



Children and Young People's
Centre for Justice

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Age of Criminal Responsibility: Children and Young People's views

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Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners across the sector for sharing the survey that led to this report, and encouraging children and young people to take part in it. We could not have done this without your help.

To each of the 342 children and young people who took time to fill out this survey, thank you! By completing it, you have helped adults and decision makers think about how they can make a difference for children and young people across Scotland. Your views and your voice matters. We are very grateful to you.

We received lots of feedback that could not be condensed into one report as it was so vast and varied! To make sure we do not lose these fabulous insights and comments, we have attached them as an appendix. This is the only appendix in this report.

Introduction

This survey was commissioned by the Age of Criminal Responsibility data and research subgroup. Its aim was to gather the views of children and young people on what they thought the Age of Criminal Responsibility should be.

The survey was developed by Beth-Anne Logan and Fiona Dyer at the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ). The survey went live on January 27 and was open until February 22. This gave respondents around four weeks to complete.

The survey comprised of six key questions for each age from 12-18. This report will delve deeper into what those key questions were, and the responses received.

The survey was sent out to various partners within the sector including, Youth Link Scotland, Young Scot, Education Scotland, Local Authorities, Children's Hearings Scotland, CELCIS, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and Who Cares? Scotland amongst others.

There was an impressive uptake on the survey with 342 respondents. This response would not have been possible without the help and support of partners.

Main takeaways from the survey:

- A total of 342 valid responses (aged 26 or under).
- Mean age of respondents was age 17, with a range of between 10 and 26
- Two-thirds were females (63.7%); one third male (33.6%) and 2.7% other
- On average participants thought ACR should be 15.3 years (15 years and 4 months).
- There was no significant difference between males and females, or between older and young participants
- Four percent of respondents thought ACR should be lower than 12
- Eleven percent of respondents thought ACR was right at age 12
- Eighty five percent of respondents thought ACR should be older than 12
- The most common age selected was 16 (24.6% of respondents)
- Almost 1 in 5 (19.7%) thought ACR should be 18 or older

Age Range

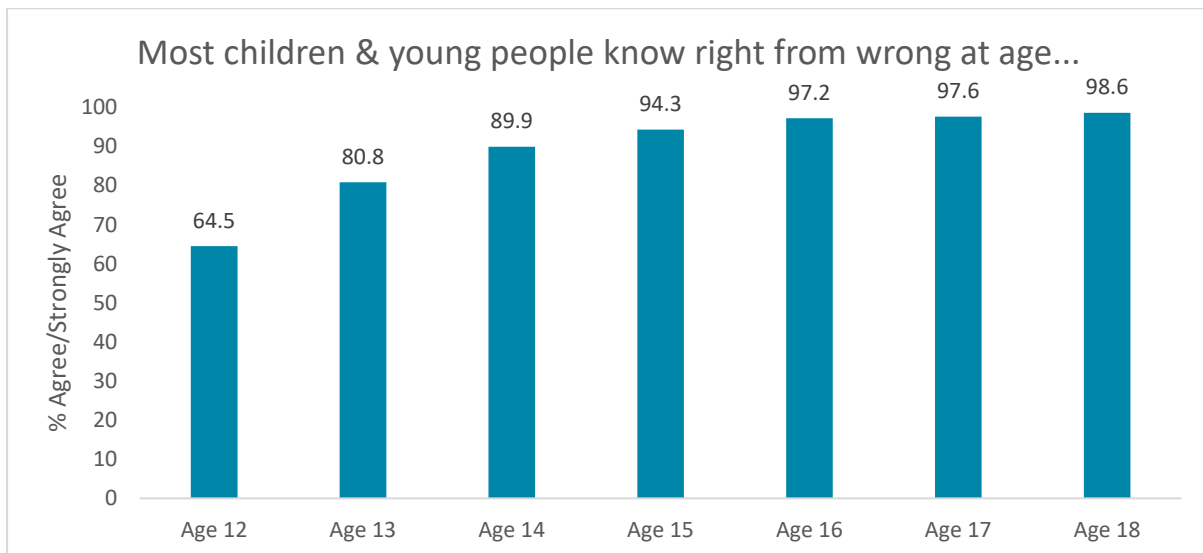
As stated above, there was 342 responses to this survey. The age of respondents ranged from 10-26. The age with the most uptake was 15, with 19.9% of respondents being this age. However, the overall average age of respondents was 17.

Gender

We had good responses from all genders with 63.7% of respondents being female, 33.6% being male, 1.8% being non-binary and 9% preferring not to say. On reflection, perhaps more could have been done to further diversify the respondents, particularly those from non-binary backgrounds. A partnership with LGBT Youth Scotland would further enhance this going forward for any other pieces of research.

Most children & young people know right from wrong:

This was the first question posed to respondents and was asked from age ranges 12 right through to 18. This graph details those who either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



Here is a breakdown of all responses by age:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Age 12	14.2	42.2	19	19	5.7
Age 13	24.2	47.8	11.9	12.3	3.8
Age 14	40.2	47.1	4.2	7.5	1
Age 15	53	39.6	3.7	3.7	0
Age 16	66.1	29.1	2.7	2.1	0
Age 17	74.4	22.5	3.1	0	0
Age 18	79.3	18.2	2.5	0	0

Analysis:

