

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS 2025/26



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION



Statistical Analysis 2025/26 - at a glance

Children referred 1972 to 2025/26

17,950
in 1972

8,839
in 2025/26

Compared to 1972 (first year of published data), the number of children referred has decreased by 50.8%

Compared to 2024/25, the number of children referred has decreased by 9.7%

Children within this report

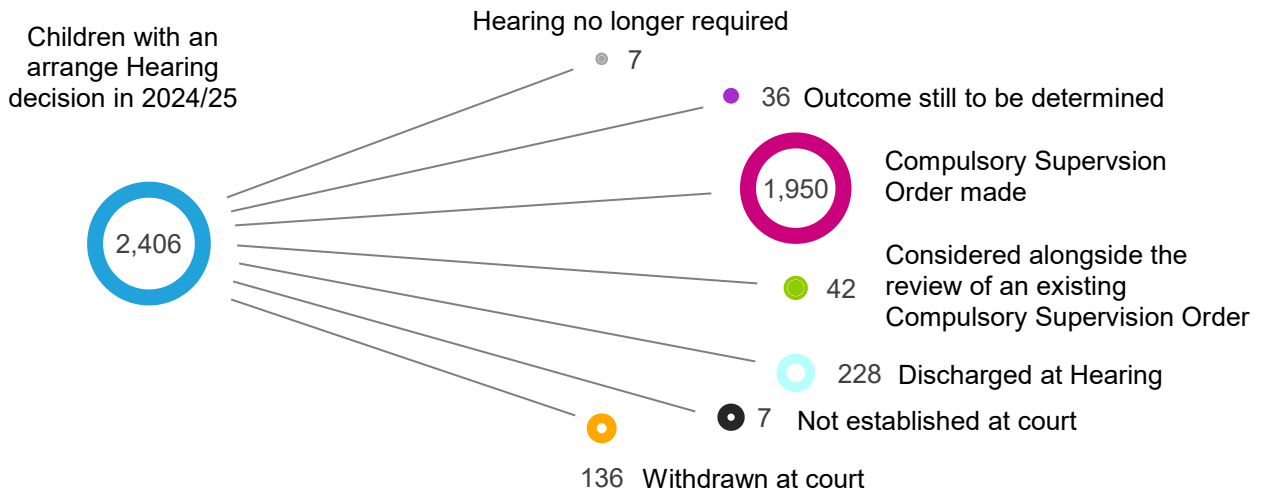
The statistics within this report cover **16,589** children within the Children's Hearings System in 2025/26. Of these children:

8,839 were referred to the Children's Reporter	2,473 had court callings
464 had Child Protection Orders	1,912 had Compulsory Supervision Orders made
8,754 had Reporter decisions	1,942 had Compulsory Supervision Orders terminated
1,696 had Pre-Hearing Panels	289 had appeals concluded or abandoned
9,267 had Children's Hearings	

Many children will be included in more than one of the splits above i.e. a child with a Compulsory Supervision Order made count will be included in that count and also the children with Children's Hearings count. The 16,589 total counts each child once.

Ground disposals at Children's Hearings

In the prior Statistical Analysis, 2024/25, 2,406 children had Reporter decisions to arrange a Children's Hearings on new grounds of referral. The visual below tracks these decisions forwards to show their outcomes. It should be noted that this is a simplified visual as it excludes any double counting and only shows the furthest point in a child's case, for instance, if there were two grounds and one was withdrawn at court and the other had a Compulsory Supervision Order made, it will only be counted as an order made.



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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.

Introduction

What do these statistics include?

This report presents the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration's (SCRA's) full statistical analysis on children involved in the Children's Hearings System between 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. This is an Official Statistics publication, and the data has been produced using sound, proven and robust methodologies.

In general, the children reported on within these statistics are aged between 0 and 15. There are however two exceptions to this:

- The age of criminal responsibility in Scotland is 12 years. Although the police cannot charge a child with committing an offence when under 12, the police may still refer the child to reporter because of concerns about the child's behaviour; and
- Children aged sixteen and seventeen 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 children, therefore age graphs within this report will always show a significant decrease between profiles for children aged under sixteen and those sixteen or over. To make this distinction more apparent, children aged sixteen and seventeen years are combined to provide an age group of 16+ years in this report.

How is this report structured?

This report is designed to follow the process by which a referral for a child 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 received by the Reporter because of concerns about them;
- Reporter investigation into the child's case including seeking relevant information from partner agencies;
- Reporter decision as to whether the child requires compulsory measures of supervision based on the information received; and
- Children's Hearing decision on whether compulsory measures of supervision are necessary (in respect of the child) to protect the child 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 during the process.

The process is complex as a child can already be subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order at the point of referral and this will be considered within the decision-making process. Compulsory measures also only last for specific time periods and as such must be reviewed. This can be seen through the breakdown of Children's Hearings on page 19.

Finally, children 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.

The Children's Hearings System during Coronavirus

While the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic is not significant on the data contained within this report (other than Pre-Hearing Panels for 2022/23 as seen on page 18) any conclusions drawn from the data presented, in terms of comparisons with years prior to the pandemic, should be treated with caution.

Children referred

This section presents information about the numbers of children referred to SCRA over the period 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 with comparisons to prior years. It looks at the reason for referral and profiles by age and sex of those children referred.

Key facts:



Children referred decreased by 9.7% from 2024/25



23.5% of children with Child Protection Orders were aged under 20 days

14

was the most common age for referral to the Reporter

Children referred to the Reporter

In 2025/26, 8,839 children in Scotland were referred to the Reporter:

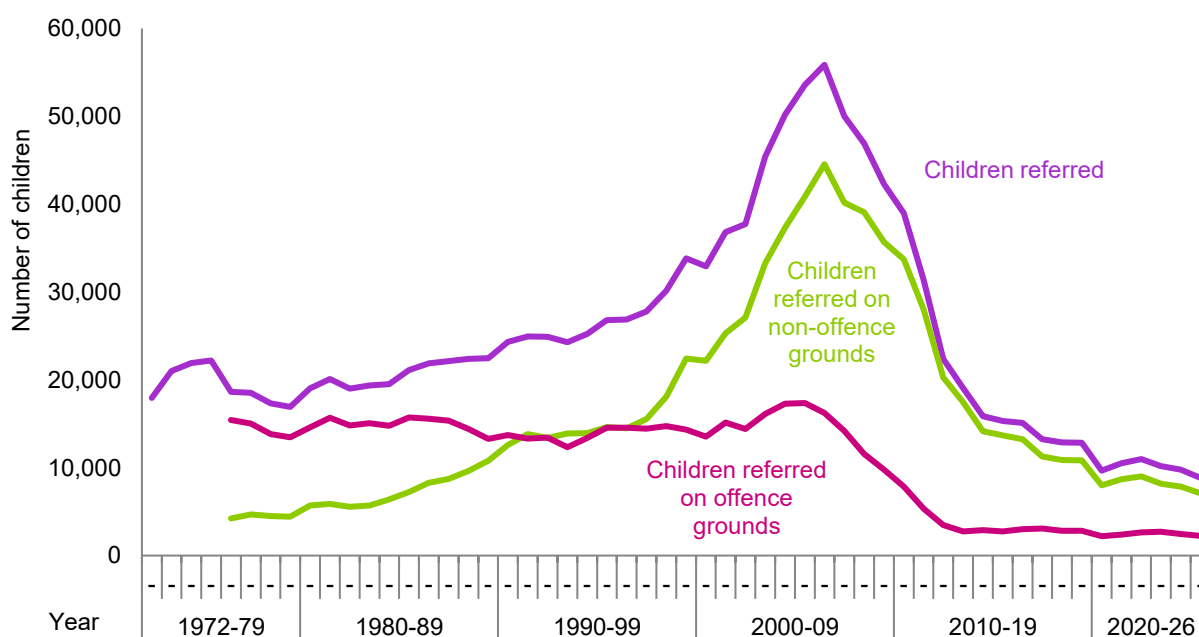
- 7,094 on non-offence grounds; and
- 2,236 on offence grounds¹.

The figure of 8,839 children referred to the Reporter in 2025/26 equates to 1.0% of all children in Scotland². Of this, 0.8% of all children were referred on non-offence grounds. 0.9% of all children aged between twelve and sixteen years were referred on offence grounds.

The number of children referred to the Reporter has decreased for the third year. This is only the third year where the number of children referred to the Reporter has been below 10,000. The other years were 2024/25 and 2020/21 which was heavily influenced by the pandemic.

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 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 referred, by year*



* Please note that offence and non-offence splits are unavailable prior to 1976.

¹ These figures include 491 children who were referred on non-offence and offence grounds.

² % of population aged under 16 years, based on mid-year estimates for 2024 from the National Records of Scotland.

The 9.7% decrease in children referred from 2024/25 levels was due to 950 fewer children being referred. There were 745 fewer children referred on non-offence grounds (a decrease of 9.5%), and 211 fewer children referred on offence grounds (a decrease of 8.6%). Please note, due to resource pressures within the Procurator Fiscal during 2025/26 there has been a delay in the marking of joint reports (which become offence referrals if the case is referred to the Reporter), therefore the number of offence referrals is lower than would be expected. Further information on joint reports can be found on page 7.

Increasing referral rates were seen in the years leading up to 2006/07 as can be seen in figure 1.1 on page 5. One of the most significant factors in this increase was police referrals for children 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 did not require help or support, rather that there was no need for it to be provided on a compulsory basis.

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

Child Protection Orders

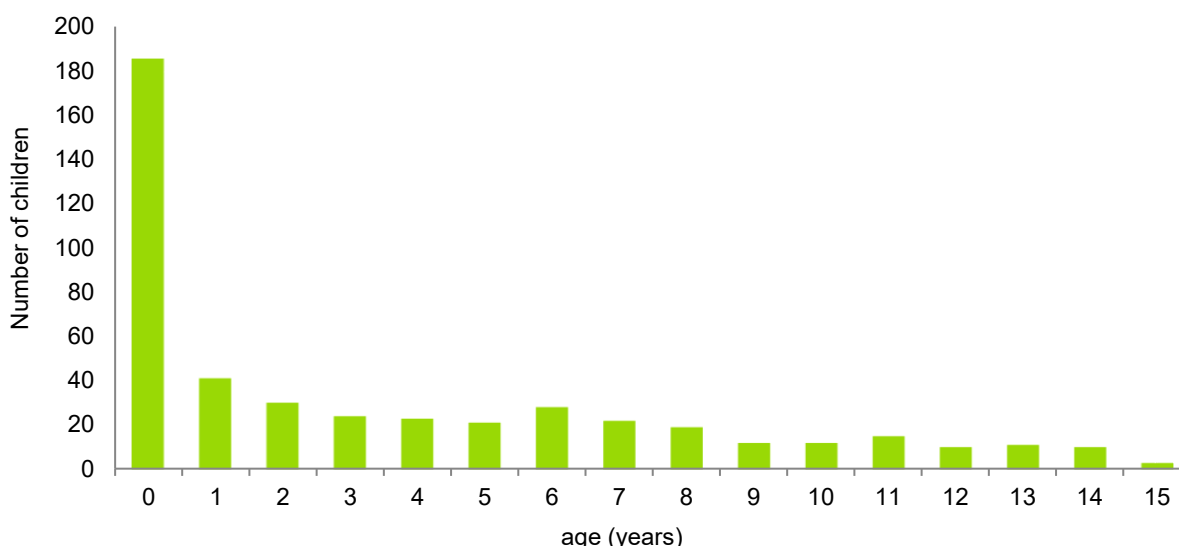
A Sheriff may grant a Child Protection Order to address emergency and/or high-risk situations where measures need to be put in place immediately to protect a child. The granting of this order requires the child to be removed to (or kept in) a place of safety away from home. For this to be considered, a child must be at risk of significant harm.

Table 1.1 Children with Child Protection Orders granted, by year

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of children	442	478	503	464

The number of children with Child Protection Orders decreased in the year (down 7.8%). 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 with Child Protection Orders granted, by age, in 2025/26



Of the 464 children with Child Protection Order referrals received in 2025/26, 109 (23.5%) were aged under 20 days at the date of receipt, 185 (39.9%) were aged under one year and 226 (48.7%) were aged under two years.

Joint reports to the Reporter and Procurator Fiscal

Where a child is alleged to have committed an offence described in the Lord Advocate's Guidelines³, 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.

For children aged under 16, only the most serious alleged offences result in joint reports. As per the note on page 4, some children aged 16 and 17 can be referred to the Reporter under certain circumstances. When the police charge these children with an alleged offence, they will usually be the subject of a joint report to both the PF and the Reporter, followed by a discussion about who will deal with the offence. In certain limited circumstances, (in terms of the Government's Early and Effective Intervention Framework) offences committed by 16 and 17 year olds may only be referred to the Reporter, but also if the offence is particularly minor, the police can decide to take no formal action or use Police Direct Measures.

