



# Children (Scotland) Act 1995

## 1995 CHAPTER 36

### PART II

#### PROMOTION OF CHILDREN'S WELFARE BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND BY CHILDREN'S HEARINGS ETC.

### CHAPTER I

#### SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

#### *Introductory*

#### **16 Welfare of child and consideration of his views.**

- (1) Where under or by virtue of this Part of this Act, a children's hearing decide, or a court determines, any matter with respect to a child the welfare of that child throughout his childhood shall be their or its paramount consideration.
- (2) In the circumstances mentioned in subsection (4) below, a children's hearing or as the case may be the sheriff, taking account of the age and maturity of the child concerned, shall so far as practicable—
  - (a) give him an opportunity to indicate whether he wishes to express his views;
  - (b) if he does so wish, give him an opportunity to express them; and
  - (c) have regard to such views as he may express;and without prejudice to the generality of this subsection a child twelve years of age or more shall be presumed to be of sufficient age and maturity to form a view.
- (3) In the circumstances mentioned in subsection (4)(a)(i) or (ii) or (b) of this section, no requirement or order so mentioned shall be made with respect to the child concerned unless the children's hearing consider, or as the case may be the sheriff considers, that it would be better for the child that the requirement or order be made than that none should be made at all.

*Status: Point in time view as at 01/04/1997.*

*Changes to legislation: Children (Scotland) Act 1995, Cross Heading: Introductory is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 18 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)*

- (4) The circumstances to which subsection (2) above refers are that—
- (a) the children’s hearing—
    - (i) are considering whether to make, or are reviewing, a supervision requirement;
    - (ii) are considering whether to grant a warrant under subsection (1) of section 66, or subsection (4) or (7) of section 69, of this Act or to provide under subsection (5) of the said section 66 for the continuation of a warrant;
    - (iii) are engaged in providing advice under section 60(10) of this Act; or
    - (iv) are drawing up a report under section 73(13) of this Act;
  - (b) the sheriff is considering—
    - (i) whether to make, vary or discharge a parental responsibilities order, a child assessment order or an exclusion order;
    - (ii) whether to vary or discharge a child protection order; (ia) whether to grant a warrant under section 66 of this Act; or
    - (iii) on appeal, whether to make such substitution as is mentioned in section 51(5)(c)(iii) of this Act; or
  - (c) the sheriff is otherwise disposing of an appeal against a decision of a children’s hearing.
- (5) If, for the purpose of protecting members of the public from serious harm (whether or not physical harm)—
- (a) a children’s hearing consider it necessary to make a decision under or by virtue of this Part of this Act which (but for this paragraph) would not be consistent with their affording paramountcy to the consideration mentioned in subsection (1) above, they may make that decision; or
  - (b) a court considers it necessary to make a determination under or by virtue of Chapters 1 to 3 of this Part of this Act which (but for this paragraph) would not be consistent with its affording such paramountcy, it may make that determination.

## **17 Duty of local authority to child looked after by them.**

- (1) Where a child is looked after by a local authority they shall, in such manner as the Secretary of State may prescribe—
- (a) safeguard and promote his welfare (which shall, in the exercise of their duty to him be their paramount concern);
  - (b) make such use of services available for children cared for by their own parents as appear to the authority reasonable in his case; and
  - (c) take such steps to promote, on a regular basis, personal relations and direct contact between the child and any person with parental responsibilities in relation to him as appear to them to be, having regard to their duty to him under paragraph (a) above, both practicable and appropriate.
- (2) The duty under paragraph (a) of subsection (1) above includes, without prejudice to that paragraph’s generality, the duty of providing advice and assistance with a view to preparing the child for when he is no longer looked after by a local authority.

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- (3) Before making any decision with respect to a child whom they are looking after, or proposing to look after, a local authority shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, ascertain the views of—
- (a) the child;
  - (b) his parents;
  - (c) any person who is not a parent of his but who has parental rights in relation to him; and
  - (d) any other person whose views the authority consider to be relevant, regarding the matter to be decided.
- (4) In making any such decision a local authority shall have regard so far as practicable—
- (a) to the views (if he wishes to express them) of the child concerned, taking account of his age and maturity;
  - (b) to such views of any person mentioned in subsection (3)(b) to (d) above as they have been able to ascertain; and
  - (c) to the child’s religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.
- (5) If, for the purpose of protecting members of the public from serious harm (whether or not physical harm) a local authority consider it necessary to exercise, in a manner which (but for this paragraph) would not be consistent with their duties under this section, their powers with respect to a child whom they are looking after, they may do so.
- (6) Any reference in this Chapter of this Part to a child who is “looked after” by a local authority, is to a child—
- (a) for whom they are providing accommodation under section 25 of this Act;
  - (b) who is subject to a supervision requirement and in respect of whom they are the relevant local authority;
  - (c) who is subject to an order made, or authorisation or warrant granted, by virtue of Chapter 2, 3 or 4 of this Part of this Act, being an order, authorisation or warrant in accordance with which they have responsibilities as respects the child; or
  - (d) who is subject to an order in accordance with which, by virtue of regulations made under section 33(1) of this Act, they have such responsibilities.
- (7) Regulations made by the Secretary of State under subsection (1) above may, without prejudice to the generality of that subsection, include—
- (a) provision as to the circumstances in which the child may be cared for by the child’s own parents; and
  - (b) procedures which shall be followed in the event of the child’s death.

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**Modifications etc. (not altering text)**

**C1** S. 17(1) applied (1.4.1997) by [S.I. 1996/3263, reg. 6\(2\)](#)

**C2** S. 17(1)-(5) applied (1.4.1997) by [S.I. 1996/3262, reg. 3\(2\)\(b\)](#)

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**Commencement Information**

**II** S. 17 wholly in force at 1.4.1997; s. 17 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 105(1), s. 17 in force for certain purposes at 12.12.1996 by [S.I. 1996/3201, art. 3\(1\)](#) (with [arts. 4-6](#) (as inserted (7.3.1997) by

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S.I. 1997/744, **art. 3**); s. 17 in force at 1.4.1997 insofar as not already in force by S.I. 1996/3201, **art. 3(7)** (with arts. 4-6) (as amended (7.3.1997) by S.I. 1997/744, **arts. 2, 3**)

**18 Duty of persons with parental responsibilities to notify change of address to local authority looking after child.**

- (1) Where a child is being looked after by a local authority, each natural person who has parental responsibilities in relation to the child shall, without unreasonable delay, inform that authority whenever the person changes his address.
- (2) A person who knowingly fails to comply with the requirement imposed by subsection (1) above shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine of level 1 on the standard scale; but in any proceedings under this section it shall be a defence that—
  - (a) the change was to the same address as that to which another person who at that time had parental responsibilities in relation to the child was changing; and
  - (b) the accused had reasonable cause to believe that the other person had informed the authority of the change of address of them both.

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