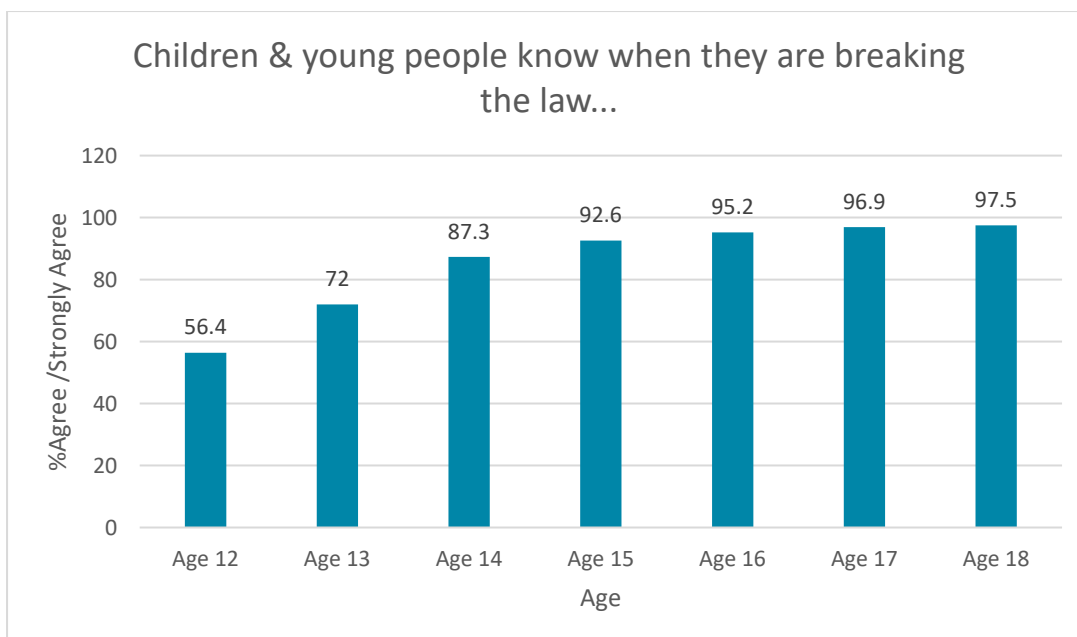
Whilst the overall majority of respondents agree that at age 12 you know right from wrong, this does not mean they are advocating for the age of criminal responsibility to stay at 12 as the detail of this report shares.

“I think it should be 12 before you can get charged with an offence but 15 before it goes through the process of being official”

“Because at the age of 12 you’re able to start at secondary school and if you’re in secondary school you should of learnt right from wrong in primary school”

Most children & young people know when they are breaking the law:

This was the second question posed to respondents and was asked from age ranges 12 right through to 18. This graph details those who either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



Here is a breakdown of all responses by age:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Age 12	14.2	42.2	19	19	5.7
Age 13	24.2	47.8	11.9	12.3	3.8
Age 14	40.2	47.1	4.2	7.5	1
Age 15	53	39.6	3.7	3.7	0
Age 16	66.1	29.1	2.7	2.1	0
Age 17	74.4	22.5	3.1	0	0
Age 18	79.3	18.2	2.5	0	0

Analysis:

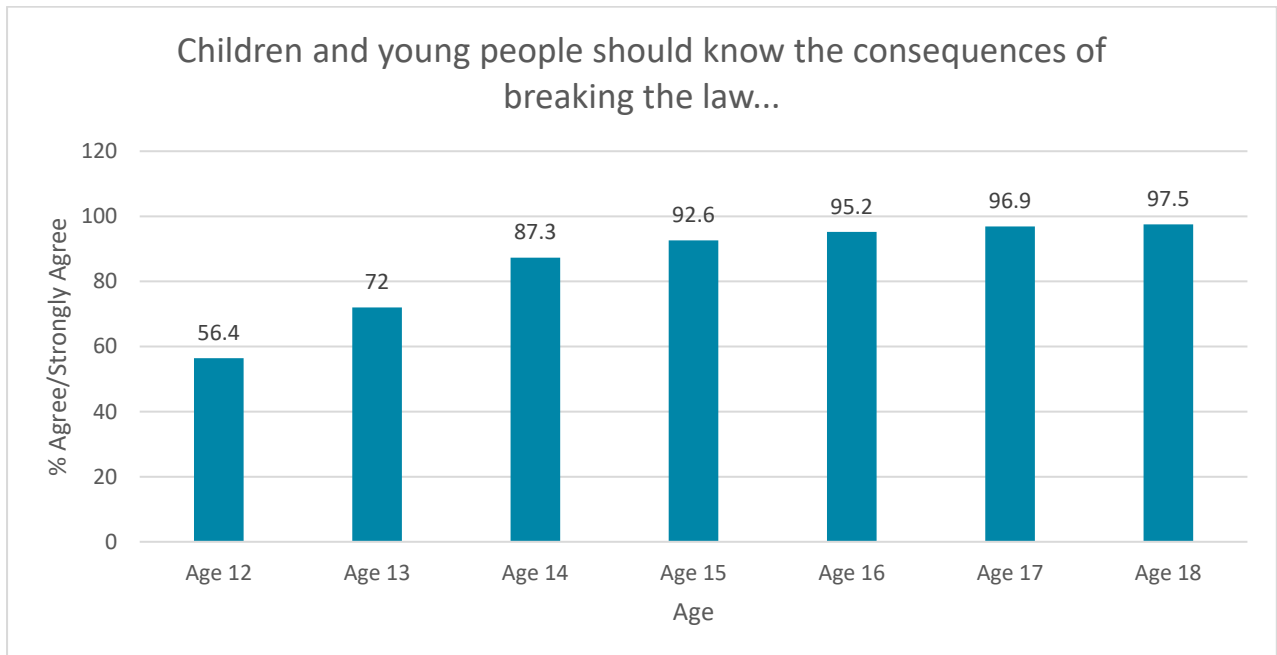
Whilst just over half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that children aged 12 know when they are breaking the law, we begin to see a culture change the older the age range gets. For example, at age 16, only one person disagreed with the above statement and for ages 17 and 18 there was no disagrees, only a small proportion whom neither agreed nor disagreed.