Joint reports can be categorised into two distinct groups; joint reports where a child has been taken into custody by the police; and joint reports with no custody element.

There are significant issues with joint reports as we are unable to establish a robust methodology for counting these. Therefore, this data should be considered as experimental statistics rather than of official statistical quality. Please see the data quality note around joint reports on page 34.

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

Type of joint report	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Children - not in custody	1,299	1,322	1,299	1,244
Children - in custody	35	30	34	27
Total children with joint reports	1,309	1,329	1,302	1,249

In 2025/26, 1,249 children had 3,340 joint reports. Of these, 49.6% (1,655) were for children aged 16 or over while 50.4% (1,685) were for children aged under 16. Most joint reports were made while the child was not in custody, 1,244 children with 3,299 reports, (several had joint reports on more than one occasion).

Of these joint reports where the PF had made a decision, 60.6% of cases were subsequently referred to the Reporter. For a small number of joint reports, the decision can be split in that some charges will be referred to the Reporter, and some will stay with the PF. In addition, 41 joint reports were made for 27 children in custody. Of those joint reports where the PF had made a decision, 81.1% of cases were retained by the PF.

Table 1.3 Joint reports to the Reporter and PF in 2025/26, by decision and age at receipt

Type of joint report	12	13	14	15	16+	Total
Joint reports where child not in custody	76	201	412	983	1,627	3,299
Referred to Reporter	38	118	246	452	572	1,426
Retained by Procurator Fiscal	10	21	74	227	585	917
Decision pending	28	62	96	308	484	978
Joint reports where child in custody	0	0	0	13	28	41
Referred to Reporter	0	0	0	5	2	7
Retained by Procurator Fiscal	0	0	0	7	23	30
Decision pending	0	0	0	1	3	4
Total joint reports	76	201	412	996	1,655	3,340

Table 1.3 shows joint reports by age at receipt and decision. Joint report numbers generally increase by age.

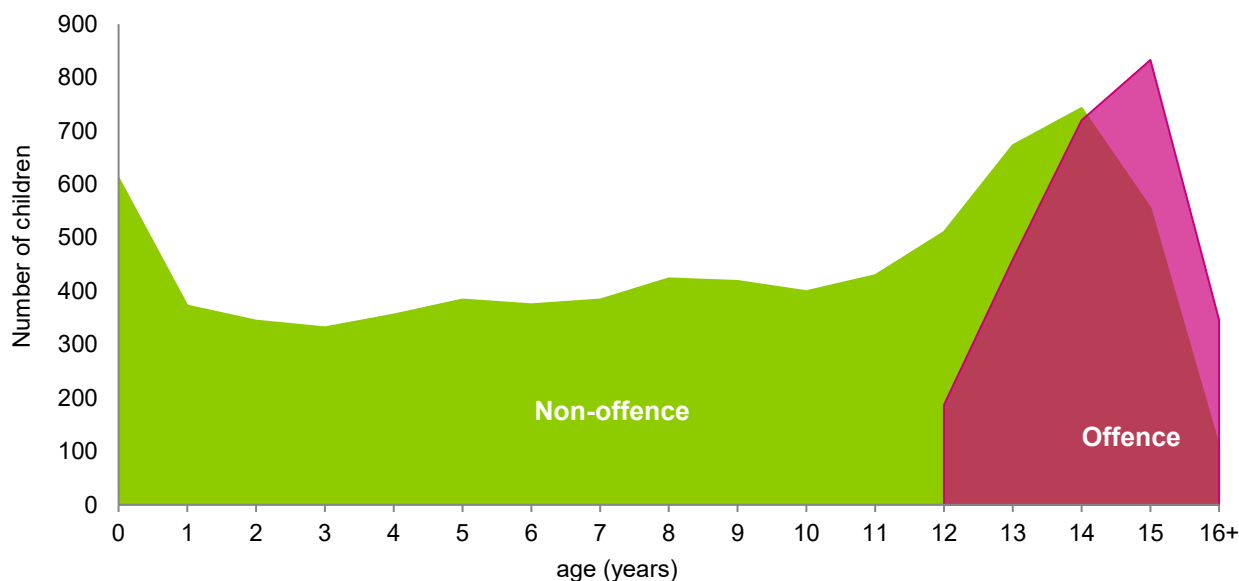
³ [Reporting to Procurator Fiscals of Offences Alleged to have been Committed by Children](#)

Age of children referred

The most common ages for children to be referred to the Reporter remain 14 and 15 years. The most common ages for children to be referred on non-offence grounds were 13 and 14 years, as shown in figure 1.3 below, with a particular increase seen between the ages of 12 and 13 years. This is in line with prior years. Children referred on offence grounds is highest for ages 14 and 15. The offence profile will look slightly different from years before 2022/23 due to the implementation of the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019. More information on this can be found on page 4.

Overall, 14 is the most common age for referral, with 1,340 children referred at this age in 2025/26.

Figure 1.3 Children referred on offence and non-offence grounds, by age, in 2025/26



Sex of children referred

The number of females referred to the Reporter decreased by 9.8% (from 4,179 to 3,768) while the number of males decreased by 9.2% (from 5,585 to 5,071). These changes occurred due to decreases for females and males referred on non-offence grounds (8.6% and 9.9% respectively) and for females and males referred for offence grounds (down by 12.4% and 7.2% respectively).

Table 1.4 Sex of children referred in 2025/26, by referral type

F = Female M = Male	Non-offence*		Offence*		All grounds	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
Number of children	3,421	3,673	528	1,708	3,768	5,071
Proportion by sex	48.2%	51.8%	23.6%	76.4%	42.6%	57.4%
Change from 2024/25	-8.6%	-9.9%	-12.4%	-7.2%	-9.8%	-9.2%

* Some children were referred on both offence and non-offence grounds. These totals count every child referred to the Reporter during the year once.

Age and sex of children referred

In line with Child Protection Orders, significant numbers of children were referred in 2025/26 before their first birthday. For the majority of children who were aged under one year, the principal concern identified in the referral related to a 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 referred, by sex and age, in 2025/26 with comparison to 2024/25

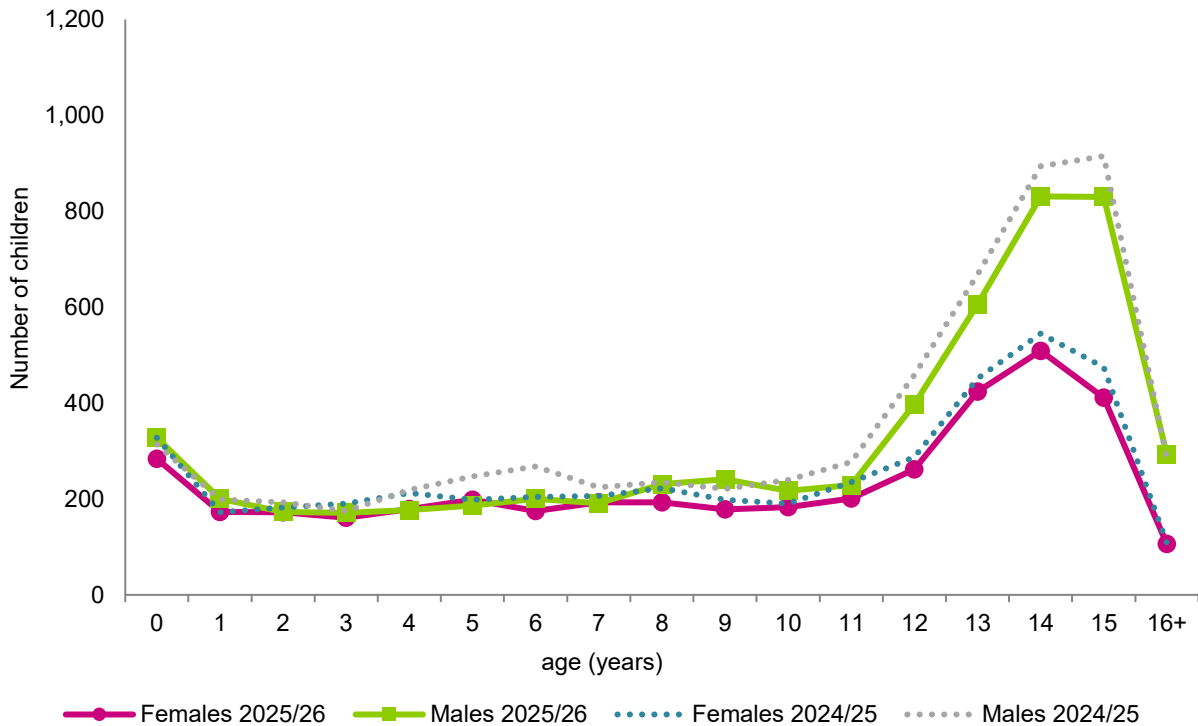


Figure 1.4, above, shows that overall, the patterns by age of males and females referred is consistent with 2024/25. For under 2s, there has been a decrease from 2024/25 for females. There were 445 females referred aged under 2 years, down 7.9% from 483 in 2024/25. For males aged under two there was an increase with 514 males referred aged under 2 years, up 3.4% from 497 in 2024/25. In general, most age groups saw decreases when comparing 2025/26 to 2024/25, overall, there is no particular pattern to the decreases seen.

Offence ground profiles

In 2025/26, 2,236 children aged between twelve and seventeen years were referred to the Reporter on offence grounds. These children were referred for 11,078 alleged offences on 5,844 referrals. The offences have been mapped to the police crime groupings⁴ to provide consistency with other publications. Please note, these groupings have been updated in 2023 by the Scottish Crime Recording Board and the data below reflects these new groupings to ensure consistency between years.

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

Police offence code group	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Non-sexual crimes of violence	3,285	3,862	3,302	3,082
Sexual crimes	542	422	383	355
Crimes of dishonesty	1,880	2,427	2,293	2,216
Damage and reckless behaviour	1,996	2,077	1,706	1,555
Crimes against society	1,381	1,529	1,608	1,305
Antisocial offences	1,881	2,062	1,678	1,421
Miscellaneous offences	257	259	228	218
Road traffic offences	480	560	780	926
Total alleged offences	11,702	13,198	11,978	11,078

Within these groupings, the most common types of alleged offences were shoplifting, threatening or abusive behaviour and assault. The Reporter has the power to change the type of alleged offence based upon information received during the course of an investigation.

Figure 1.5 shows that children with two to five alleged offences (40.4%) is the most common profile in 2025/26 followed by children with a single alleged offence in the year (37.7%). Children with six to nine alleged offences (10.1%) and ten or more alleged offences (11.7%) make up the remainder of the profile.

Figure 1.5 Number of alleged offences per child referred on offence grounds in 2025/26



⁴ Further detail on crime groupings can be found here: [Scottish Crime Recording Standard: Crime Recording and Counting Rules](#).

Victim information service

SCRA provides an information service to people affected by harmful behaviour, or offences committed by children across Scotland who are reported to SCRA.

The Principal Reporter has powers to give victims the opportunity to receive information about the outcome of offences against them by a child, whilst also protecting the child's right to confidentiality. In addition, the Principal Reporter can give a similar opportunity to victims of seriously harmful behaviour by children aged under 12.

The principles of SCRA's Victim Information Service are:

- To provide victims of offences or harmful behaviour with access to routine information about the Children's Hearings System;
- To provide specific information to victims about what has happened to the referral to the Reporter; and
- To protect the right of the child to confidentiality.

The process involves the victim of an offence or seriously harmful behaviour being identified from the police report when the child is referred to the Reporter. Victim Information Co-ordinators then write to victims at the initial stage of our investigation. On receiving this initial letter, victims can then opt in to receive further information regarding key stages of the investigation and the final decision.

Referrals to the Reporter

This section presents information about the numbers of referrals received by SCRA over the period 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 with comparisons to prior years. It looks at the types of referral, the source of referrals and whether the child was subject to compulsory measures of supervision when the referral was received.

Key facts:



Referrals received decreased by 9.9% from 2024/25



74.4% of referrals were from the police



of referrals received were for children not subject to an order

Referrals received

In 2025/26, 15,182 referrals were received by the Reporter, this was a 9.9% decrease from 2024/25 levels. Non-offence referrals decreased by 10.0% to 9,338 while offence referrals decreased by 9.6% to 5,844. The changes seen in non-offence and offence referrals are mainly due to changes in volumes from the police who as noted above are the main source of referrals to SCRA.

