by age, in 2019/20**



## 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, 2,763 applications were determined for 2,708 children and young people in 2019/20 and 91.5% 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.

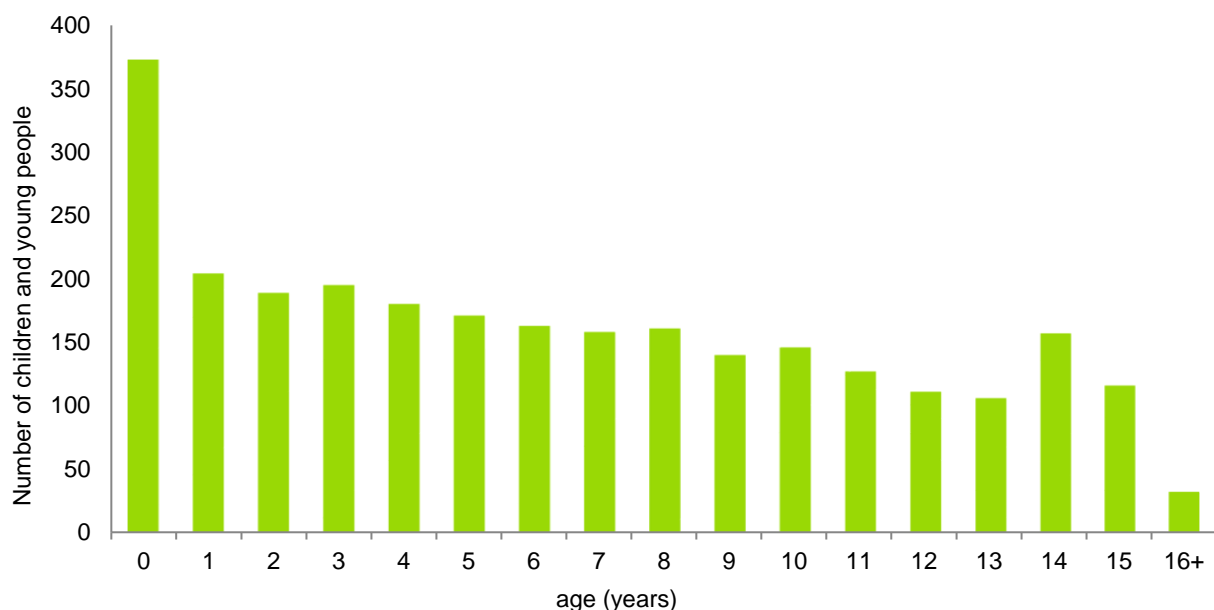
**Table 4.4 Applications to the Sheriff for proof determined, by year**

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<b>Number of applications determined</b>	3,189	2,796	2,837	2,763

The number of concluded applications for proof decreased by 2.6% after the increase in 2018/19.

Applications for proof may require several callings (court dates) before the application is determined. In 2019/20, including applications not yet determined, there were 10,812 callings recorded for 3,231 children and young people. As with interim orders and Child Protection Orders, numbers are highest for children aged under one. The age at determination of the application for children and young people is shown in Figure 4.5 below.

**Figure 4.5 Children and young people with applications determined, by age, in 2019/20**



## Applications to the Sheriff to consider interim orders

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.

At the conclusion of a proof at which the Sheriff has found the statement of grounds for referral to be established, the Sheriff can also make an Interim Compulsory Supervision Order, or, if the child or young person is already the subject of a Compulsory Supervision Order, can make an Interim Variation of the Compulsory Supervision Order to change the measures attached to the current order. These interim orders last for a maximum of 22 days.

Sheriffs made, varied or continued 4,183 interim orders in 2019/20 for 1,326 children and young people.

## Compulsory Measures of Supervision

This section presents information about Children's Hearings decisions and Compulsory Supervision Orders in force in 2019/20. It also covers the number of secure authorisations and non-disclosure measures put in place by Children's Hearings in 2019/20 with comparisons to previous years.

### Key facts:



Compulsory Supervision Orders have decreased for the tenth consecutive year

**'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 Children's Hearings. It is the statutory responsibility of local authorities to implement Compulsory Supervision Orders.