“Because at that age (16) you should know your rights and wrong and should be old enough to recognise that”

“At the age of 13 you definitely know the difference between right and wrong. Starting secondary school changes you and you start acting and getting treated like an adult. However it depends on your surroundings and role models in your life”

Most children and young people understand the consequences of breaking the law:

This was the third question posed to respondents and was asked from age ranges 12 right through to 18. This graph details those who either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



Here is a breakdown of all responses by age:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Age 12	14.2	42.2	19	19	5.7
Age 13	24.2	47.8	11.9	12.3	3.8
Age 14	40.2	47.1	4.2	7.5	1
Age 15	53	39.6	3.7	3.7	0
Age 16	66.1	29.1	2.7	2.1	0
Age 17	74.4	22.5	3.1	0	0
Age 18	79.3	18.2	2.5	0	0

Analysis:

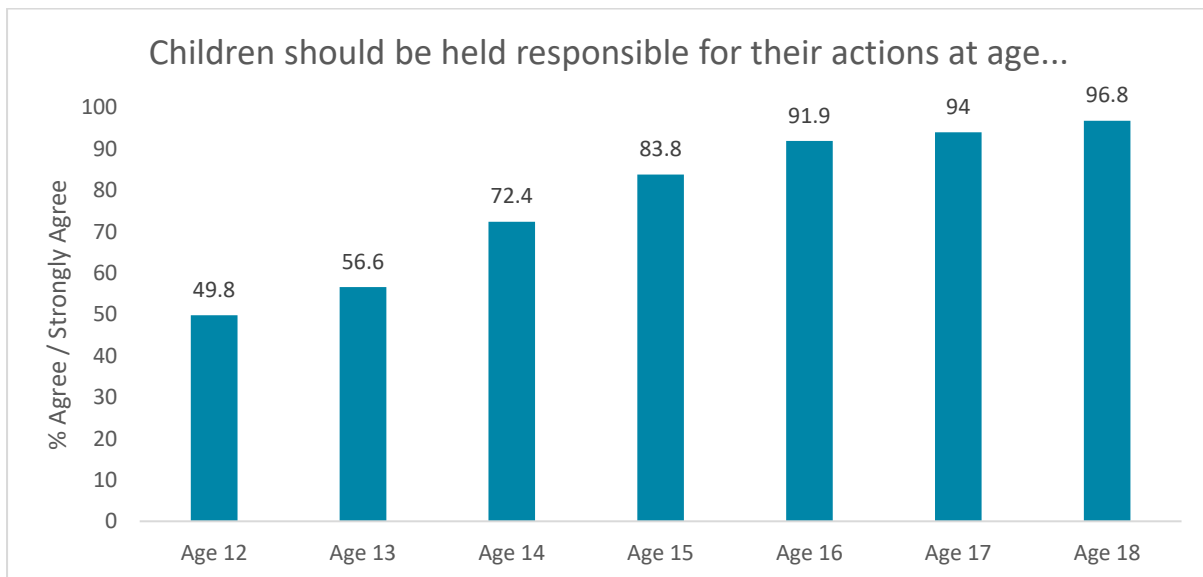
Again, here we see a similar upward trend the older the age range gets. It is important to note however, that the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement for 12 year olds is lower than the answers to the above two questions. This could mean that although at age 12 you may know right from wrong, you may not necessarily understand the consequences of breaking the law and what could happen.

“Because younger people shouldn't be punished necessarily but should be taught using therapy of some sort to be taught not to do that” (16)

“I think that up until 17/18 teenagers still need a lot of guidance and support. Depending on the offence and the circumstances there should be a consequence that helps to show them a different way and to be given a chance to better themselves”

At what age should children and young people be held responsible for their actions?

This was the fourth question posed to respondents and was asked from age ranges 12 right through to 18. This graph details those who either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



Here is a breakdown of all responses by age:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Age 12	10.9	38.9	23.3	19.5	7.4
Age 13	17.6	39	21.7	15.7	6
Age 14	30.3	42.1	15.1	10.2	2.3
Age 15	42.9	40.9	8.1	6.8	1.4
Age 16	58.3	33.6	5.1	2	1
Age 17	65.5	28.5	3.5	1.8	0.7
Age 18	75.7	21.1	1.8	1.1	0.4

Analysis:

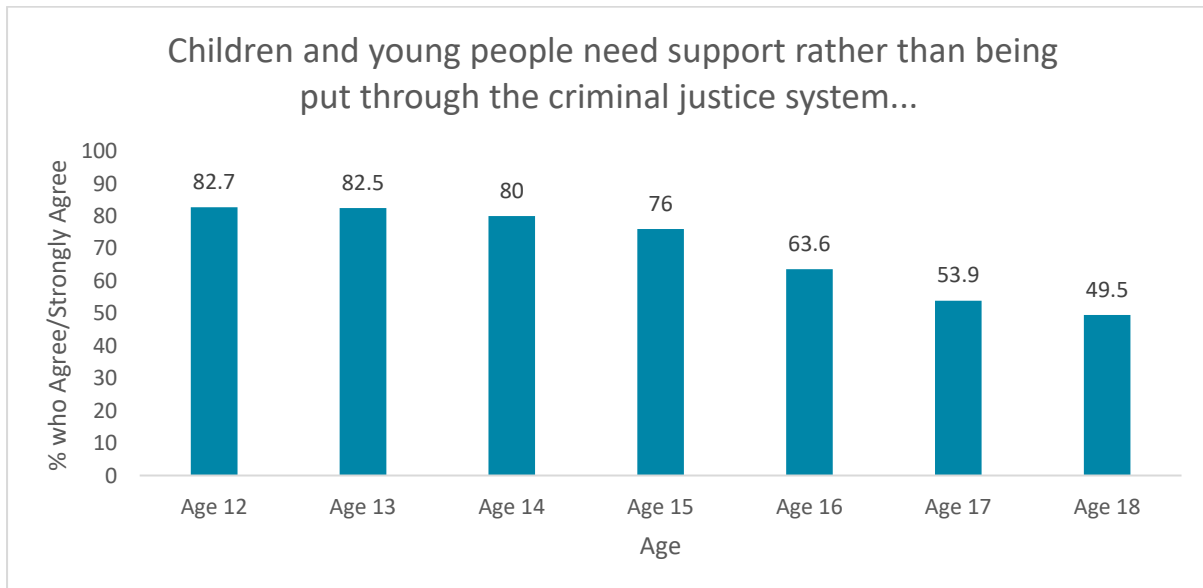
Although we are seeing the same upward trend the higher the age of children, just less than half of respondents believed that 12 year olds should be held responsible for their actions. We are seeing the same downward trend for 13 and 14 year olds too. The evidence suggests that this was a pivotal question in the survey.