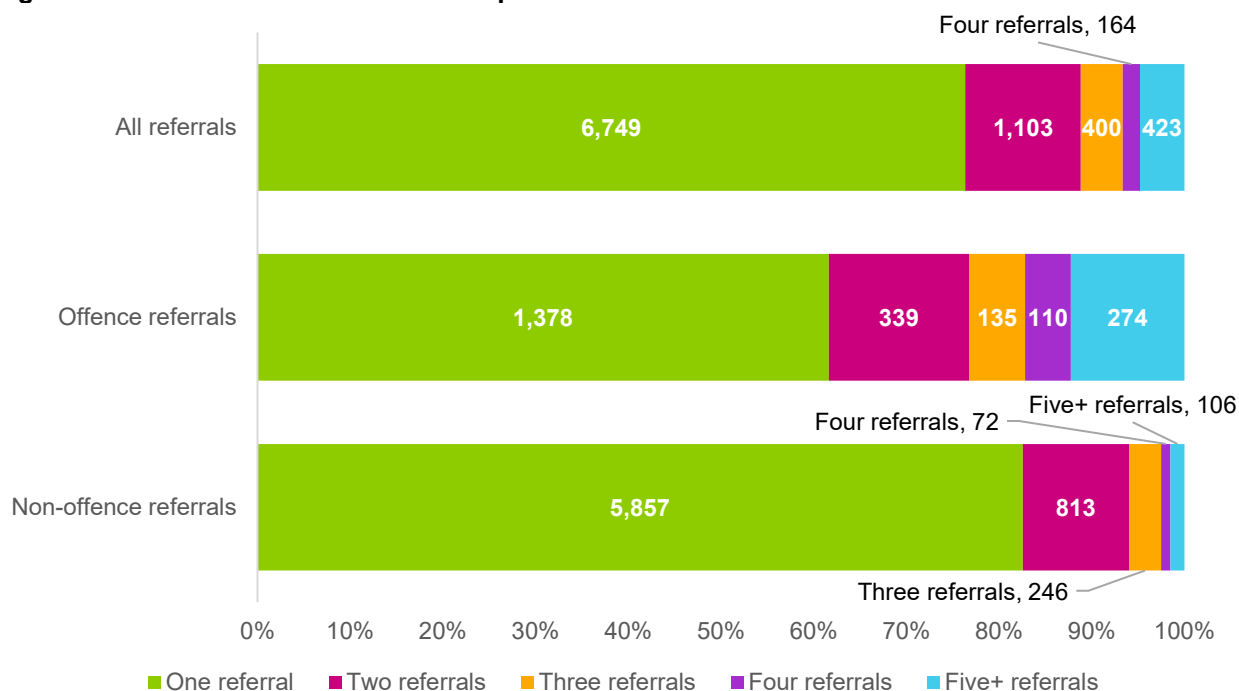
Referrals received have decreased for a third consecutive year. Full details of referral rates alongside other SCRA statistics over time can be accessed through SCRA's [Online Statistical Dashboard](#).

Table 2.1 Numbers of referrals received, by type and year

Type of referral	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Offence	6,498	7,615	6,466	5,844
Non-offence	13,406	11,847	10,381	9,338
Total referrals	19,904	19,462	16,847	15,182

Referrals per child varies depending on the type of referral. For non-offence referrals, 82.6% had a single referral in the year, this compares with 61.6% of children referred on offence grounds having a single offence referral in the year. Overall, most children (76.4%) were referred only once in the year, with 4.8% referred five or more times. The number of referrals received per child in 2025/26 is shown in Figure 2.1.

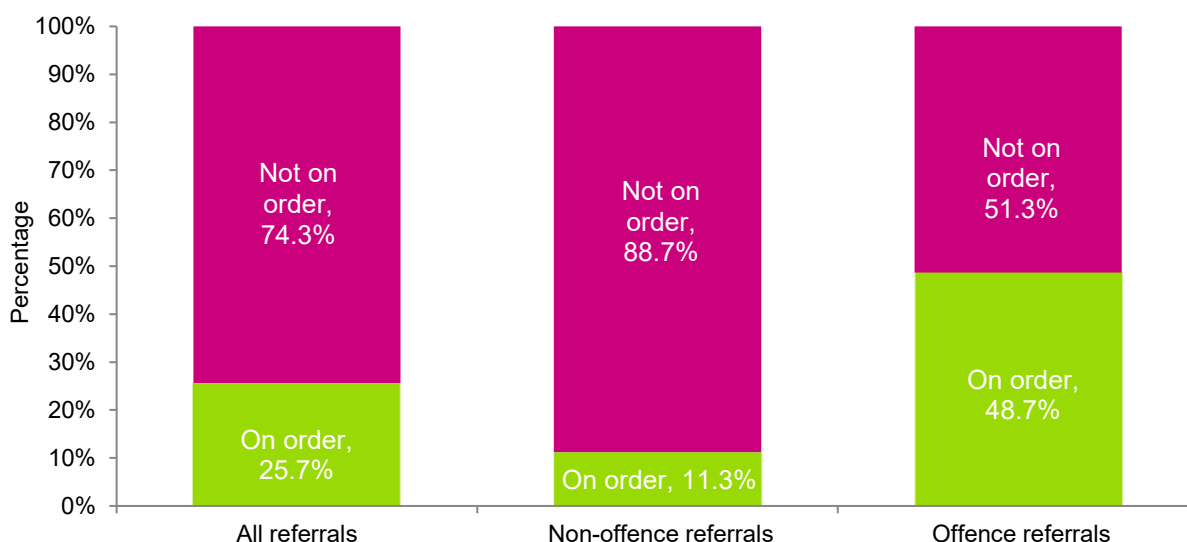
Figure 2.1 Number of referrals received per child in 2025/26



Referrals received by order status

In most cases, the child was not subject to an order at the point of referral (either a Compulsory Supervision Order, or, for a small number of children where grounds are currently at hearings or court, an Interim Compulsory Supervision Order), see Figure 2.2. Overall, 25.7% of referrals received (3,898) were for children subject to orders at the point of referral. This was the case for 11.3% of non-offence referrals (1,051) and 48.7% of offence referrals (2,847). This reflects Early and Effective Intervention guidance that says that there is a presumption that where the police charge a child on a Compulsory Supervision Order with an offence, they will refer the child to the Reporter.

Figure 2.2 Referrals received by order status at receipt in 2025/26

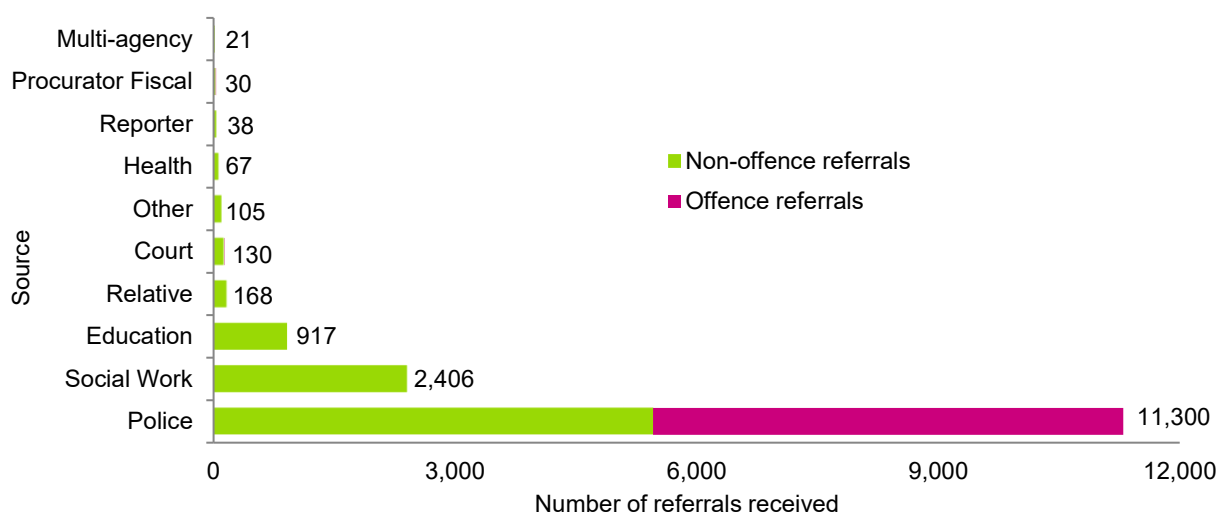


Males were more likely to be subject to an order at the point of receipt of a referral (26.9%) than females (23.9%). The difference is mainly because a greater proportion of referrals for males are on offence grounds than for females; and children referred on offence grounds are more likely to be subject to an order at the receipt of the referral than is the case for non-offence referrals.

Source of referrals

The police are the main source of referrals, comprising 74.4% of all referrals to the Reporter in 2025/26 - 99.99% of all offence referrals and 58.4% of all non-offence referrals. This was a decrease of 2.8 percentage points in the proportion of non-offence referrals from the police from last year.

Figure 2.3 Referrals received by source in 2025/26



Reporter decisions on children referred

This section presents information about the investigations Reporters within SCRA undertake with partner agencies to make decisions on children’s cases along with the grounds of referral and the decisions which have been made over the period 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026.

Key facts:

 **26%**

of children had a Reporter decision to arrange a Hearing

‘Compulsory Supervision Order not necessary and refer to local authority’

was the most common Reporter decision with 34% of children with Reporter decisions having this decision in the year.

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 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 information requests by the Reporter, linked to investigations, by receiving agency

Agency	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Social Work	6,151	6,182	5,216	4,976
Education	1,812	1,602	1,389	1,206
Health	426	431	378	302
Other	31	25	51	9
Total requests	8,420	8,240	7,034	6,493

Reports are now linked to investigations, so the data above only includes those report requests within an investigation. Therefore, the numbers are not comparable with data published prior to 2021/22 where many report requests were linked to reviews of Compulsory Supervision Orders.

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 referred, to a comprehensive assessment of the child’s situation that would involve social work contacting the family as well as any other agencies involved in the child’s upbringing.

In many areas the GIRFEC approach means that where the Reporter requests a comprehensive report, it is always a multi-agency assessment that is provided through social work, a practice which significantly impacts the number of single agency assessments received.

Education authorities can be asked by the Reporter to provide information about a child’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 family of particular health issues. The information that health visitors provide can indicate if the child is failing to thrive (through growth centiles and developmental measures).

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. Following the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law⁵ the child is given the opportunity to express a view on the decision the Reporter may make, unless there is a reason for not writing to the child.

⁵ UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.

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 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'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 from the local authority.

Reporters have other options available to them to find the right help for children. The other decisions that a Reporter may make in relation to a referred child include asking the local authority to provide voluntary advice, guidance and assistance to the child, and not arranging a Children's Hearing as the child is already subject to a compulsory order that is sufficient to address the child's needs. In addition, the Reporter will decide not to arrange a Children's Hearing if there is insufficient evidence of any ground or if the Children's Hearing would not have jurisdiction over the child.

Table 3.2 Number of children with Reporter decisions in 2025/26*, by decision

Reporter decision	Non-offence	Offence	Total
Arrange a Children's Hearing (on new grounds)	2,226	33	2,251
No Hearing – Compulsory Supervision Order not necessary	1,593	814	2,371
No Hearing - Compulsory Supervision Order not necessary and refer to LA	2,336	699	2,952
No Hearing - Current order/measures sufficient	587	792	1,209
No Hearing - Insufficient evidence	579	83	661
No Hearing - Insufficient evidence and refer to LA	207	14	219
No jurisdiction	29	28	55
Total	7,018	2,222	8,754

* Data in this table relates to cases decided in 2025/26 as opposed to referrals received in 2025/26.

** The totals do not equal the sums as children can be referred more than once in the year and may have multiple Reporter decisions. The totals count each child once.

In 2025/26, 25.7% of children (2,251) with cases decided had a Reporter decision to arrange a Children's Hearing on at least one referral. The most common decision was that a Compulsory Supervision Order was not necessary and to refer the child to the local authority (2,952 children (33.7%)). In many cases, for children who are referred for offending where the Reporter decides compulsory intervention is necessary, the Reporter adds an additional non-offence referral, and it is this which is taken to the Children's Hearing.

Grounds assigned to referrals

As noted above, when making a final decision in relation to a referral, the Reporter will select the ground which reflects the principal concern(s) about the child. These grounds are set out in section 67(2) of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 and are summarised in Table 3.3. The table also includes splits to show whether children were subject to an order (either a Compulsory Supervision Order or an Interim Compulsory Supervision Order) at the point of referral. This table counts children with referrals decided in 2025/26. Please note, if the Reporter decides that no ground applies, a ground doesn't have to be added. Table 3.3 shows the numbers of children with no grounds added.

'Lack of parental care' was the most common ground assigned by Reporters to children referred followed by 'offence', 'close connection with person who has carried out domestic abuse' and 'child's conduct harmful to self or others'.