At Children's Hearings in 2019/20, 2,806 children and young people had a new Compulsory Supervision Order made. This includes orders made as a result of grounds and remits from the criminal court under Section 49 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995, see Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Number of children and young people with Children's Hearings decisions in 2019/20**

Children's Hearing decision	Non-offence	Offence	S49 Remit	Total
Grounds accepted/established and new Compulsory Supervision Order made	2,727	80	30	2,806
Grounds accepted/established and considered in review of existing Compulsory Supervision Order	84	44	28	149
Grounds discharged	373	38	36	447
<b>Total*</b>	<b>3,159</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>3,336</b>

\* 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 or may have a Section 49 remit. The totals count each child or young person once.

### Children and young people subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders

At 31 March 2020, 8,875 children and young people were subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders. This is 1.0%<sup>9</sup> 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	2017	2018	2019	2020
With parent/relevant person	4,486	4,262	4,226	4,071
With other approved foster parent	2,873	2,679	2,599	2,386
With relative/friend - other	1,257	1,202	1,100	1,176
With relative/friend - approved foster parent	586	557	515	498
Children's unit	314	329	301	289
Other residential placement	216	235	239	235
Residential school	203	184	185	174
Other	41	25	27	26
Other non-residential placement	11	17	11	18
None recorded	9	3	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,996</b>	<b>9,493</b>	<b>9,206</b>	<b>8,875</b>

<sup>9</sup> % of population aged under 16 years, based on mid-year estimates for 2019 from the National Records of Scotland.

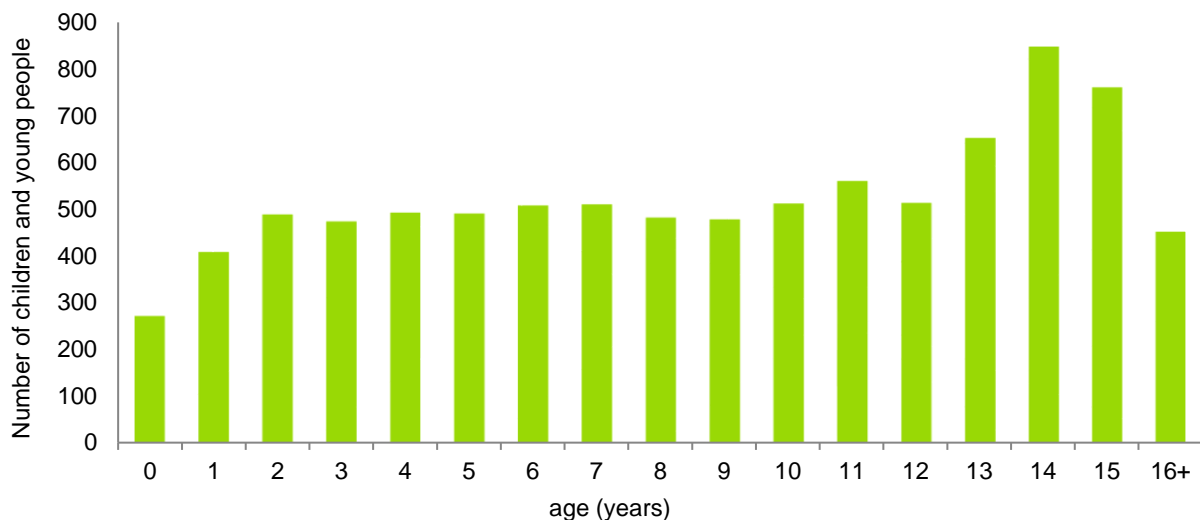
The number of children and young people subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders has decreased for a tenth consecutive year. 'With parent/relevant person' continues to be the most common type of Compulsory Supervision Orders. The types of orders in place at 31 March 2020 are shown in Table 5.2 on page 22.

Children and young people aged under eight subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders at 31 March 2020 decreased by 3.7% to 3,631, while children and young people aged eight and over decreased by 3.5% (to 5,244).