“Because by that age you understand what you are doing. You also know the difference between what is right and what is wrong so you should be held accountable for your actions” (14)

“By this age, most young people have a fuller understanding of their actions but they still require significant help and support”

Children and young people need support rather than being dealt with in the criminal justice system:

This was the fifth question posed to respondents and asked from age ranges 12 right through to 18. This graph details those who either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



Here is a breakdown of all responses by age:

Column1	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Age 12	48.2	34.5	12.2	3.9	1.2
Age 13	43.8	38.7	11.7	4.1	1.6
Age 14	42.7	37.3	10.3	7	2.7
Age 15	39.2	36.8	10.3	8.6	5.2
Age 16	36.3	27.3	18	11.1	7.3
Age 17	32.1	21.8	19.6	17.1	9.3
Age 18	31.8	17.7	13.7	22	14.8

Analysis:

Although we have seen high percentages in previous questions regarding accountability, there seems to be a consensus that young people who are in conflict with the law need support, not punishment. This particular data set further strengthens the argument for 16 and 17 year olds to be redirected to the Children's Hearing System rather than a criminal court.

“They are now legally an adult (18) and so when committed a crime, it should be dealt with mainly through the criminal justice system”.

“At age 16 you have many of the rights adults have, and are able to leave school for work, therefore you are able to be an adult member of society, so should be treated as one. Anyone under 16 is still in education and may not fully understand the consequences of their actions, it may also impact on their job prospects in the future from having a criminal record”

What age should the age of criminal responsibility be?

Of the 285 responses received on what the respondents think the Age of Criminal Responsibility should be, the top three ages are:

14 – 16.8%

16 – 24.6%

18 – 16.1%

Analysis:

This specific component of the survey is of key importance. Although respondents have answered the above questions - which at times may seem as though they have a clear idea of what the Age of Criminal Responsibility should be - the answer to the final question: What do you think the ACR should be? has presented a clear unequivocal challenge to Scotland and how it responds to young people in conflict with the law. It is also a stark reminder that young people across Scotland are saying the status quo of 12 is no longer acceptable. Perhaps had there been a question around restorative justice we may have seen different results; however, the overall consensus is that these young people need **support** and not to be **criminalised**.

“For many young people, 16 is an age where they have learned a lot from their surroundings and should know what is illegal. Anyone younger won't understand the true consequences of their actions, and between then and when they turn 16 they will have matured more. So at 16, they should have an amount of what is right and what is wrong”

“Young people's brains do not finish developing until age 25. While young people should hold responsibility, prison is a place where young people may fall into worse situations. So while justice should be served, young people should be placed into a support system that encourages reform alongside acknowledging their crimes”

Conclusion:

This survey has been extremely useful in gathering the views of young people. They have answered the questions posed with a nuanced and balanced view. The data we have received will serve its purpose on the Age of Criminal Responsibility research subgroup, and additionally can be used within the wider landscape of care and justice. Although respondents may have answered ‘agree or strongly agree’ with most statements, it is clear they want to see their peers being supported, not punished.

Appendix 1 – Children and Young People’s Views

What age should ACR be?	What age do you think the Age of Criminal responsibility should be? - Why do you think that?	Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the age of criminal responsibility or children in conflict with the law?
12	because at the age you should definitely know right from wrong	
14	I think it should be at least 14 years old. This is due to the brain still not fully developed and therefore can struggle to understand their actions/consequences.	
18	Because my rights as a child are up to 18	no
16	16 seems like a good age where people can understand the impact of their actions around them.	
18	If a young person is not able to vote or purchase alcohol and cigarettes until they are 18, then they should not be punished for an illegal activity or held fully responsible for criminal activity at the age of 10. Someone at the age of 10 is a child. If they are breaking the law and carrying out criminal/illegal activity at 10 years old then there is something significantly wrong with their surroundings. A ten year old doesn't wake up and decide they want to commit a crime, it should be recognised as a 'cry for help', an in-depth investigation of their surroundings such as their family, home, school and social life. I believe they should be held responsible but only with the correct in-depth support to healing and making amends from the incident.	
15	At 16, we give young people the chance to leave school, get married, join the Forces etc. This means that we trust 16 year old to be responsible for their own decisions. I think that penalisation of young people should always include supporting them to rehabilitate, but there should be punishment too.	
15	Because that is a good age to take responsibility	
18	More mature, any younger you wouldn't understand as much as you do as when you are older	Sometimes people get in with the wrong crowd
13	Because they are old enough to know right from wrong. The brain may still be developing but they are at the age where they should know.	
16	because you are not legally classed as a young adult until this age, anything below is classed as a child, children are meant to be taught right from wrong and if they aren't then can we blame them for breaking the law? they need to be taught instead of punished, educated instead of punished.	Some children have a better childhood than others and some have different behavioural problems which play statistically a big part in criminal activity, because of that i dont get why there is an age

16	If they old enough to have sex, leave school, move out, drive, smoke and drive then they are old enough to be accountable for their actions	
13	You are a teenager, at secondary school by now and definitely know right from wrong	
13	At the age of 13 you definitely know the difference between right and wrong. Starting secondary school changes you and you start acting and getting treated like an adult. However it depends on your surroundings and role models in your life.	
16	Don't really know should be old enough to know the consequences	Nope
18		
14	In line with other countries	Regardless of the age of criminal responsibility the response should always be initially for support rather than punishment for young people in Scotland.
12	12 year olds know what they are doing	
17	I think that up until 17/18 teenagers still need a lot of guidance and support. Depending on the offence and the circumstances there should be a consequence that helps to show them a different way and to be given a chance to better themselves	
15	Reasoning skills become more defined, know right from wrong and that there are consequences to not abiding by the law	
16	I believe that too many of "typical" childhood and adolescent behaviours are criminalised e.g. fighting, sexual exploration. Those children who are involved in harmful behaviour need to be supported and risk needs to managed, but nothing is achieved by placing "offender" labels on them. I have chosen 16 in line with when matters are dealt with by the court, however I also believe that those children aged 16-18 should be dealt with by the children's hearing system when practicable.	
12	it depends the crime - but whatever their age the damage the do to the victim does not change	
14	This is the age I feel you mentally mature	
12	Because all teenagers should know the damage	
17		
16	Age when a lot of stuff becomes legal	In an ideal world anybody who commits a crime should be given support not jail time or whatever as long as it's not a really serious crime
16	16-18 depending on circumstances. But too many young people are charged with minor offences which then change their whole life and stops them from getting jobs etc.	