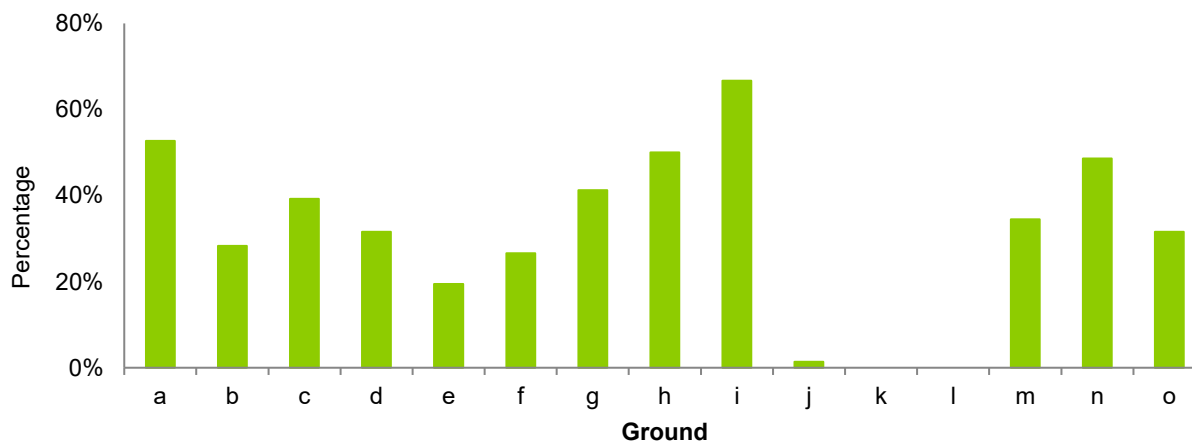
Table 3.3 Number of children with Reporter decisions in 2025/26, by section 67 ground and order status at the point of referral

Section 67 ground	On order	Not on order	Total
(a) Lack of parental care	164	2,608	2,732
(b) Victim of a Schedule 1 offence	32	406	436
(c) Close connection with a Schedule 1 offender	13	232	245
(d) Same household as a child victim of Schedule 1 offender	8	57	65
(e) Exposure to persons whose conduct likely to be harmful to child	43	344	385
(f) Close connection with a person who has carried out domestic abuse	91	1,245	1,325
(g) Close connection with Sexual Offences Act offender - Parts 1, 4 & 5	6	63	69
(h) Accommodated and special measures needed	0	20	20
(i) Permanence order and special measures needed	0	3	3
(j) Offence	689	1,628	2,222
(k) Misuse of alcohol	1	1	2
(l) Misuse of a drug	2	3	5
(m) Child's conduct harmful to self or others	194	690	867
(n) Beyond control of a relevant person	0	37	37
(o) Failure to attend school without reasonable excuse	10	706	716
(p) Pressure to enter into civil partnership (or same household as such a child)	0	0	0
(q) Forced to marry (or same household as such a child)	0	0	0
No grounds apply	92	1,016	1,108
Total children*	1,101	7,867	8,754

* A child may be referred to the Reporter more than once in the year on the same and/or different grounds and may be on an order at the point of referral at one time and not on an order at another. These totals count every child referred to the Reporter during the year once.

Different factors are considered by the Reporter when deciding whether to arrange a grounds Hearing for a child already subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order as opposed to those children not on an order. The percentage of children with arrange Hearing decisions by assigned ground where the child was not subject to an order is shown in Figure 3.1. Only very low numbers of children who are already on orders will have arrange Hearing decisions on new grounds, so these are excluded from the graph.

Figure 3.1 Percentage of children with a Reporter decision to arrange Hearing by ground in 2025/26 (where the child was not already subject to an order)



Non-offence ground profiles

The average ages of children referred on non-offence grounds are outlined below based on their age at referral receipt. The Reporter identifies the appropriate ground when making a final decision, to reflect the principal concern about the child’s welfare. Grounds codes (p) and (q) are excluded due to low or zero counts. The grounds codes are described in full in Table 3.3 on page 16.

Figure 3.2 Average age of children with Reporter decisions on non-offence grounds in 2025/26

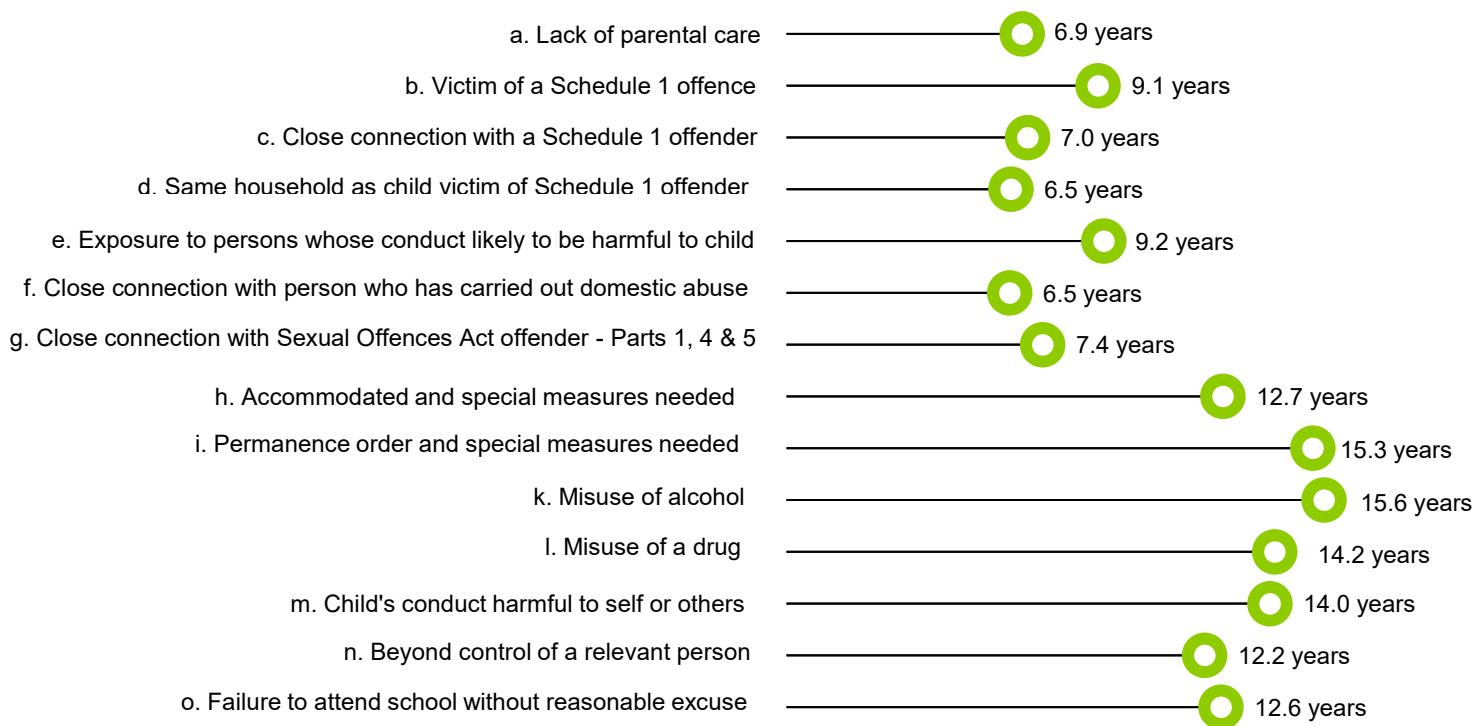


Figure 3.2 shows that in general, a – g grounds assigned by the Reporter have a younger average age and for other non-offence grounds the average age tends to be older.

For the most common ground assigned, lack of parental care, children 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 (377). This was 13.8% of the children with this ground assigned.

The number of children with ‘f’ (‘close connection with person who has carried out domestic abuse’) grounds assigned, again generally decreased with age. Very young children were more likely to have this ground assigned, with more referred in the first year of their life than any other age (165). This was 12.5% of children with this ground assigned.

Other grounds assigned, such as ‘victim of Schedule 1 offence’, and ‘exposure to persons whose conduct is likely to be harmful to child’ grounds were common throughout the childhood years.

Older children were more likely to have grounds of ‘child’s conduct harmful to self or others’ and ‘not attending school’ grounds assigned. The most common age at referral for children with these grounds assigned were 15 and 14 respectively.

Low numbers around drug and alcohol and beyond control referrals makes it difficult to draw conclusions from those grounds of referral in terms of age.

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 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 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 decreased by 2.7%
From 2024/25



Children’s Hearings increased by 0.3%
from 2024/25



92 % 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:

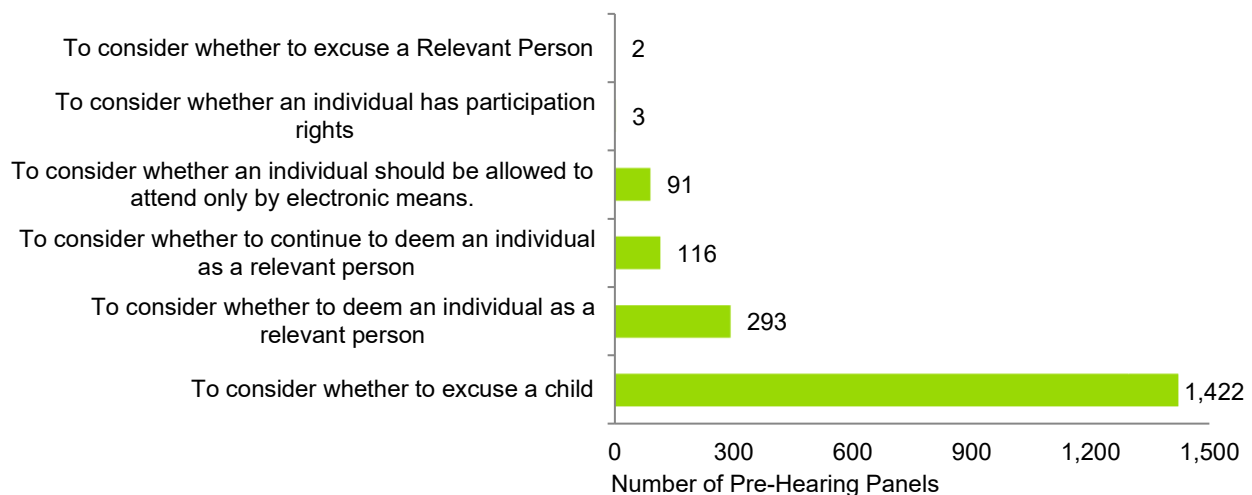
- whether to deem/und deem an individual as a relevant person;
- whether to excuse a child or relevant person from the obligation to attend the Children’s Hearing;
- whether an individual has participation rights; and
- whether an individual should be allowed to attend only by electronic means.

The vast majority of Pre-Hearing Panels (79.3%) were convened to consider excusing a child. Pre-pandemic, this figure was around 87%. Under the Coronavirus Act provisions, Hearings could proceed without individuals being present, this part of the legislation was only repealed on 30th September 2022, so the partial year is reflected within the 2022/23 data in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Pre-Hearing Panels held, by year

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of Pre-Hearing Panels	963	1,767	1,843	1,793

Figure 4.1 Pre-Hearing Panels held, by reason* in 2025/26



* Children 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 2025/26, 1,793 Pre-Hearing Panels were held for 1,696 children, this is a 2.7% decrease from the previous year. Prior to the pandemic, Pre-Hearing Panel numbers were between 3,800 to 3,900 so current volumes are still significantly lower than they were historically. Figure 4.1 will not fully reflect the total number of decisions made in each category as Pre-Hearing Panel matters can also be considered at the start of a child’s Hearing. This option of considering Pre-Hearing Panel matters at the start of a Children’s Hearing has been much more common during and after the pandemic and associated restrictions.

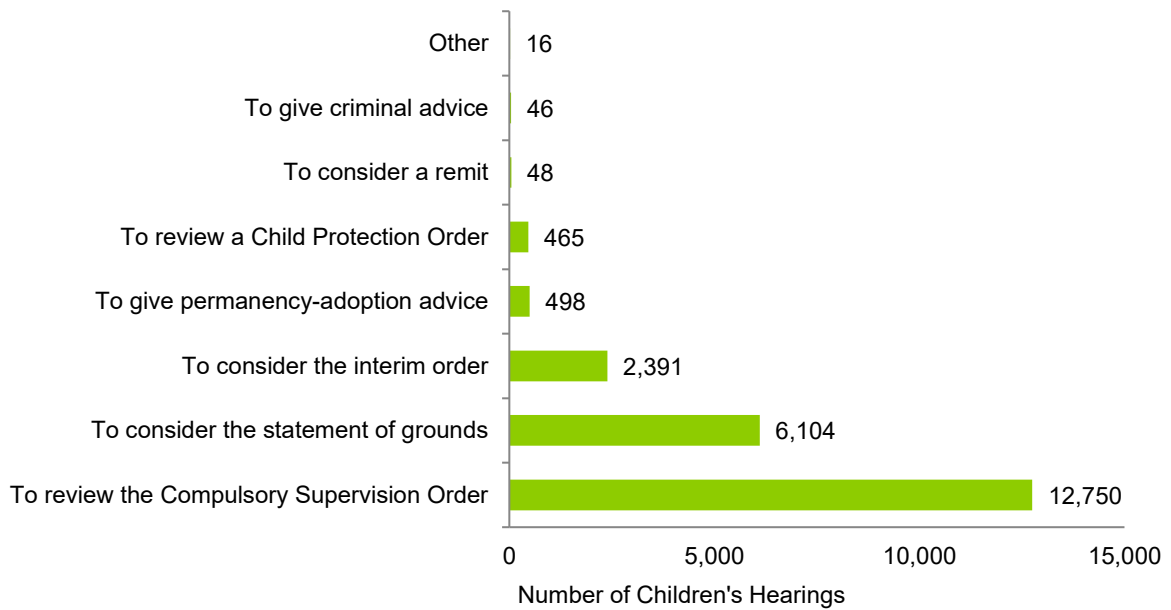
Children's Hearings held

Children's Hearings decide whether compulsory measures of supervision are necessary (in respect of the child) to provide protection, support or guidance. 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 to arrange a Hearing for the child to consider whether compulsory measures of supervision are required.

