



Advocacy in Children's Hearings: How does it help?

Summary for children and young people

2024

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About advocacy in Children's Hearings

The law in Scotland says children and young people have the right to advocacy at their Hearing.

Since 2020, when the law was introduced, more than 5,000 children and young people have been supported by the national Children's Hearings Advocacy Scheme.

Advocacy workers help children and young people to prepare for and give their views at their Hearing. Advocacy workers help by listening to what children and young people want, and helping them to have their voice heard at the Hearing.

In 2024, the Scottish Government did some research to find out what difference this advocacy support makes, what works well and what could be better.

This involved gathering views from:



What difference does advocacy make for children and young people?

Children and young people said that advocacy helps with:



Children and young people said they were happy with advocacy. Most said there was nothing that could be better about it.

The main thing children and young people liked was being supported by the same advocacy worker over time. This meant they got to know each other well. Children and young people said they trusted their advocacy workers and this was important to them.

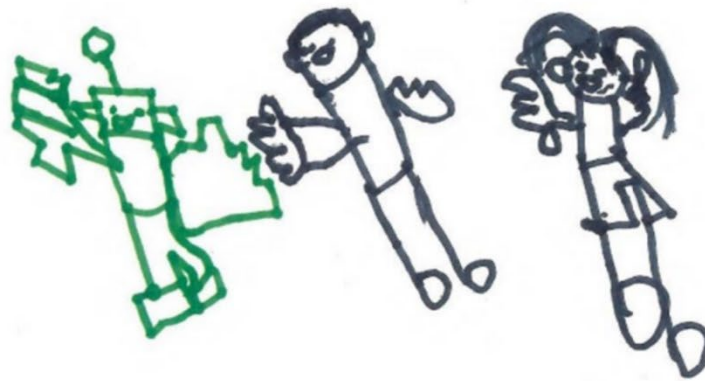
I'm so glad there's going to be someone at this Hearing that has my back."

YOUNG PERSON

She said the hard bits that I couldn't."

YOUNG PERSON

Panel members



You're the first adult I've ever trusted."

YOUNG PERSON

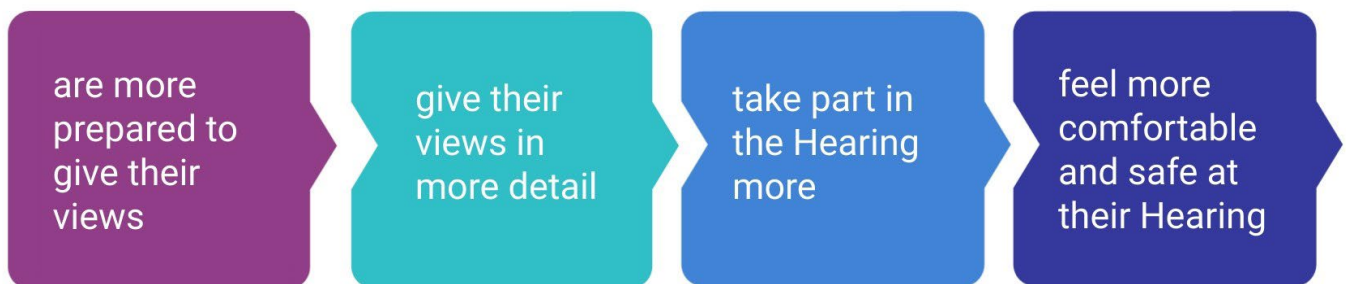
She helps me to get ready but I still feel worried about going. She talks for me so I can sing in my head."

YOUNG PERSON

What difference does advocacy make for adults working in Hearings?

Adults at Hearings - like Panel members, social workers and Reporters - said that advocacy for children and young people helps Hearings to work better.

Adults said that advocacy means that children and young people:



Adults said that advocacy for children and young people helps with making decisions at the Hearing. It helps Panel members to understand what children and young people want, and feel more confident about the decisions they make.

Overall adults said that advocacy support helps the Hearing focus on the child, and make sure their voice is heard.

“Children are more informed and more willing to share their views if they have an advocacy worker.”
Reporter, Evaluation interview