16	Too young to know what doing	
18	From the ages of 12 - 18 the brain is still developing so there may be some confusion about right and wrong	
18	Although the prefrontal cortex isn't formed until the age of 21 and so arguably a full understanding of risk taking isn't formed until then- 18 is the age in which people are largely considered adults within Scotland. These people still need and deserve help and support over punishment:	
15	Because they are older and can understand better	
14	14 is the UN minimum. 16 makes more sense from a legal standpoint as it is the age of majority in Scotland. If you can't be deemed responsible enough to own a hamster until 16 you probably shouldn't be anywhere near a criminal court below that age.	Nothing really apart from the fact it is ludicrous how a 12 year old can get a criminal record here but in most of Europe they'd be dealt with in terms of their needs and the offending would be looked at as a welfare issue regardless of severity. Criminalising kids is never right.
12	i think it should be 12 before you can get charged with an offence but 15 before it goes through the process of being official	
19		
18		
12	good	
12	Because at the age of 12 your able to start at secondary school and if your in secondary school you should of learnt right from wrong in primary school.	I was a terror as a child even at 12 years old. I knew right from wrong but always chose to do wrong. I received a lot of support but that never helped me change my behaviours. After being sent away to a secure unit i finally clicked and changed my behaviour. Support never helped but having my freedom restricted and being taken away from my home town for a few years whilst i was taught a bit more on how to act and behave in public and at home that helped.
17	I think by this time you should know better	young people should be supported by workers or families. the children hearing protects u the P.F. some time forget

		that we are young and need support
15	At a young age of 12 we may understand right from wrong but we may not understand this is illegal and the true consequences. Support groups/1-1 should be used in most cases for children of this young age to support them to understand mistakes and how to move on from them, allowing them safe spaces to build their resilience	
16	I believe people may do crimes on purposes or may out of health problem but if they get help in time it could change that	
15	I think when your 14 you start to understand more the consequences and how bad it is to break the law but I think that it isn't fair to be tried until you are 15 as you've had a year to really kind of grow up and have some realisation of the real world therefore you have a much better judgement and if you are still stupid enough to go and break the law even though you know the consequences I think that is the price they should pay. But I definitely think that 12 is far too young as they don't have a knowledge of life or the consequences and for many they are still very immature and do stupid things without thinking about them so instead of having to attend court should be given support in order for them to realise right from wrong and condition them that what they have done is wrong	Anyone under the age should be given correctional but living support and not be isolated in a scary method such as attending court and therefore are less likely to end up in and out of juvie growing up and then in and out of jail when in adulthood. This teaching of right to wrong would allow children to realise that although what they have done is wrong it shouldn't mean that they are isolated from society and feel alienated for a bad mistake which presumably many of them do regret
16	Too young before then to take full responsibility or understand consequences or too young to realise impact of consequences	
21	Young people are not fully aware of the consequences and the impact that could have on them.	Young people often don't really think about the impact that charges can have on them or the implications this can have later in life. I would say most young people know right from wrong but don't know how everything works within justices system.
15	Because they are getting closer to adulthood and need to take responsibility for their actions.	No

14	Because they need support not punished as sometime they are doing because of problems in the past	
12		
15	People are responsible for their own action by the time they get to this age	
17	Because they should know better at that age	
16	Because at that age you should know your rights and wrong and should be old enough to Recognise that	
14	Because they are likely to understand what a crime is and that it is wrong	
14	I think that at age 14, the majority of kids know what's right and wrong, and are aware of consequences that they'll be faced with. From 12 to 14 you learn a lot more about consequences and the criminal justice system.	
18	I think that is the age in which people are fully able to make their own decisions and should know the consequences	I think there should be a bigger emphasis on support and rehabilitation than punishment
16	In Scotland, at age 16, people are considered adults and are given the right to leave home, get a job, leave school and get married. Because of this I think 16 is a fair age to assume teens and young adults do know right from wrong and can face the consequences for breaking the law. However, I still believe punishment is more damaging for some who has broken the law and those under 18 who have broken a law should be faced with rehabilitation and support.	At age 12, many are still in primary and have not been taught and do not understand how breaking the law can be damaging to society. That makes it unfair to assume they are able to face the consequences when many will not understand what they have done wrong.
16	I would think most 16year olds were mature enough to know actions mean consequences.	Social issues, family circumstances etc should be taken into account when young person breaks the law.
16	Because younger people shouldn't be punished necessarily but should be taught using therapy of some sort to be taught not to do that	
12	Because they will get support and know from right to wrong	
16	By this age, most young people have a fuller understanding of their actions but they still require significant help and support.	
14	Because by that age you understand what you are doing. You also know the difference between what is right and what is wrong so you should be held accountable for your actions	
17	Greater understanding or right and wrong and consequences for their actions	
10	They know at that age they did wrong	
16	Because by then you should know what you are doing and if it's wrong or not	

14	At 14 they have had more experiences e.g high school so I feel they would be more aware of what is right and wrong	
14	you have been in high school for longer and are less naive	
17	I feel like kids aren't fully understanding what they're doing wrong as they are still very immature younger than I'd say 17.	
16	At 16 most people should know right from wrong and it is an age when you get more legal rights in Scotland	I do not think children of 12 should be held responsible in the way they are now.
14	unless a major crime, many do not realise the seriousness of their actions until they are reaching puberty or are taught this in modern studies at school	
15	Most people have an understanding of right from wrong at this age	
12	By the age of 12 children should know better but it could be argued that although they should know better it doesn't mean they definitely do	
12	At that age you fully know right from wrong	
13		
18	You are no longer considered a child	
14	most people don't know the justice system well enough till then	Some children take advantage of not being charged
16	Age classed as young adult	
12	As the understand the difference between right and wrong	
14	Start of high school, becoming more independent, mature enough	
13	it is the perfect cut off between a child and a person in high school who is slowly being introduced to the adult world	all children (under the age of 18) should be helped if they so happen to commit a criminal offence as it is mostly not their own fault
14	12 years is too young in my opinion because you are a child at that age. You are probably able to judge whether what you're doing is wrong or forbidden but you are in no way old enough to consider the consequences. Support is the only way to help young people on the wrong track, anything else (like punishment/legal consequences) will not help them become a better person. (I'm judging this based on the 12 year olds I know). At 14 however, you've learned a lot. It's a huge gap. (though it seems small) You're much more independent and capable of considering consequences.	Anyone under the age 17/18 should receive more support than punishment. You can help these people, they're most likely not lost yet. Don't anger them. Don't make them hate and distrust the system. Help them.
18	They are adults and know what they should and shouldn't do by then	