### 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, by age, at 31 March 2020**



### 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 displayed 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 2020, by length of order**

Length of Compulsory Supervision Order	Count	Percentage
Under 1 year	2,691	30.3%
1 – 2 years	1,971	22.2%
2 – 3 years	1,244	14.0%
3 – 4 years	868	9.8%
4 – 5 years	575	6.5%
5+ years	1,526	17.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,875</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

For the majority of children and young people subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders, the reasons which they came into the Children's Hearings' System was as a result of concerns about their care and protection. Of the 8,875 children and young people subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, 84.5% have only ever been referred on care and protection grounds.



## Compulsory Supervision Orders terminated

When a Children's Hearing decides that a child or young person no longer needs to be on supervision they will terminate the Compulsory Supervision Order. If not before, a Compulsory Supervision Order must end on a young person's 18th birthday. Alternatively, Compulsory Supervision Orders can end if a court grants a Permanence Order following a request from a local authority.

**Table 5.4 Number of children and young people with Compulsory Supervision Orders terminated, by year**

Compulsory Supervision Order terminations	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Compulsory Supervision Order terminated	2,867	2,866	2,776	2,658
Permanence Order granted	620	534	418	452
<b>Compulsory Supervision Orders terminated</b>	<b>3,417</b>	<b>3,397</b>	<b>3,194</b>	<b>3,110</b>

## 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 5.5 Number of children and young people with Secure Authorisations made by Hearings, by year**

Secure Authorisation measure	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Within interim orders	120	114	116	97
Within Compulsory Supervision Orders	99	98	97	96

Children and young people with Secure Authorisations included in interim orders decreased by 16.4% while those included in Compulsory Supervision Orders decreased by 1.0%. Secure authorisations within Compulsory Supervision Orders have remained consistent over the past four years.

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

Order type measure attached to	2017	2018	2019	2020
Interim order	100	92	76	81
Compulsory Supervision Order	1,013	805	776	749
<b>Total non-disclosure measures<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>1,098</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>823</b>

As at the 31st March 2020, 749 children and young people had non-disclosure measures attached to Compulsory Supervision Orders and 81 children and young people had non-disclosure measures attached to interim orders. Overall, twenty fewer children and young people (2.4%) had non-disclosure measures in place at the year-end as a result of interim orders or Compulsory Supervision Orders than was the case at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. SCRA continues to work with partner agencies to ensure that non-disclosure is only used where absolutely appropriate as well as internal work to review all current non-disclosure cases.

<sup>10</sup> 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 to the Sheriff

This section presents information about appeals to the Sheriff against decisions made by Children's Hearings in 2019/20 with comparisons to previous years.

### Key facts:



Children and young people with appeals concluded decreased for the fifth consecutive year



% of appeals were 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 and Pre-Hearing Panels. In 2019/20, 557 children and young people had 686 appeals concluded, a 16.7% decrease. A child or young person may have multiple appeals within the year.

**Table 6.1 Number of appeals to the Sheriff**

Appeal outcomes	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of children and young people*	740	668	651	557
Number of appeals concluded**	n/a	914	824	686
% with Hearings' decisions upheld (appeal refused)	n/a	56%	57%	56%

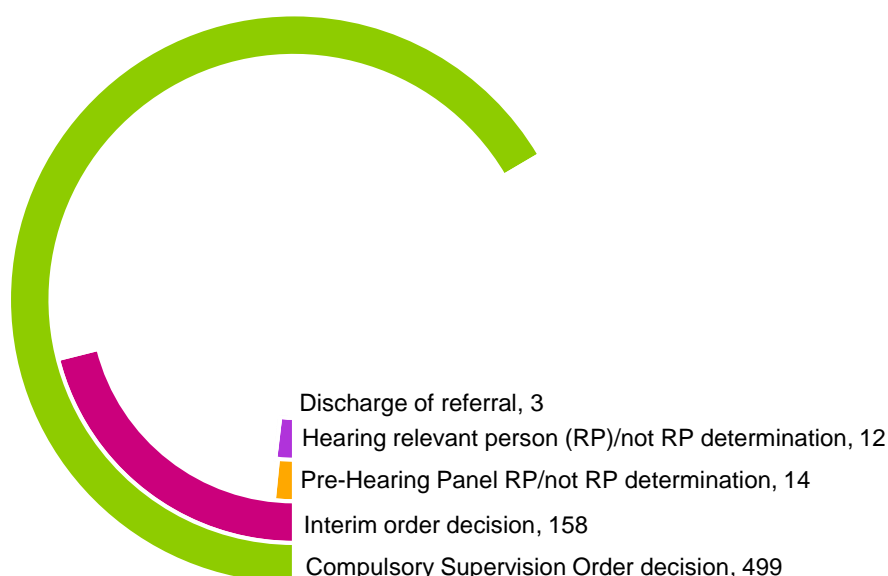
\* Please see the note on error margins within appeals on page 28.

