

AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY IN SCOTLAND

CHANGES TO THE LAW AND WHAT THIS MEANS

INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN, & THEIR FAMILIES

The law in Scotland has changed.

From the 17th of December 2021, the age of criminal responsibility has been raised to **12 years old**. This means that if you are under 12 years old and you get in conflict with the law, you are not going to get charged. You will be offered some extra support to help you avoid being involved with the law in the future.



If you are the victim of crime due to the actions of a child under the age of 12, it is important to know that the law is also there to protect and help you. The behaviours and actions of the child will be taken seriously. This change in law, is part of The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 (the Act). This helps to keep all of us safe. Police Scotland will continue to record and investigate crimes, and respond to the need of victims.

The Act aims to protect children involved in crime, as well as making sure the wider public are protected.

If you are under 12, you won't be expected to go through the criminal justice system. You may be referred to the Children's Reporter who will decide if a Children's Hearing would be helpful. This involves a panel of three adults who will listen to you and hear what's happening in your life, and take decisions based on your actions and what support is required.



If you are a victim of a crime due to the actions of a child under the age of 12, there are a number of support agencies that can help you. The advice given is free and kept private. A support worker will listen to you and provide a package of support. Victim Support Scotland is one of these organisations, and provides services to everyone after a crime.

It is important for you to remember that if you have been affected by crime, you are not alone, and support is available throughout Scotland.*



*the above organisations will have more information on this change in the law