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our hearings, our voice

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Our Hearings, Our Voice

Hearings Redesign Consultation Response

The importance of supportive, trusted, skilled, accountable, and consistent adults in children's lives



Panel chairs need powers to reduce conflict in hearings

Children need consistency of panel members

Children should be offered professionals with time and skills to engage, assess their needs and communicate well

Children should meet the panel chair in advance

"Competent chairs already take action if there are too many adults present. This should also happen if someone was being unfair or talking over the child. Chairs need more support to understand how to use existing powers and skills to manage hearings"



Children and families need information and Hearings decisions shared in ways that involve them, are easy to understand and are personalised to their needs

Decisions must be written in child friendly language and shared by a trusted adult

Children need more time to consider and understand hearings papers

Children and families need more clarity on restrictions made in orders

Easy to understand and more positive language should be used in grounds

Adults must support children to understand papers, in a way chosen by the child

"After the hearing, someone they trust and have a good relationship with should meet the child and explain the decision".



Children need support before, during and after their hearings and much more needs to be done to prepare children for hearings, to understand how they can participate fully, comfortably, and safely, and to enable them to exit the hearings system fully supported and ready to thrive.

Children should be able to meet reporter in advance of their decision to call a hearing

Children should be offered choices on how to share their views if they do not attend their hearings

Children should be given choice in how they wish to engage and share their views. Skilled, trusted adults with time to do this are crucial

Advocacy should be offered to children as soon as they are referred to the Children's Reporter

Sheriffs should continue to make decisions on grounds which have not been accepted

"There should be a plethora of ways for young people to share their views. There should be an index or catalogue of ideas"

If safe, hearings should be delayed allowing for Family Group Decision Making or Restorative Justice resolutions

Children should have clearer exit plans when they leave the hearings system, including ongoing supports available to them and their families

Children should not have to attend their hearings

The adults arranging hearings must ensure the child's views are heard, as well as exploring how they wish to participate in a hearing

Secure care decisions should be reviewed more frequently