10	Horrendous crimes such as the murder of James Bulger have shown that young children are capable of appalling crimes. Therefore in the instance that such a crime happens again the young perpetrators must face justice for the protection of society.	The Scottish Justice System is a joke. We need harsher and longer punishments in order to deter petty crime from happening in the first place. For more severe crimes we need punishments in which the public is protected as opposed to supposed life sentences where the offender can be released after 20 years.
14	As you have most likely matured to an ability of understanding of wrong doing	
15	children below the age of 15 haven't always been taught the necessary life skills to avoid crime/getting involved with crime and people below the age of 15 that commit crimes often have much more to their story than the fact that they have just committed a crime and should be given help to make them a better person and give them a better chance to be successful in their future.	
15	Feels about right	
16	I feel that this is the age where you begin to be exposed to illegal activities and are aware what will happen if you partake in it	
12	By age 12 you should have a good idea of what is morally right and wrong and understand their actions and why they did them	
18	legally an adult	
16		
18	Most young people are in education until 17.	12 is far too young. Young people are not educated about crime and the law unless they study Modern Studies and even then not all schools teach the Crime and the Law unit.
16	More devolved	
14	old enough to know the consequences of their actions	
16	As I believe that is the age where people are aware of their actions enough to bear the consequences those actions may receive	
16	Before the age of 16 you should be held account but helped via guidance and help not with dealt with by the justice system	
16	It is the age when you can legally leave school and provide for yourself so you should have to be held accountable	
16	21	
18	People are seen as more independent at this age.	

14	By then people have reached an age of maturity where they should be held responsible for their actions.	
14	12 is to young	
18	they are now legally an adult and so when committed a crime, it should be dealt with mainly through the criminal justice system.	
14	I think it's only at that age that children start to mature.	I think that helping criminal children should come far before punishing them.
15	It is the age where I consider myself intelligent enough to think freely and responsibly.	
16		
17	Teenagers simply lack the cognitive ability that adults have to process decisions made which could be deemed wrong and/or illegal therefore situations where they have broken the law have to be handled carefully	
18	This is when you are classed as an adult rather than a child.	
21	Don't think maturity & emotional capacity begins to fully develop until this point. Under this age you dont always realise the consequences of your actions. Children committing crime need support & early intervention, not prison sentences. They aren't mature enough to cope with the court system.	
16	Whilst people of a younger age should be held responsible for actions, they should not face criminal charges until they are legally an adult - unless the crime is severe and there was clear intent and planning behind it.	
10	Society is becoming more and more deviant through a leniency approach. Enforcing the responsibility part should be priority, and at a lower age.	
18	As they are classed an adult	Children who commit crime should be supported unless they have committed a serious crime like murder.
12	Because at this age you're in high school and being taught like skills to get your prepared for the real world. If you behave badly or commit an offence you should be dealt with accordingly. I think most people know when they are doing something wrong but think they know they will probably get away with what rhymes have done due to their age. There needs to be clear information regarding what could happen if you commit an offence m, for example what might happen at the worst case.	

18	Under 18s generally do not fully appreciate the impact of their actions on the rest of their lives, and are known to be more reckless and impulsive than those over 18. Clearly, there are exceptions to every generalisation and 18 year olds do not have a sudden understanding that 17 year olds do not, but given the rights given to 18 year olds I think it is a fair balance to expect criminal responsibility to be introduced at the same time as those rights. However significantly more support must be available to those 18 and older as well as those under that age, regardless of the age of criminal responsibility.	
15	This is when you know what breaking the law is and in school around 15 you learn the consequences	
18	Children who are heavily in developmental stages even into late teens are still impressionable and will benefit from rehabilitation and support more than they would punishment.	
15	before that people don't always act considering everything and thinking about it before but at 16 you definitely consider more and think for themselves and are from my point of view ready to take responsibility	
16		
16	At age 16 you have many of the rights adults have, and are able to leave school for work, therefore you are able to be an adult member of society, so should be treated as one. Anyone under 16 is still in education and may not fully understand the consequences of their actions, it may also impact on their job prospects in the future from having a criminal record	Although I don't think children should have a criminal record, I do believe education and support for those challenging the police and law at a young age is essential. This could take place in a residential facility
17	You are just becoming adult and should be treated like one, should fully know right and wrong	
8	They know they're doing wrong.	No
11	Children under 11 may not realise they are breaking the law	
12	By age 12, children know right from wrong	
14	Because by this age you should know right from wrong, and be able to understand that what you do has consequences	
14	There may be some younger people that could know they are breaking the law by doing some people who won't and I would think people at the age of 14 and over should know if they are breaking the law or not	I think children that are under 16 and claim they didn't know they were committing a crime should get a reduced sentence unless it has been proven that they knew what they were doing
8	Because by then you know right from wrong and your parents have told you the consequences of committing a crime and what would happen	