Table 4.2 Children’s Hearings held, by year

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of Children’s Hearings held	22,341	21,613	21,313	21,369

Figure 4.2 Considerations by Children’s Hearings* in 2025/26



* Children can have more than one reason considered at a single Children’s Hearing. The totals in Table 4.2 count each Hearing once. Some Children’s Hearings may also consider Pre-Hearing Panel matters such as the deeming of relevant persons.

In 2025/26, 21,369 Children’s Hearings were held for 9,267 children. This was a 0.3% increase from 2024/25. The main reasons for the increase in the number of Children’s Hearings were due to more grounds Hearings as well as a slowing down in the decreases in review Hearings being required as the number of Compulsory Supervision Orders stabilises (see page 25). In addition, 2025/26 saw an increase in permanency-adoption advice Hearings (up 16.4%). Review Hearings are the most common type of Hearing, with 59.7% of Hearings having this as a purpose in the year. The next most common purpose was to consider the statement of grounds, 28.6%, followed by considering the interim order, 11.2%.

Of the grounds Hearings, 2,173 had substantive (final) decisions, this means that either a Compulsory Supervision Order was made, the grounds were considered alongside a review of an existing Compulsory Supervision Order, or the grounds were discharged by the Hearing. More information about these can be found on page 24.

The 21,369 Children’s Hearings were part of 16,165 Hearing slots in 8,560 Hearing sessions. A session is a block of time, usually the morning or afternoon, which panel members are allocated to for the purposes of making legal decisions for children. A slot is a specific time period within that, allocated to one or more children within a family and a Hearing is a count of each individual child within that slot.

Of the children with Children’s Hearings in the year, 45.5% had a single Hearing, with 10.9% having five or more Hearings. In terms of child attendance, we have recorded that 4,187 children (45.2%) attended at least one Hearing in the year (excluding those Hearings with no attendance data) this was down 1.9pp from 2024/25. Children’s Hearings can be held physically, with all attendees in the room, virtually, with everyone joining online or a combination of the two. In 2025/26, 60.3% of Hearings were solely physical and 12.3% being solely virtual and the remaining 27.3% a combination of physical and virtual.

Children’s Hearings deferred

In most Children’s Hearings, Panel Members can defer (postpone) the hearing until a later date if required. Overall, 25.3% of Children’s Hearings (5,414) were deferred for 2,901 children, this was up 2.3pp on 2024/25. SCRA records the main reason for deferral and the most common reasons recorded in 2025/26 are shown in Table 4.3 below. Thirty-five deferred Hearings had no reason recorded, 0.6% of all deferred Hearings. These are excluded from the proportions below but are included in the overall deferral counts.

Table 4.3 Five most common deferral reasons recorded in 2025/26

Deferral reason	Count	Proportion of deferrals
For attendance of relevant person	1,098	20.4%
Further information, report or update required including placement, in order to make decision	897	16.7%
Social work report not submitted in time	640	11.9%
For safeguarder appointment	511	9.5%
Other report not submitted in time (including safeguarder report)	410	7.6%

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 has not attended and has not been excused in advance at a Pre-Hearing Panel, or if a relevant person has not attended. In 2025/26, there were 381 such decisions for 335 children. This was 41 fewer Children’s Hearings than in 2024/25 (down 9.7%).

Child Protection Orders

Many short-term decisions made by Children’s Hearings will be to address emergency and/or high-risk situations where measures must be put in place to provide immediate protection, support or guidance. These may include Children’s Hearings arranged as a result of the Sheriff granting a Child Protection Order.

In 2025/26, Children’s Hearings considered the cases of 456 children with Child Protection Orders under sections 45 or 46 of the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. Of these, 258 Child Protection Orders were continued, 204 were continued and varied and two were terminated (eight children had more than one CPO considered at a Children’s Hearing in the year).

Safeguarder appointments

A Children’s Hearing must consider whether to appoint a Safeguarder to provide them with a report that will help with making a decision in respect of the child. In 2025/26, there were 916 decisions to appoint a Safeguarder at Children’s Hearings and Pre-Hearing Panels, 108 more than in 2024/25 (up 13.4%).

Interim orders

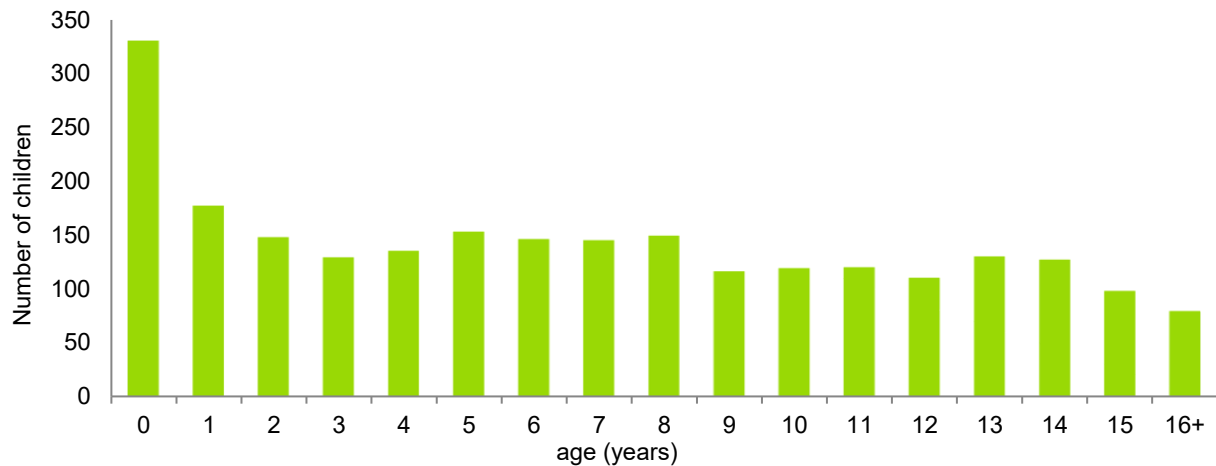
Interim orders in the form of Interim Compulsory Supervision Orders can be used to protect the child whilst grounds for referral are in the process of being determined at proof. Interim Variations of Compulsory Supervision Orders can also be made which can change the measures attached to a current Compulsory Supervision Order. Children’s Hearings made, varied, or continued 5,981 interim orders as defined under sections 86 and 140 of the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 for 2,139 children in 2025/26.

Table 4.4 Children with interim orders, by year

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of children	2,064	2,076	2,058	2,139

Interim orders numbers are highest for children aged under one but are also common for all ages. Eighty-one more children had interim orders made by Children’s Hearings than was the case in 2024/25 (up 3.9%).

Figure 4.3 Children with interim orders made by Children's Hearings, by age, in 2025/26



Non-disclosure requests

A non-disclosure request may be made by any person. The request must specify what information within the Children's Hearing (or Pre-Hearing Panel) papers is to be withheld from whom, and why. The Reporter must withhold the specified information from the specified individual and refer the request to the Children's Hearing (or Pre-Hearing Panel). The Children's Hearing (or Pre-Hearing Panel) will decide whether to agree to the request. In 2025/26, there were 330 Children's Hearings or Pre-Hearing Panels which considered non-disclosure requests (103 more than 2024/25, up 45.4%).

Measures and directions

Compulsory Supervision Orders and Interim Compulsory Supervision Orders must specify which local authority is the implementation authority and must include at least one of the measures listed in section 83(2) of the Act.

In 2025/26, a total of 11,314 Children's Hearings made a decision which included in the order a contact direction regulating contact between the child and a specified person or class of persons. These directions may include frequency and duration of contact, and whether it is to be supervised by another person. 9,820 of the 11,314 Children's Hearings included such a direction. In addition, 3,491 included a direction that the child should have no contact with a specified person or persons (1,997 Children's Hearings had both types of decision).

Other measures made by Children's Hearings are as follows:

- 10,126 made a decision which included a measure requiring the child to reside at a specified place;
- 1,971 made a decision which included a measure requiring the child to reside at a place of safety away from the place they predominantly reside (for interim orders only);
- 2,796 made a decision which included the measure that the implementation authority must provide appropriate support and supervision to the child;
- 956 included a measure that the child must comply with another specified condition; and
- 471 included a measure that the implementation authority carry out specified duties.

Statement of grounds

Where the Reporter arranges a grounds hearing for a child, the Children's Hearing can only consider whether compulsory measures are required for the that child if the statement of grounds is accepted and understood by the child and any relevant persons.

If the child 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 is unable to understand the grounds, the Children's Hearing may direct the Reporter to apply to the Sheriff to determine whether the statement of grounds for referral is established (sections 93 and 94 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011).

In 2025/26, 2,283 children had statements of grounds considered by a Children's Hearing. For 1,935 of these children, the Children’s Hearing directed the Reporter to apply to the Sheriff to determine whether the ground for referral is established on at least one occasion in the year (a small number of children can have more than one grounds statement in a year).

Applications to the Sheriff for proof

Overall, 2,046 applications were determined for 2,022 children in 2025/26 and 92.1% 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 4.5 Applications to the Sheriff for proof determined, by year

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of applications determined	1,976	2,001	1,925	2,046

The number of concluded applications for proof increased by 6.3% from the previous year. Applications for proof may require several callings (court dates) before the application is determined.

Table 4.6 Average working days for proofs to be determined, by year

	0-19	20-39	40-59	60-79	80-99	100+
2025/26	402	364	400	317	195	368
2024/25	421	391	367	295	140	311
2023/24	443	403	316	257	169	413

The working day profiles for proof applications to be determined from the first to the final court calling dates are shown in the table above. The Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Act was passed on the 15th May 2026. It includes a provision about timescales for proof applications to be determined; they will have to be determined no later than 90 days after the date of application, unless the sheriff grants an extension of the time. While this data predates the Act, 48.5% of proof applications determined in 2025/26 were within 90 days.

Table 4.7 Number of callings for proofs to be determined, by year

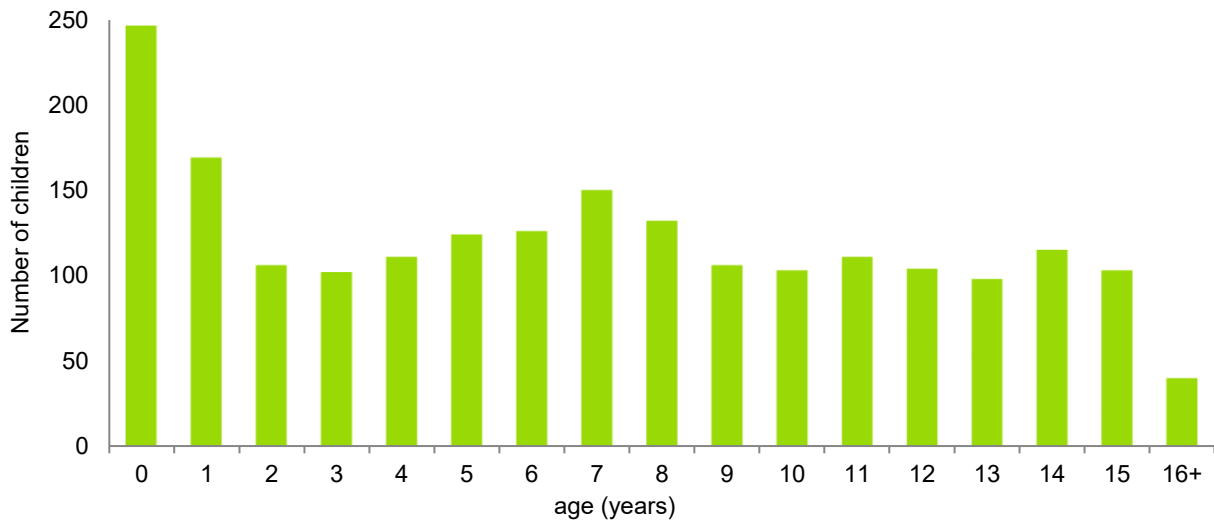
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
2025/26	258	302	405	348	255	153	117	66	43	99
2024/25	279	323	327	335	262	160	85	56	25	73
2023/24	278	338	335	293	282	152	134	54	35	100

The number of court callings for proofs to be determined are profiled in table 4.7 above. Tables 4.6 and 4.7 show that in many cases, proofs can be determined within one or two callings and within 40 working days, but a significant number can take a longer time and take multiple callings.

