



SCOTTISH  
**CHILDREN'S REPORTER**  
ADMINISTRATION



# How the Children's Hearings System works...

The Children's Hearings System provides the overarching framework in which SCRA and all our partner agencies work. The aim is to provide a safety net for vulnerable children, and deliver tailored solutions which meet the needs of the individuals involved and help to build stronger families and safer communities.

## 1

### **Incident**

An incident occurs – for instance, a child is the perpetrator of an offence, or perhaps a child's welfare may be at risk, or a child may have suffered abuse or neglect.

### **Referral to the Reporter**

A referral of a child or children to the Reporter should suggest that there is a need to intervene on a compulsory basis.

## 2

### **Investigation**

The Reporter investigates the child's case by requesting information from different sources: social work, police, school, health, and voluntary organisations.

### **Reporter Decision**

The Reporter evaluates the information and decides whether there is a need for compulsory intervention. If there is, the child is referred to a Children's Hearing.

## 3

### **The Hearing\***

Each Hearing comprises three panel members, all trained volunteers from the local community.

The child and family – or carers – are central participants in the Hearing.

The role of the Reporter is to attend the Hearing to support fair process. The Reporter takes no part in the panel members' deliberations and decision-making.

Decisions are made openly during the Hearing.

\*Hearings will only go ahead once the grounds for referral are accepted by the young person and their parent(s) or, if necessary, once the court has decided they have been established on the basis of evidence presented by the Reporter

## 4

### **Outcome**

The most common Hearing outcome is a supervision requirement, ranging from supervision at home to secure accommodation.

Temporary emergency measures will sometimes be necessary, such as child protection orders.

Local authorities have a statutory obligation to implement the decisions made by Children's Hearings.



## SCRA's Role and Mission:

Focused on children most at risk, our fundamental purpose is to:

- make effective decisions about a need for compulsion
- support panel members to make good decisions
- enable children and families to participate in Hearings
- disseminate information and data to influence, inform and reassure.



**Scottish Children's Reporter Administration**

Ochil House, Springkerse Business Park, Stirling FK7 7XE  
Tel: 01786 459500 Fax: 01786 459532/3

**Policy Enquiries:**

Nick Hobbs  
Tel: 01786 459572  
nick.hobbs@scra.gsx.gov.uk

**Media Enquiries:**

Maryanne McIntyre  
Tel: 01786 459516  
communications@scra.gsx.gov.uk

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