\*\* Appeal counts (as opposed to counts of children and young people with appeals) are unavailable prior to 2018/19.

At appeal, 56.1% 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 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 decision to make the first order. This is expected in the context of Compulsory Supervision Orders being the most common outcome of Children's Hearings.

**Figure 6.1 Number of appeals against Children's Hearings decisions in 2019/20\***



## Performance

This section presents information about operational performance within SCRA during 2019/20, with comparisons to previous years. Detailed performance against targets contained within our Corporate and Business Plans will be reported through SCRA's Annual Report 2019/20. It will also include commentary around performance as well as wider progress against SCRA's plans and will be published on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020<sup>11</sup>.

### Key facts:



Performance improved in one of the four time interval standards

**123 days**  
care and  
protection

average working days from referral receipt to Hearing decision

**78 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 2001<sup>12</sup>. 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 2019/20**

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	22,378 referrals	16,791 referrals	75%
Standard TI6 – Hearings will be scheduled to take place within a maximum of 20 working days of the Reporter's decision	4,253 referrals	3,144 referrals	74%
Standard TI8 – All relevant people, information and resources will be available to Hearings to ensure that continuations are kept to a minimum	15,150 Hearings	12,208 Hearings	81%
Standard TI14 – The child and family will be sent written notification of the outcome of a Hearing within 5 working days of the Hearing.	29,502 Hearings	27,961 Hearings	95%

Performance against the Time Interval Standards has improved against 2018/19 for TI8. Performance in TI4, TI6 and TI14 have all dipped slightly. TI8 is at its highest levels in recent years.

**Table 7.2 Performance against Time Interval Standards, by year**

Time Interval (TI) Standard	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
TI4	78%	76%	78%	75%
TI6	75%	76%	75%	74%
TI8	77%	80%	79%	81%
TI14	96%	96%	97%	95%

The Time Interval Standards within the Blueprint are currently being reviewed by a multi-agency group as part of the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership. New standards may therefore be in place for the 2020/21 Statistical Analysis report.

<sup>11</sup> SCRA's publications can be accessed here: <https://www.scra.gov.uk/resources/>.

