



Children's Legal Assistance

Information for children





What is children's legal assistance?

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

A solicitor can:

- Give you advice about going to a children's hearing or about what happens after the hearing.
- Go to the hearing with you and help you speak or speak for you at the hearing.
- Speak for you if your case goes to court.



If you don't understand everything in this leaflet, you can ask a solicitor to explain it to you.





Can children apply for legal assistance?

Yes. If you are old enough to understand why you need the help of a solicitor you can apply for children's legal assistance.

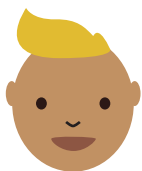
If you are 12 or older, you should be old enough to ask a solicitor to work for you and to apply for children's legal assistance. If you are under 12, your solicitor has to be sure that you understand what it means to ask for a solicitor's help.

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

If a children's hearing decides that you need help and support from a social worker, they will place you on a compulsory supervision order. This gives the social work department legal powers to give you and your family supervision 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 from the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA).

You might want to talk to a solicitor straight away.

SCRA will 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.





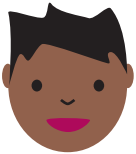
Will I have to pay for a solicitor?

You probably won't have to pay anything to your solicitor as you are a child.

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

There are some types of hearings where you won't be asked to pay anything at all.

Your solicitor will be able to tell you more about this.



How do I find a solicitor?

Go to our website www.slabb.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.

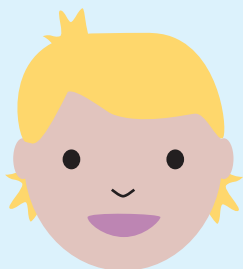




Where else can I go for help?

The Scottish Child Law Centre can give you free telephone advice and put you in touch with a solicitor who deals with child law. Their **0300 330 1421** number is free from mobiles for under 21s.

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 about the human rights of children and young people. Their website is www.cypcs.org.uk.



For more help from the Scottish Legal Aid Board phone **0131 226 7061**, or look at our website www.slabb.org.uk.