Including applications not yet determined, there were 8,607 callings recorded for 2,473 children in 2025/26. This was a 4.7% increase in callings (384 more than 2024/25). 173 children were recorded as having attended at least one court calling in the year, this was a decrease of 12 (down 6.5%) from 2024/25.

As with interim orders and Child Protection Orders, numbers of proof applications determined are highest for children aged under one. The age at determination of the application for children is shown in Figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4 Children with applications determined, by age, in 2025/26



Applications to the Sheriff to consider interim orders

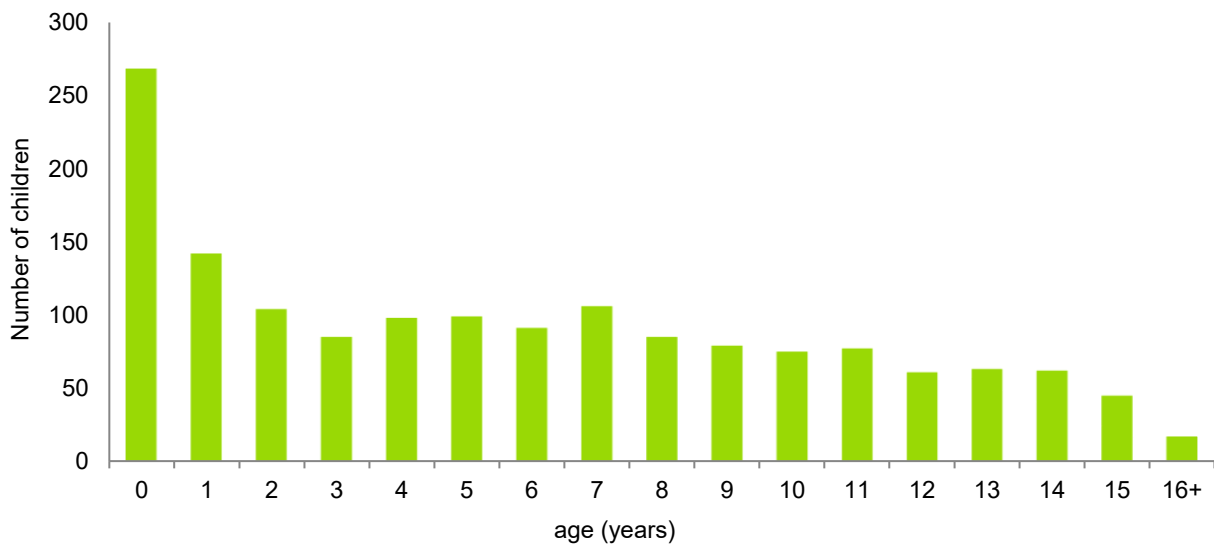
Interim orders in the form of Interim Compulsory Supervision Orders can be used to protect the child whilst grounds for referral are in the process of being determined at proof. As with interim orders issued by Children’s Hearings, numbers are highest for children aged under one but are also common for all ages.

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 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. Sheriffs made, varied, or continued 5,764 interim orders in 2025/26 for 1,348 children. This is an 17.3% increase in interim orders and an 8.4% increase in children.

Table 4.8 Children with interim order made by Sheriffs, by year

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of children	1,232	1,244	1,244	1,348

Figure 4.5 Children with interim orders made by Sheriffs, by age, in 2025/26



Compulsory Measures of Supervision

This section presents information about Children’s Hearings decisions and Compulsory Supervision Orders in force in 2025/26. It also covers the number of secure authorisations, movement restriction conditions and non-disclosure measures put in place by Children’s Hearings in 2025/26 with comparisons to previous years.

Key facts:



Compulsory Supervision Orders have decreased for the sixteenth consecutive year

14 and 15 years are the most common ages for children to have Compulsory Supervision Orders

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 2025/26, 1,912 children had a new Compulsory Supervision Order made. This includes orders made as a result of new grounds of referral 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 with Children’s Hearings decisions on grounds in 2025/26

Children’s Hearing decision	Non-offence	Offence	S49 Remit	Total
Grounds accepted/established and new Compulsory Supervision Order made	1,896	14	8	1,912
Grounds accepted/established and considered in review of existing Compulsory Supervision Order	35	8	19	62
Grounds discharged	220	6	10	236
Total*	2,144	28	37	2,202

* The totals do not equal the sums as children 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 once.

Figure 5.1 Number of children with Children’s Hearings decisions on grounds, by age, in 2025/26

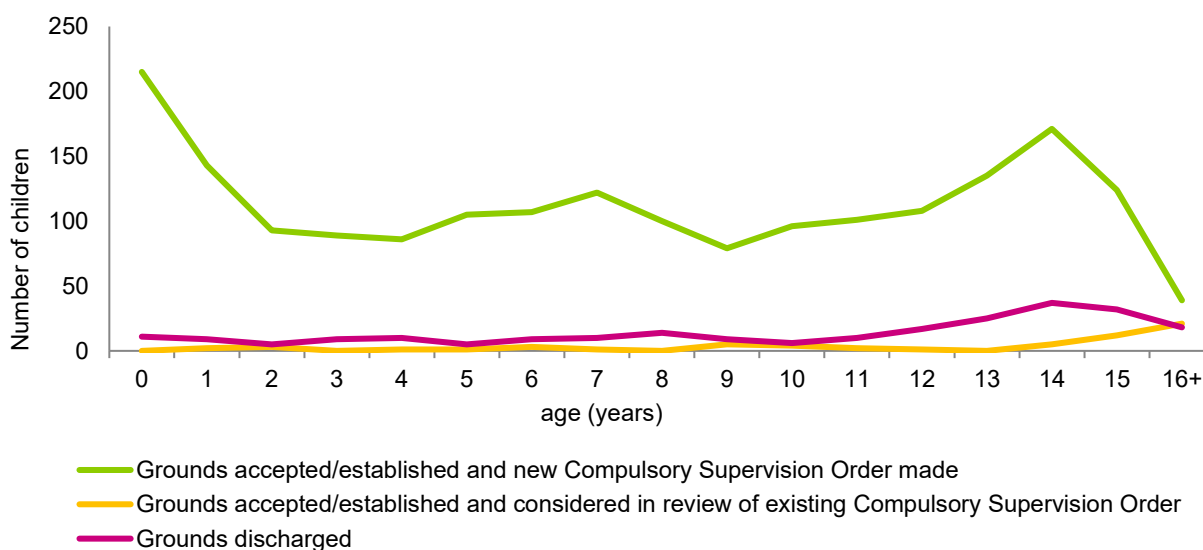


Figure 5.1 shows the most common age for CSOs to be made is for under 1s, the numbers then remain consistent across the childhood years before having another peak at 14 years. Grounds discharged remain low until ages 12 and above when they increase slightly. For those considered in review of an existing Compulsory Supervision Order, volumes are low until children reach age 15.

Table 5.2 Number of children with Children’s Hearings decisions on grounds, by year

Children’s Hearing decision	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Grounds accepted/established and new Compulsory Supervision Order made	1,897	1,935	1,853	1,912
Grounds accepted/established and considered in review of existing Compulsory Supervision Order	112	74	62	62
Grounds discharged	279	247	231	236
Total*	2,255	2,238	2,126	2,202

* The totals do not equal the sums as children 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 once.

Children subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders

At 31 March 2026, 6,301 children were subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders. This is 0.7%⁶ of all children in Scotland. The number of children subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders has decreased for a sixteenth consecutive year. The 6,301 children are 54 fewer than the prior year-end, a decrease of 0.8%. This is the lowest annual decrease since Compulsory Supervision Orders started to drop in 2010/11.

For most children subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders, the reasons which they came into the Children’s Hearings’ System was as a result of non-offence referrals. Of the 6,301 children subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order as at the 31st March 2026, 87.1% have only ever been referred on non-offence grounds.

Table 5.3 Number of children with Compulsory Supervision Orders in place at 31 March, by year

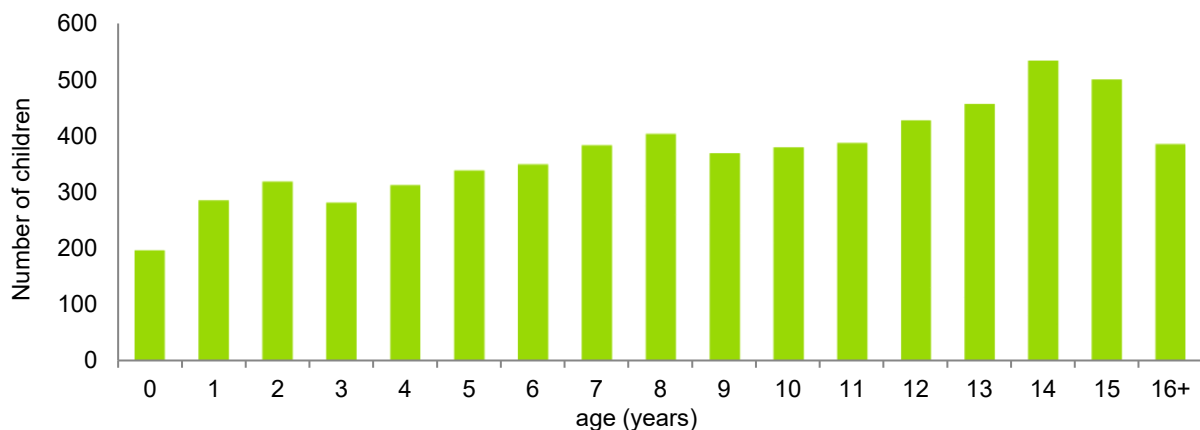
	2023	2024	2025	2026
Number of Compulsory Supervision Orders in force	6,789	6,490	6,355	6,301

Of the 6,301 children subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders at the year-end, 74.3% (4,681) had a condition of residence specifying where or who the child must reside with while 25.7% (1,620) had no condition of residence.

Compulsory Supervision Orders by age

The most common ages of children subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders continue to be 14 and 15 years. Figure 5.2 shows the number of Compulsory Supervision Orders by age at the start of the current order.

Figure 5.2 Children with Compulsory Supervision Orders in force, by age at 31st March 2026



⁶ % of population aged under 16 years, based on mid-year estimates for 2024 from the National Records of Scotland.

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 5.4. This shows that the most common length of time to be subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order is under 1 year.

The impact of the pandemic and the low number of orders made in 2020/21 can be seen in the low proportion of orders in place for 2-3 years at 31st March 2023, 3-4 years at 31st March 2024, 4-5 years at 31st March 2025 and 5+ years at 31st March 2026. Children may also have been subject to an interim order prior to the Compulsory Supervision Order being made, the length of order below though counts from the first Compulsory Supervision Order made date in the sequence.

Table 5.4 Number of children with Compulsory Supervision Orders in place at 31 March each year, by length of order

Length of Compulsory Supervision Order	2023	2024	2025	2026
Under 1 year	26.8%	28.6%	27.8%	29.1%
1 – 2 years	21.4%	20.8%	22.1%	20.7%
2 – 3 years	9.4%	15.2%	13.8%	15.3%
3 – 4 years	12.4%	6.2%	10.5%	9.3%
4 – 5 years	9.1%	8.5%	4.6%	7.0%
5+ years	20.9%	20.8%	21.3%	18.6%
Total	6,789	6,490	6,355	6,301

Compulsory Supervision Order review decisions

For children to remain subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders, the orders must be reviewed at least once annually. There are three substantive decisions which can be made at the Children's Hearing which reviews the order:

- Continued - which means the order will continue with no variation to any measures required;
- Continued and varied - which means the order will continue but with a variation to the current measures, for instance, changes around contact; and
- Varied - which means that the current order has a variation to the measures but the expiry date of the order remains unchanged.

Review Hearings can also have an interim continuation of the order issued, be deferred or the order can be terminated (see page 30 for more information).