10	I believe that being raised with rules and boundaries a child does know right from wrong. Children are very often taught the law in schools and many are exposed to the crime in everyday life. A child between 10-12 can understand the law and know what is acceptable.	
13	By this age individuals have a sound understanding of what is right and wrong.	There should be a comprehensive support system in place for children who have broken the law in order to help rehabilitate without a primary focus on punishment as this will reduce the chances of reoffending in the future.
15	At 15 you are old enough and mature enough to know right from wrong no matter what your situation is whereas at 12 some people may have grown up with it and not know any different	
16	It's not a kid but not fully an adult	
15	Old enough to understand, should perhaps have more leniency in punishment, but to say that most 15 year olds do not understand right and wrong is a lie	
20	Because they are old enough to suffer the consequences	
14	They should be able to know if they are breaking the law but depending on what they have done for example murder would be jail but if it was something like underage drinking etc they should be given help because it might not be their fault just the way they are brought up.	
15	at this age you should know there will be consequences to any action you carry out	
14	I think that because at the age of 12 you are still learning right from wrong and you deserve a chance to learn from mistakes yourself. Whereas at 14 you should know what's right and wrong and take consequences for your illegal actions.	NO
16	that's when you are legally an adult in Britain	
18	I think this because it's when you're grown up	
14	Just the right age of maturity	
18	Children under the age of 18 aren't adults yet, they are prone to making stupid mistakes when they are young and often don't understand what they're getting in to and the long term impacts.	There should be more education on what happens when you commit a crime/ have a criminal record especially in primary school.
15	It's the age that children are looking to the future with exams so they should be looking after themselves and not getting into trouble	
17	I think that because it's a good age for them to be independent and understand their own person	

12	By 12 children are in high school and should be well aware of what's right and what's wrong and should know When someone is breaking the law	Children 12-16 should receive extra support when they have conflict with law but after 16 I think they should have learned a lesson and if not they should be treated as a criminal
16	I think 16 because it's not too young and too old to be taking responsibility for their action	
14	Because I feel that if you're younger than 14 some people don't understand the full on consequences but if your 14 or older then I feel that if you have committed a crime then you should get punished for it since at this point you should know what's right and what's wrong.	no thank you
16	16 is when a child can move out and it makes sense as they are fully aware of their actions	
14	Many people understand by the age of 14 what they are doing and the consequences of it	
19	your old enough to know what you're doing and you know it's bad	
14	Because when they are that age that is them becoming an adult	no
21	because they are older and have been young but it is time at that age that they grow up and know there rights from wrong	drinking should be sold to 16 yrs n higher
18	At the age of 18 you are classed as an adult so surely you can make decisions for yourself and know what is right from wrong	
		No
17	your nearly an adult at 17 and should be mature enough to see what you've done and how it affects on u and others	
14	Before 14 they don't know all the laws of what you could do wrong	
16		
17	because by 17 you should know what's wrong and right	
18	Children below the age of 18 are trying to live the best childhood without thinking of the consequences	
16	I think this because some people have been raised to break laws from their parents etc	
17		
13	cause that's kinda when you become and teenager and probably have more responsibly and know what ur doing	cant think of anything :)
13	because that's the teenager age starts	
18	because you are an adult at age 18	
17	I think this should be the criminal responsibility age because you are almost an adult	



13		
14	because there is little kids running around beating people to there death knowing they will get away with it even when the police find them they take them to the station and they get let go the next day and do it again	no
11	They ae becoming older and more aware of the criminal system so should be taking more responsibilities in all aspects of their lives.	
16	They should know not to break the law because the should be old enough to understand what happens if they do	
12	I knew what I was doing when I was twelve.	Every family circumstances is different. Every child is different. We differentiate in school as some kids are more able to understand instructions and rules than others.
15	people younger are usually led into life like that and don't have a choice and need help and nothing else	
12	Because more and more young children think that they can get away with anything they do illegal	young children aged 12 upwards need to be taught right from wrong because more and more parents don't tell there children what they have done wrong and let there children do what they like.
16	For many young people, 16 is an age where they have learned a lot from their surroundings and should know what is illegal. Anyone younger won't understand the true consequences of their actions, and between then and when they turn 16 they will have matured more. So at 16, they should have an amount of what is right and what is wrong.	
16	They're old enough to know what's right and what's wrong	



16	Because 16 is mainly the entry point to the adult life	<p>In my answers I mainly put in the middle. This is because it is very unlikely that just grouping to a specific age for crime and responsibilities is to work. its just not right, it's completely dependent on up being, it's possible they do know it's wrong but do it away same as it's just as possible they do it and don't know it's right. Really this should be family/background oriented tho yes it's a pain and will be incredibly hard but it's better than a system that only picks on on the specific group considered "most people". It should be judged on what they know, up bringing, family background, education and friend group and just as important what crime has been committed. From entry to high school I think that point on there should be a punishment but also someone there or system in place that can help them know right from wrong and not to do it, this should be kept like that till age 16-18 depending on if the person is a repeat offender or actually showing proof of improvement. After 16-18 the punishment and help they get should be drastically improved given that they're still doing it tho it probably should of been up to whomever was involved in the past like start of high school to judge if their help should be improved, but this shouldn't be led to just one person but as a group given one persons idea about them can differ to an</p>
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		other.
13	That's when you become a teenager and it's more likely for you to know from right from wrong.	no
14	Because most people have a very well developed brain that can tell right from wrong	
17		
16		
15		
13		
12	Because they know right from wrong by that age	
17	more understanding of consequences	
15		
10	So children are aware of their actions at a young age. So to not spiral into a descent of trouble	Teenagers at 13 to 15 need help. There should be no justifiable reason a teen should commit crimes. So they need the help the most.
18	Umm I don't know	
17	Should be responsible for their actions	No
18	That is classed to be when you are sort of an adult	
12	as it is a good age to learn of the consequences to your actions	
14	12 is too young and don't have much knowledge of the outside world.	
14	I think that at the age of 12 your just starting to understand what the real world is like because in primary school your getting a lot more individual	

	support but in high school it feels like it's not as much 1 to 1 learning	
16	because i do	
16		
17	basically adults and should know what to do	Sometimes it is down to the parents and how they were brought up to think
18	they are considered an adult and should be treated as one in the eyes of the law	
14	That's when most people know what they are doing is wrong and what the punishment is	
21	Young people's brains do not finish developing until age 25. While young people should hold responsibility, prison is a place where young people may fall into worse situations. So while justice should be served, young people should be placed into a support system that encourages reform alongside acknowledging their crimes.	N/A
12	at this stage in life, parents should have done well to tell their child what is right and what is wrong morally and in line with the law	
16	As that is when they have more responsibility given to them about their lives e.g. can do medical appointments by themselves	
12	I don't think there can be a specific age because obviously it depends on the circumstances however I believe that in the majority of cases I think that 12 should be fine.	I think that punishment in some regard is an important aspect however incarceration is rarely a good remedy. I think there needs to be more focus on the rehabilitation of a Criminal young or old, changing their perceptions or situation to ensure they don't re-offend - especially among the 16-25 age group.
18	You would be more educated about the law and more mature where as someone who is 13 might not know all of the law and might be breaking the rules without even knowing.	
16	I think this is an acceptable age of criminal responsibility as the person would discover more on that there nothing is black and white, right or wrong and i think the age of criminal responsibilities at 12 years old is too low as there are still growing and while 16 is still a youthful age, the person will still be able fully in control of their actions	There is many children that do activities that unlawful and even criminal. It come to the point where teachers and adults are consistently ignoring, pretending it doesn't exist. Teachers and adults have become blatantly lazy in problems with the youth. Which is there jobs

