

The Scottish Government continues to undertake activities to raise awareness amongst employers of these benefits.

What should I do next?

A short leaflet aimed at employers, explaining how they can support employees who are panel members and what they can gain from this support, is available from the CPAC Clerk of your local council. Meanwhile, if you are applying for membership of a Children's Panel, it is advisable to discuss this with your employer and line manager to ensure their support.

childrenspanelscotland.org



TIME OFF WORK
JOIN THE CHILDREN'S PANEL. IT'S LIFE CHANGING.



I've been appointed as a Children's Panel member. What if I need time off work to attend hearings?

Children's Hearings mainly take place during daytime hours, and panel members are normally called upon to attend either a morning or an afternoon session once or twice a month on average. For those panel members who are in employment, this usually means asking their employers for time off. The issue of time off work to carry out Children's Panel duties is one which has on occasion raised problems, and unfortunately there are no straightforward answers.

What is the legal position?

Basically, since Children's Hearings are statutory tribunals, employees have a statutory right to take reasonable time off work to sit on these hearings, as set out in section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996. However, in terms of section 50(4) of the Act, the amount of time off which an employee is allowed to take, and the occasions on which and conditions under which that time off can be taken, are "those that are reasonable in all circumstances". What is considered 'reasonable' includes the circumstances of the employer's business and the effect of the employee's absence on the running of that business. Small businesses may therefore have more difficulty in granting time off than large corporate bodies. What is considered reasonable can also depend

on any other time off that an employee has been granted, for example to carry out trade union duties.

Am I entitled to pay during time off?

You should note that the statutory right to time off for public duties does not in itself carry an entitlement to pay during the time off. Many employers do allow their employees paid time off and we welcome this level of support for the Children's Hearings system from employers. However, where a panel member does lose pay, they are entitled to claim a set allowance for loss of pay. Details are available from the Clerk to your local Children's Panel Advisory Committee (CPAC).

How can the Scottish Government help?

The Scottish Government is unable to intervene in individual cases or specify the time off that an employer should grant in individual circumstances. However, where a panel member has particular difficulties, the Scottish Government can, at the panel member's request, write to the employer to set out the general position in regard to time off work for public duties. Scottish Ministers feel it is also important to highlight to employers the valuable training and generic skills that panel members acquire and which are transferable back to the workplace, thereby benefiting both the employer and employee. These skills include effective communication, decision making, leadership and team working.