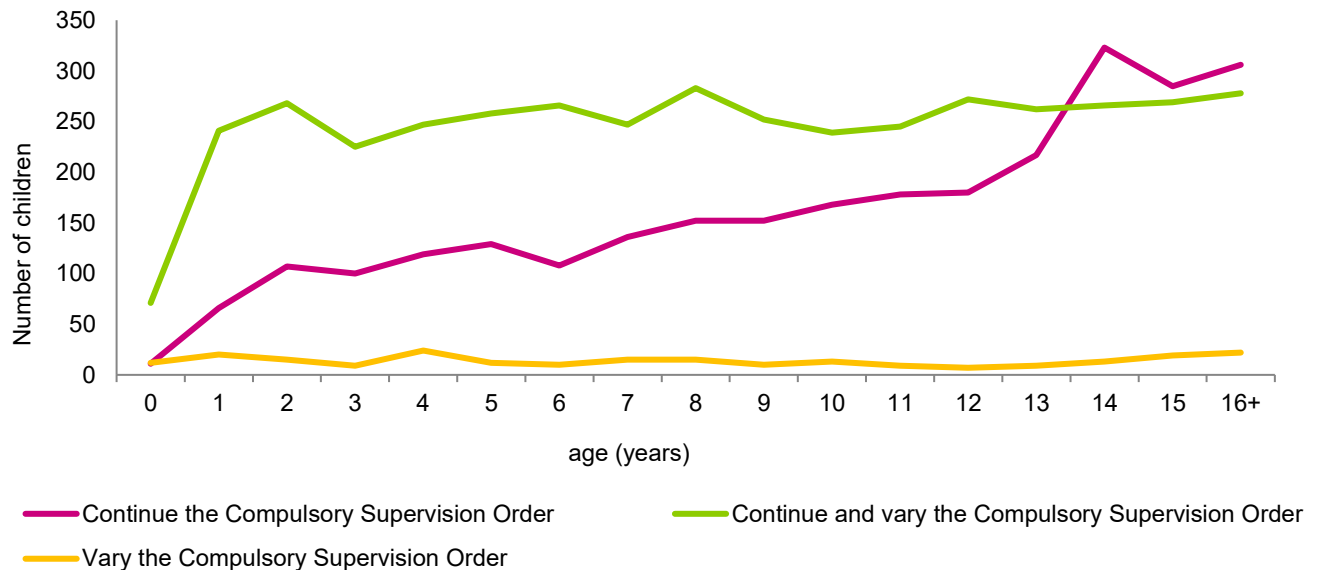
Table 5.5 Number of review Hearing decisions, by year

Hearing decision	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Continue the Compulsory Supervision Order	3,073	2,876	3,029	2,737
Continue and vary the Compulsory Supervision Order	4,614	4,288	4,129	4,209
Vary the Compulsory Supervision Order	220	251	255	232
Total	7,907	7,415	7,413	7,178

The National Convener of Children's Hearings Scotland reports on the implementation of Compulsory Supervision Orders annually. This will provide more data around review decisions and implementation breaches. The report is normally published in October and will be available here: [Children's Hearings Scotland](#).

As shown in figure 5.3, the most common review outcome is to continue and vary the Compulsory Supervision Order until age 14 where continue the Compulsory Supervision Order decisions become most common.

Figure 5.3 Review Hearing decisions in 2025/26, by age at decision

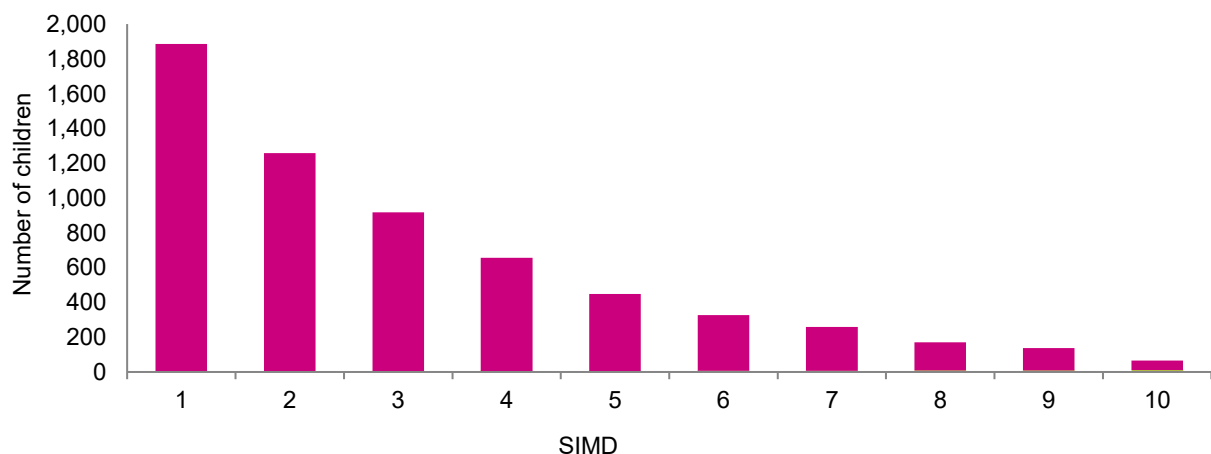


Compulsory Supervision Orders and deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas (called data zones). If an area is identified as 'deprived', this can relate to people having a low income, but it can also mean fewer resources or opportunities. SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime, and housing.

SIMD is the Scottish Government's standard approach to identify areas of multiple deprivation in Scotland. SIMD data here is used to categorise the home postcodes of children subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders at 31st March 2026 in groups of 10 percentage points from the most deprived (1) to the least deprived (10).

Figure 5.4 Children with Compulsory Supervision Orders in force, by SIMD, at 31 March 2026

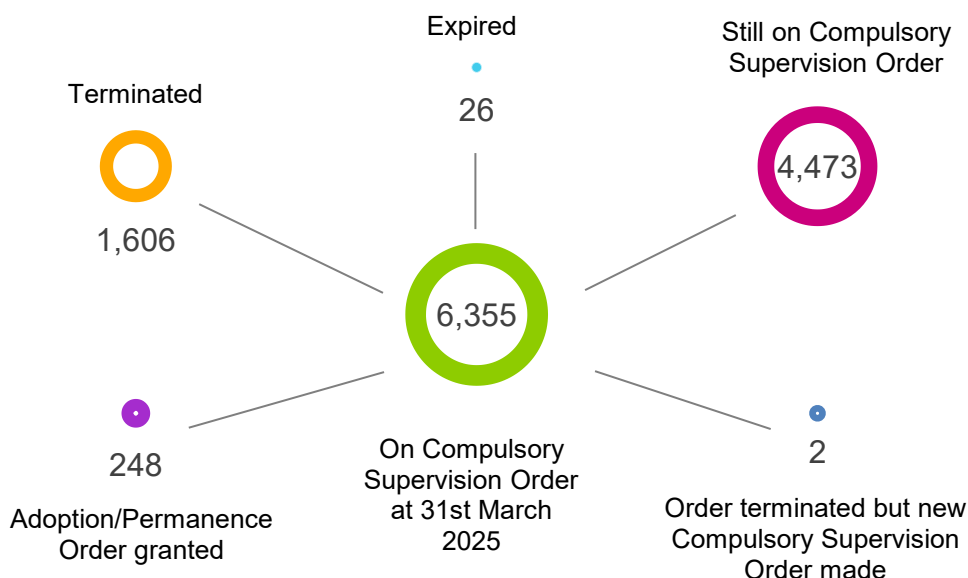


This graph is based on the home postcodes of the child as at the year-end so may differ from the postcode at the time the order was made. Additionally, 233 orders (3.7%) had no recorded postcode, incomplete postcodes, had postcodes outside of Scotland or the postcodes are not yet on the SIMD dataset. These are excluded from the counts above. The graph shows a clear relationship between deprivation and supervision with over half of children with Compulsory Supervision Orders having home postcodes within the two most deprived data zones.

Tracking Compulsory Supervision Orders

To provide more context around Compulsory Supervision Orders we have tracked forward the 6,355 children with orders which were reported as in force at the 31st March 2025.

Figure 5.5 Children with Compulsory Supervision Orders in force at 31 March 2025 tracked forward to 31 March 2026



Of the 6,355 children with Compulsory Supervision Orders at 31st March 2025, the majority were still on an order a year later, 70.4% (4,473). For 248 children, (3.9%), the order ended due to an Adoption or Permanence Order being granted and the Sheriff terminating the Compulsory Supervision Order. The 248 is a higher figure than table 5.9 on page 30 as often it takes a long time for us to receive the orders from the court so many of them pre-dated the 31st March 2025. The 26 expired orders expired on the child’s 18th birthday.

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 5.6 Number of children with Secure Authorisations made by Children’s Hearings, by year

Secure Authorisation measure	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Within interim orders	84	98	67	62
Within Compulsory Supervision Orders	71	80	66	52
Total children with Secure Authorisations	102	110	83	74

Children with Secure Authorisations included in interim orders decreased by 7.5% compared to 2024/25 while those included in Compulsory Supervision Orders decreased by 21.2%. In total in 2025/26, 74 children had secure authorisations either within interim orders or within Compulsory Supervision Orders, this was 9 fewer than in 2024/25 (down 10.8%).

Movement Restriction Conditions made by Children’s Hearings

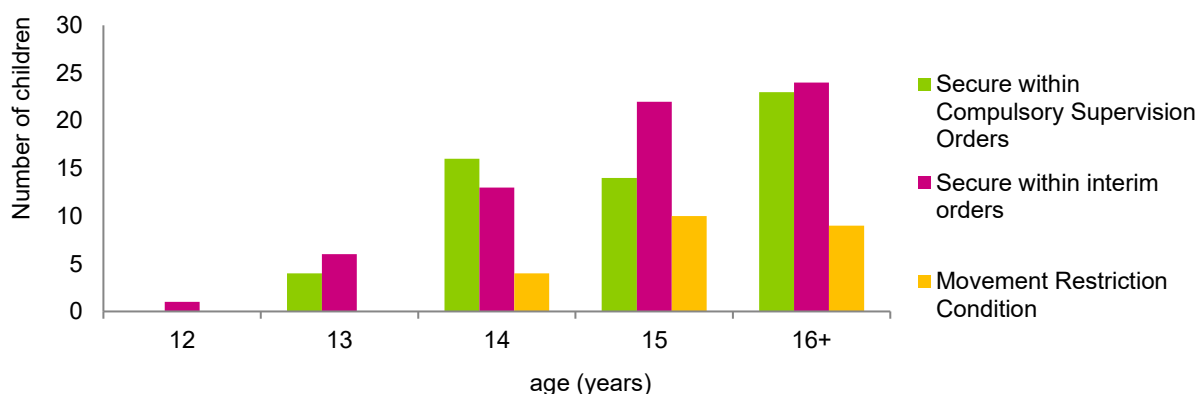
A Movement Restriction Condition (MRC) is a measure that can be included in interim orders or Compulsory Supervision Orders restricting the child's movements and requiring the restrictions to be monitored by way of an electronic monitoring device attached to the child. The criteria by which they can be made are set out in sections 83(5) and 83(6) of the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.

Table 5.7 Number of children with Movement Restriction Conditions made by Hearings, by year

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Children with Movement Restriction Conditions	24	17	28	22

Children with MRCs decreased by 21.4% in the year. The 22 children had 40 MRCs made, this compares to 28 children with 45 MRCs in 2024/25. MRCs tend to be quite changeable in terms of volumes which is often the case when low numbers are involved.

Figure 5.6 Number of children with secure orders and/or MRCs in 2025/26, by age



Non-disclosure Measures

A non-disclosure measure is a special provision attached to a child’s order in instances when it is considered necessary to protect the address at which a child is required to reside by virtue of the order, due to significant concerns about their safety.

Table 5.8 Number of children with non-disclosure measures in place at 31 March, by type and year

Order type measure attached to	2023	2024	2025	2026
Interim order	58	70	73	64
Compulsory Supervision Order	682	645	632	686
Total non-disclosure measures	740	715	705	742

As at the 31st March 2026, 686 children had non-disclosure measures attached to Compulsory Supervision Orders and 64 children had non-disclosure measures attached to interim orders. Overall, 37 more children (5.2%) 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 31st March 2025.

The 742 children with non-disclosure orders represents 10.9% of all children with orders in force at the 31st March 2026 (either Compulsory Supervision Orders or interim orders). SCRA continues to work with partner agencies to ensure that non-disclosure is only used where necessary and in line with statutory criteria as well as internal work to review all current non-disclosure cases.

