

Child Care and Justice

Consultation on Raising The Age of Referral to The Principal Reporter

Easy Read

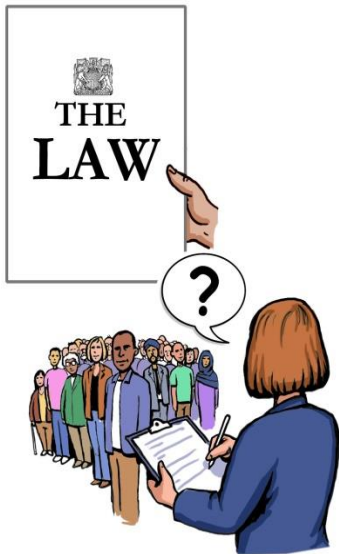
June 2020

Raising the age a young person can go to a children's hearing

A consultation – easy read summary



What is a Consultation?



The law says that the Scottish Government has to ask the people their views before important changes are made.

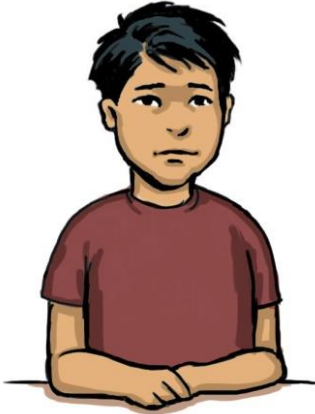
When the Scottish Government asks people for their views it is called a Consultation.

The Scottish Government would like your views on children's hearings.

The responses should be handed in by **7 October 2020.**

Background - what is a children's hearing?

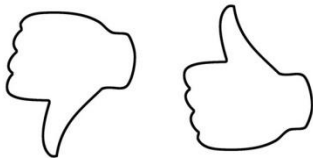
A children's hearing is a legal meeting that children and young people can be asked to go to. This may be with their families or carers to sort out problems.



There are many reasons a child can be asked to go to a children's hearing. These include if someone is worried that they are not being cared for properly or if they have been in trouble with the police.



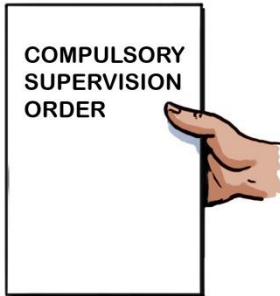
A Children's Reporter is the person that decides if there needs to be a children's hearing. Information about a child or young person is sent to the Children's Reporter so they can decide.



They may decide there needs to be a children's hearing. Or they may not need a children's hearing. They may decide they need support from social work and other services. Some children will not need any further help at all.



The children's hearing is made up of 3 people. They are called the panel members. Panel members make decisions to support children.



If they are worried they can make a compulsory supervision order. This is a legal document which allows people like a social worker to help the child or young person.

What do we want to know?



Most of the time, a child is someone who is under 18. However for children's hearings a child is a person under 16 years of age.

We want to know what you think about changing the law so that all young people under 18 can go to a children's hearing.

What difference will these changes make?



Some children and young people have needs and face risks. They may have been going on a long time. It can be complicated.



Concerns about a young person can be made to the Children's Reporter. This is called a referral. This may be from the police, social work, school or another person. This is because they think that the child or young person needs help.

Some 16 and 17 year olds may need legal protection or support in their life. They may not get the help they need, because laws and services may not see them as a child.

What about young people who have carried out serious crimes?



Children and young people who break the law should be seen as children in need. They may be vulnerable and have had problems in their lives.

Young people aged between 12 and 15 years are reported to the Children's Reporter and the Procurator Fiscal when they commit the most serious crimes. The Procurator Fiscal investigates crimes.



We want to change this. We want all under 18s who are charged by the police to be able to be reported to the Children's Reporter and the Procurator Fiscal.

The Children's Reporter and Procurator Fiscal will then talk about the case. The Procurator Fiscal will decide whether it should be dealt with by a children's hearing or a court.

What about victims?



The impact of crime can be huge for victims.

Victims should have confidence that their voices will be heard. Victims need access to the right help, information and support. They should feel supported.

This consultation is about children's hearings, however we will think about information and more support for victims.

Questions

1. Is it fair that some 16 and 17 year olds are treated differently?

yes

no

You can explain your answer in the box below:

2. Should all 16 and 17 year olds be considered by the Children's Reporter and the children's hearing?

yes

yes, but only in some cases

No

You can explain your answer in the box below:

3. Is there anything else you want to say about this possible change?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to provide their response to the question above. The box is currently blank.

Giving your consultation answers

Please give us your answers to this consultation online at **<https://consult.gov.scot/children-and-families/age-of-referral-to-the-principal-reporter>**

Please give your answers before the closing date of **7 October 2020**.

If you are unable to give us your answers online, please complete the Respondent Information Form (see “What we do with your answers” below) and send it to:

CareandJusticeConsultation@gov.scot

What we do with your answers

If you ask for your answers to be kept private, we will not publish them. The Scottish Government follows the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and that includes any requests we get for information about this consultation.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy: **<https://beta.gov.scot/privacy/>**

What happens next?

If you have given permission for your answers to be made public, and we have checked that they contain nothing inappropriate, your answers will be published at **<http://consult.scotland.gov.uk>**

If you use Citizen Space to give your answers you will get a copy of them sent to you by email.

Following the closing date, all answers will be looked at along with any other information we have.

Comments and complaints

If you have any comments about how this consultation has been done, please send them to:

CareandJusticeConsultation@gov.scot



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Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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