



Children's Legal Assistance in children's hearings and related court cases

Information sheet for children

You can ask a solicitor to explain anything you don't understand in this information sheet. Or you can contact us (contact details below).



What is Children's Legal Assistance?

Children's legal assistance can pay for a solicitor (sometimes called a lawyer). A solicitor can do different kinds of legal work for you.

A solicitor can...

- give you advice about going to a children's hearing or about what happens after a hearing
- go to the hearing with you and help you speak or speak for you at the hearing
- speak for you (represent you) if your case goes to court



Can children apply for legal assistance?

Yes. The important thing is you are old enough to understand why you need the help of a solicitor. If you do, then you can apply for children's legal assistance.

If you are 12 or older, you should be old enough to ask a solicitor to work for you and to apply for legal assistance.

If you are under 12, your solicitor must be sure that you understand what it means to ask for a solicitor's help.

By **children** we mean anyone under 16. We also mean someone who is 16 or 17 if the children's hearing has placed them on a **Compulsory Supervision Order**.

Compulsory Supervision Order

A children's hearing may decide that you need help and support from a social worker. If they do, they will place you on a Compulsory Supervision Order. This gives the social work department legal powers to give you and your family help and support.



When should I see a solicitor?

You will probably find out about having to go to a hearing when you get a letter. This will be from the **Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA)**.

You might want to talk to a solicitor straight away and you can do so. We will tell you how to contact a solicitor later in this document. SCRA may send you a copy of the **Statement of Grounds**.

Statement of grounds: These are the reasons for asking you to go to a hearing. Your solicitor can go through these reasons with you and talk to you about what will happen at the hearing.



Will I have to pay for a solicitor?

You probably won't have to pay anything to your solicitor as you are a child. **Your solicitor will tell you if you need to pay anything.**

If you are working or have savings you may not get legal assistance. Sometimes you might have to pay something towards the cost of the help you receive.

You may want a solicitor to represent you at a **children's hearing**. You won't need to pay for this, even if you are working or have savings.



How do I find a solicitor?

Go to our website www.slab.org.uk and use the [solicitor finder](#).

Go to the **Law Society of Scotland's** website www.lawscot.org.uk and use their [solicitor finder](#).



Where else can I go for help?

The **Scottish Child Law Centre** can give you free advice. They can also put you in touch with a solicitor who deals with child law. You can contact them on their website: [Get In Touch | Scottish Child Law Centre](#)

You might also be able to get help from Scotland's **Commissioner for Children and Young People**. The Commissioner's job is to make sure that Scotland keeps promises it has made. These are promises about the human rights of children and young people.

Their website is www.cypcs.org.uk.

You can also contact us at the **Scottish Legal Aid Board**:

Telephone 0131 226 7061

Website www.slab.org.uk

Email general@slab.org.uk

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