Compulsory Supervision Orders terminated

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

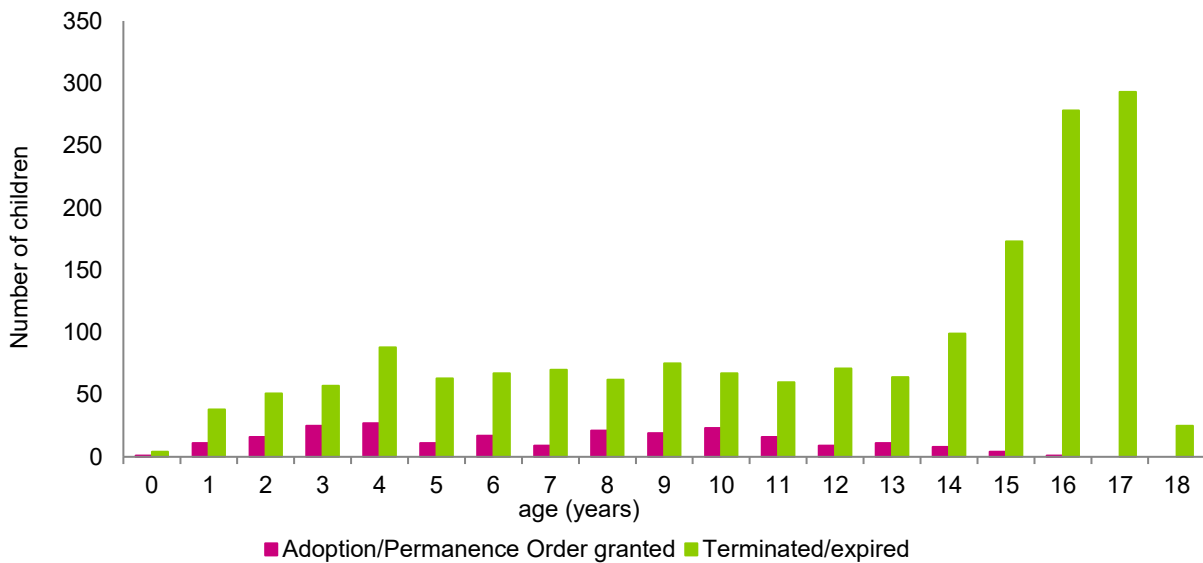
Table 5.9 Number of children with Compulsory Supervision Orders terminated, by year

Compulsory Supervision Order terminations	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Compulsory Supervision Order terminated	2,013	1,907	1,713	1,709
Permanence or Adoption Orders granted and Compulsory Supervision Order terminated by the Sheriff	368	314	266	233
Compulsory Supervision Orders terminated	2,381	2,221	1,979	1,942

Please note that it can often take some time for the Permanence or Adoption Order to be received and therefore we have adjusted the 2024/25 figures to reflect the updated position based on this year’s analysis. Of the orders terminated this year, 152 were identified as Permanence Orders and 81 were identified as Adoption Orders.

Some orders were allowed to expire rather than a hearing being arranged just before the child’s 18th birthday to terminate the order. This can only happen if a previous Children’s Hearing has made a substantive decision on a review of the Compulsory Supervision Order within three months of the child’s 18th birthday. These expiries are included in the terminated figure above. Because many orders are terminated at 17, the graph below deviates from the rest of the report (where ages 16 and 17 are combined to be 16+).

Figure 5.7 Children with Compulsory Supervision Orders terminated, by age, in 2025/26



Appeals to the Sheriff

This section presents information about appeals to the Sheriff against decisions made by Children's Hearings in 2025/26 with comparisons to previous years.

Key facts:



Appeals concluded increased by 31.4%



75% of appeals were against Compulsory Supervision Order decisions

Appeals

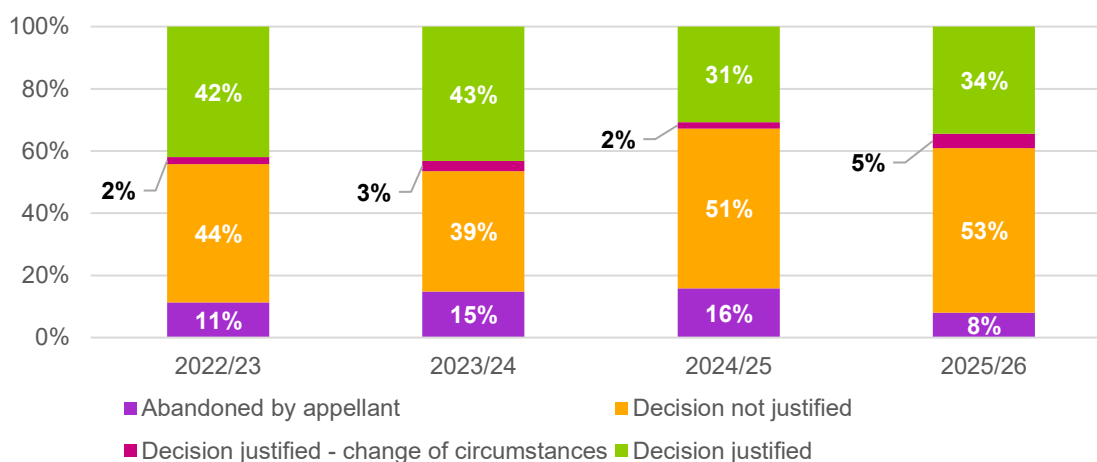
Children and/or their relevant persons can appeal to the Sheriff against decisions made by Children's Hearings and Pre-Hearing Panels. In 2025/26, 289 children had 389 appeals concluded (including abandoned), a 31.4% increase in appeals against the prior year. A child may have multiple appeals within the year.

Table 6.1 Number of appeals to the Sheriff, by outcome and year

Appeal outcomes	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Hearing's decision justified	189	143	91	134
Hearing's decision justified but change of circumstances	10	11	6	18
Hearing's decision not justified	200	128	152	206
Appeal abandoned	51	49	47	31
Number of appeals concluded/abandoned	450	331	296	389
Number of children with appeals concluded/abandoned	346	281	250	289

The most common appeal outcome in 2025/26 was that the Children's Hearings decision wasn't justified (53.0%) followed by the decision being justified (34.4%). Where a decision wasn't justified, 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 proportions of each category of appeal outcomes can be seen in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1 Appeals against Children's Hearings decisions, by outcome, and year



The most common type of appeal is in respect of Compulsory Supervision Orders (292), 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. In addition, there were 84 appeals against interim orders and 13 against relevant person/not relevant person decisions.

Performance

This section presents information about operational performance within SCRA during 2025/26, with comparisons to previous years. Detailed performance against targets contained within our Corporate and Business Plans will be reported through SCRA's Annual Report 2025/26. It will also include commentary around performance as well as wider progress against SCRA's plans and will be published on the 29th October 2026⁷.

Key facts:



Performance improved in all three measurable time interval standards

157 days
non-offence

average working days from referral receipt to Hearing decision

116 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 2001⁸. 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. Currently the only time interval standards which we are reporting against are TI4, TI6 and TI14.

Table 7.1 Performance against Time Interval Standards in 2025/26

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	15,205 referrals	11,079 referrals	73%
Standard TI6 – Hearings will be scheduled to take place within a maximum of 20 working days of the Reporter's decision	2,298 decisions	1,741 decisions	76%
Standard TI14 – The child and family will be sent written notification of the outcome of a Hearing within 5 working days of the Hearing	54,279 notifications	53,978 notifications	99%

Performance against the Time Interval Standards has continued to improve since the impact of the pandemic on the Hearing's system.

Table 7.2 Performance against Time Interval Standards, by year

Time Interval (TI) Standard	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
TI4	69%	70%	72%	73%
TI6	57%	66%	70%	76%
TI14	94%	95%	98%	99%

⁷ SCRA's publications can be accessed here: <https://www.scra.gov.uk/resources/>.

⁸ Scottish Executive (2001) Blueprint for the Processing of Children's Hearings Cases. Inter-agency Code of Practice and National Standards.

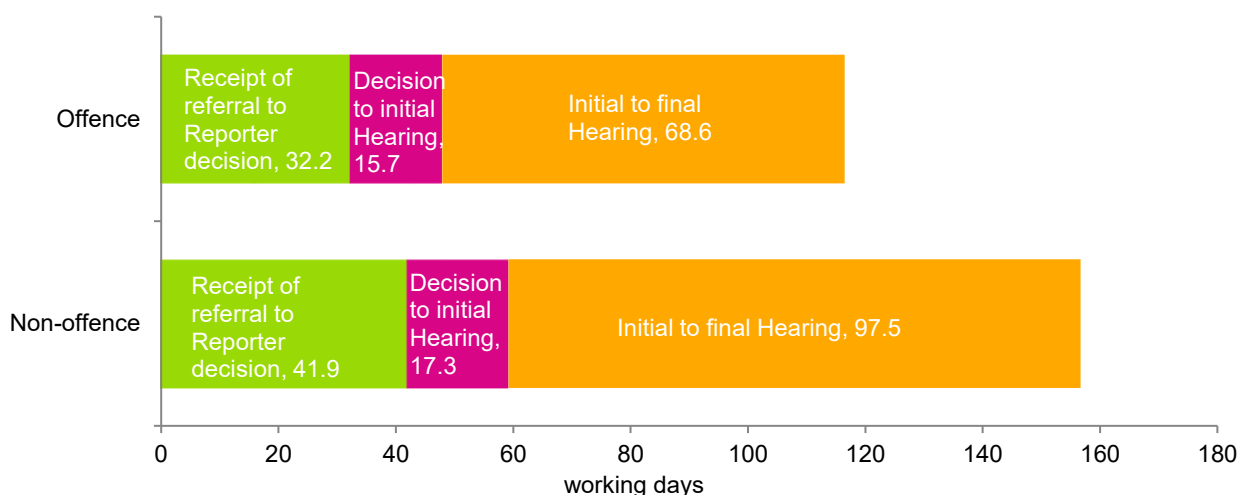
Working days from referral receipt to Hearing decision

Of the 2,144 children with non-offence based Hearing decisions and the 28 children with offence based Hearing decisions (Table 5.1), the average working days from referral receipt to Hearing decision were 157 and 116 days respectively, see Figure 7.1.

Working days are split by the main stages in the process. The differences in profiles between non-offence and offence referrals reflect the higher proportion of non-offence referrals which require the establishment of grounds at court.

Please note that the methodology for counting working days for non-offence referrals has changed from 2021/22 onwards as non-offence referrals now form part of an overall investigation with the decision applied to the investigation rather than the referral. To count working days for non-offence referrals, we have used the receipt date of the earliest referral within the investigation as the starting point. Therefore, average working days will be longer than before 2021/22. Offence referrals remain unchanged as each charge is treated separately.

Figure 7.1 Average working days from referral receipt to Children's Hearing decision in 2025/26



The major factor in the length of time to a Children's Hearing decision is whether the grounds required to be established at court by a Sheriff. Where they were, the average days for non-offence referrals was 171.3 days against 76.7 where a proof application was not required. While for offence referrals, the averages were 201 days and 48.4 days respectively.

The median for offence referrals was 90 days against an average of 116.5 days, while the median for non-offence referrals was 147 days against an average of 156.7 days. The difference between the average and the median (26.5 days for offence referrals and 9.7 days for non-offence referrals) illustrates the effect that prolonged cases have on the overall performance on this measure.

To provide context, the average working days were 152 for non-offence referrals and 84 for offence referrals respectively in 2024/25.

For enquiries or feedback about this publication please contact:
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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. If data falls below the quality that we expect from an Official Statistics publication, then it will be noted as such or removed from the report. Where data quality issues have been identified, manual checks and amendments to the figures have been undertaken.

Referral data

Police referrals and charges are now automatically processed into our system for most offence referrals. In addition, there are no longer additional or duplicate categories which caused issues previously, therefore our error margin is expected to be very low, <1%.

Joint reports

A police report can concern several individuals and if any one of these are jointly reported then then all children within the report will be considered as having been jointly reported. Where possible (if this has not already been done by locality staff) we attempt to adjust the data to only include those children where the intention was to jointly report. There can also be issues around receiving joint reports for children who are over 16 and have no open referrals or current orders. In effect, these shouldn't be counted. In addition, we have discovered marking issues with custody reports which we have manually corrected. Due to the issues above, we are unable to provide an estimated error margin which is why joint reports have been classified as experimental rather than official. It is worth noting that this is only a counting issue, cases are still being accurately processed.

Child Protection Orders

Child Protection Orders can be cross referenced against the order and the referrals therefore the error margin will be low, <1%.

Children's Hearings

Only Children's Hearings with outcomes have been included and any cases where there is more than one Children's Hearing for a child on the same day have been checked. Therefore, our error margin is expected to be very low, <1%.

Compulsory Supervision Orders

Compulsory Supervision Orders are well recorded and checked. Our error margin is expected to be very low, <1%. Issues do occur in identifying those which are terminated due to permanency or adoption as there is no date field for these and receiving documentation for them can take a while, so they are checked manually. For this subset there may be an error margin of up to 10%.

Court

All court disposals have been checked. Therefore, our error margin is expected to be very low, <1%. Issues occur is around court interim orders which have errors in recording. Whilst we have tried to cross reference available data to minimise this, there may be an error margin of up to 10% in court orders.

Appeals

Many appeals in the year had no outcome recorded. These have been manually corrected but there are limited cross reference points for appeals, so it is difficult to know whether all appeals have been captured. Therefore, there may be an error margin of up to 10% in appeals.

Time intervals

For standard T114 – The child and family will be sent written notification of the outcome of a Hearing within 5 working days of the Hearing, there is no sent date currently, so we use the creation date. Not all family relationships can be identified also for picking up communications, therefore there may be an error margin of up to 2 percentage points.



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