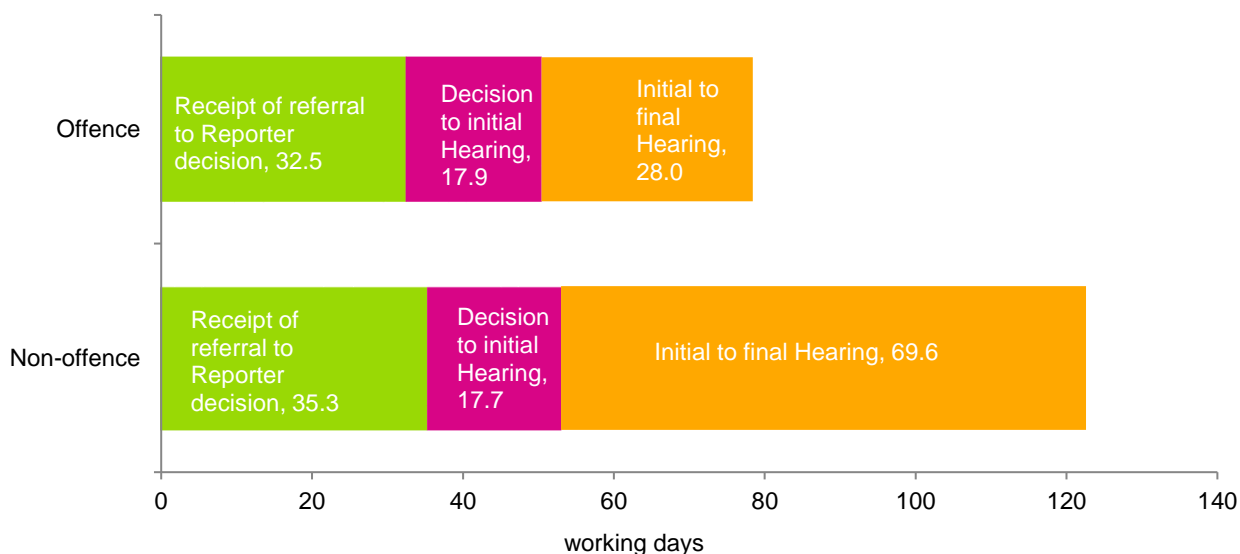
<sup>12</sup> Scottish Executive (2001) Blueprint for the Processing of Children's Hearings Cases. Inter-agency Code of Practice and National Standards.

### Working days from referral receipt to Hearing decision

Of the 3,159 children and young people with care and protection based Hearing decisions and the 136 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 78 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 higher proportion of care and protection referrals which require the establishment of grounds at court.

**Figure 7.1 Average working days from referral receipt to Children's Hearing decision in 2019/20**



The major factor in the length of time to a Children's Hearing decision is whether or not the grounds required to be established at court by a Sheriff. Where they were, the average days for care and protection referrals was 138 days against 72 where a proof application was not required. While for offence referrals, the averages were 134 days and 59 days respectively.

The median for offence referrals was 69 days against an average of 77.9 days, while the median for care and protection referrals was 116 days against an average of 122.5 days.

The difference between the average and the median (9 days for offence referrals and 7 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 2019/20

Performance against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) contained in the 2017-20 Corporate Plan has remained positive, with six of the ten reportable indicators met for the year. Improvements have been seen against initial Hearings proceeding to disposal. 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 2019/20 Annual Report.

**Table 7.3 SCRA's performance against targets in 2019/20**

Outcomes for Children and Families	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20	Change from 2018/19
The percentage of Hearings scheduled to take place within 20 working days.	77%	74%	down 0.9pp
The percentage of decisions on referrals made within 50 working days of receipt	77%	75%	down 2.5pp
Outcomes for Panel Members, Partners and Staff	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20	Change from 2018/19
The degree to which SCRA core properties comply with SCRA property standards	90%	90%	up 0.1pp
The percentage of initial Hearings proceeding to disposal	77%	81%	up 1.1pp
Organisational Efficiency Outcomes	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20	Change from 2018/19
Variance in annual revenue spends as a percentage of the available revenue budget	Within 1%	0.7%	n/a
Variance in annual capital spends as a percentage of the available capital budget	Within 5%	25.5%	n/a
The Scottish Government efficiency savings target will be met	0.7%	Target met	n/a
The percentage of revenue savings achieved in the year	1.5%	2.3%	n/a
The percentage of working days lost to absence (long term)	2%	3.3%	up 0.3pp
The percentage of working days lost to absence (short term)	2%	1.9%	up 0.1pp

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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 the processing to decision of cases which are not categorised as standard referrals. The non-standard ground issue has largely been resolved 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 **7.3%**. This is why page 14 provides counts of additional and duplicate referrals and the notice that consideration will be given to including these in standard referral counts in future years.

### 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 **1.2%** decrease within the report.

### Pre-Hearing Panels and Children's Hearings

For Pre-Hearing Panels, there are issues with multiple Pre-Hearing Panels 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 **0.3%** within the report.

### Compulsory Supervision Orders

Some Compulsory Supervision Orders are still awaiting 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. The appeal count of 864 in this report for 2019/20 should be an accurate record of appeals but it may be the case that some short notice appeals are still not recorded.

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.