16	16 is the age where most young people are transitioning from being a teenager to an adult.	
14	Don't know	
14	idk	
What age do you think the Age of Criminal responsibility should be? - Age	most young people who offend come from broken homes and there offending is a by-product of there home situation each case should be taken case by case . i do not believe any young child wants to be a criminal.	every child/young person deserves a opportunity to be assessed and supported and educated on what is acceptable in society and what is not rather than punished when they start to offend.
13	because it's an age where most people do bad things	nope
16	i think 13 is too young and 18 is too old because your already an adult. At the age of 16 you should know what the consequences would be. at the the age of 16 you are probably do things by yourself and going places by yourself and you are responsible for everything you do, therefor i think 16 is the appropriate age of criminal responsibility.	your punishment should be determent on what the crime was, for example shoplifting isn't as serious as murder, you should go to court and be questioned and it could be that they were hungry. If you murder someone then that is definitely a serious crime and you should be fully responsible for your actions, go to court, and even therapy, then depending on your age should be put in prison.
12	They are fully aware what they are doing.	
16	Because by that age you should be taking responsibility for you life you are an adult in Scotland and you need to be held responsible for your actions or they will continue to offend and not all parents care	
16	we all know what we are doing at that age and if its wrong or not	
15	Personal feeling of when I was 12 and not sure what was legal or illegal	
18	18 is the age people's child hood stop and they take a step into adult hood. The age of 18 should be the criminally responsible age for the fact that their adults anyone 17 and younger should get help instead of being dealt with in the jury system	
25	I feel a lot of young people are coerced into doing things, low income families children often hang out together because of the same areas etc. Poverty always leads to crime, looked after children always want to hang out with kids they have grown up with, taking them from a safe background in to a dangerous one.	I feel the amount of time you have to declare that you have charges before going for an interview is too long, the rehabilitation act does not help us as much as it should.
16		
12	At age 12 you know the difference between right and wrong	

13	Because	
12	Children under the age of twelve who find themselves committing a crime may not be able to process what might happen, and in many cases, are forced into committing a crime through no fault of their own (Eg have been groomed, abused, or aren't receiving the correct support). While it is true that many children under twelve are aware of what is right and wrong, they are unaware of consequences and what is illegal, and many do not know what is right or wrong. If a child commits a crime below the age of 10 ish, I do not believe it should be held against them in such a staining manner	No, only that there needs to be increased support
12	I think this because at this age, most young people start secondary school and become more aware of crimes and the consequences which come from these. As long as young people are educated and well-aware on what they can and cannot do, I think that this is the correct age.	
18	This is when they're a full grown adult and have gone through school and now have a chance to change their behaviour around but choose not to meaning that they are in the grown up world, take grown up punishments	I believe that interest in drugs beginning in their teenage years should be helped as it is a difficult thing to be addicted to. Possible social groups may help however refusal to do so might be the option to take them in for either handing it out or being in possession of it
16	at 16 years old you are a legally an adult an can leave home there if they can stand on there own two feet do what they wont bad or good then they can have the consequences that come with it.	
16	should be more understanding and more of an adult	
15	Starting to mature and know they could harm someone or there will be consequences	
16		
17	Because they should know better as they are older and should be more knowledgeable	I think we should think if they have learning disabilities as they might not know what they are doing or be at the age they are
14	Because that's when you start growing up in a way. Exams at school, job opportunities and taking responsibility for your actions.	
18	That's when ppl become adults and should pay the consequences for their actions	
14	I think they have the capacity of knowing what is right and wrong now rather than age 12	
14	I think by this age you know the consequences of your actions	

17	Because by then you are an adult and should know the consequences of your actions	
15	At age 15 most individuals understand their actions and the subsequent repercussions of them.	
14	it is the age commended by the UNCRC other jurisdictions such as Sweden are commended for doing so Scotland needs to come out of the dark ages and stop being left behind like it was it 2002 when the SLC were bombarded by the media for wanting to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility back in 2002 it is for these reasons that Scotland should increase the age of criminal responsibility. Personally i would go even further and say 16, as I myself do remember doing things at 14 that i did not really know the consequences of.	I feel my previous answer would of been better placed here. But, Scotland does need further law reform, I understand like Elaine E. Sutherland states that it has taken years to get where we are now, and we shouldn't get ahead of ourselves. But, it is necessary and I do not believe we are getting ahead of ourselves and subsequent reform within the next five years is inevitable in my opinion. So why not now??
16	I think this because they are classed as a young adult and if you are able to move out and have children and get married and are not classed as a minor they should be accounted for their own actions	
15	I believe at age 15 you have more of a grasp on right and wrong and with education in schools (pse, social education, moral education) they understand what is law, what isn't	
15	Because you should know right from wrong by then	No
16	Over the brain hasn't fully developed yet to comprehend and analyse consequences for their actions I do believe that 16-year olds have a better understanding and would be aware to some degree of the consequences of their actions if they are committing an offence for example. However on lower level or less serious offences I think it's important to encourage development and Growth out of what is happened where possible	I believe that children and family services should take a stronger lead over criminal justice services when working with young people under the age of 16 who committed offences. I don't think criminal justice services and adult services such as Court of Justice social work probation etc are appropriate for working with young people because the needs are very different therefore the intervention is very different
18		
14	14 would bring us in line with UNICEF guidelines and international standards - however, we can't sit on a jury until 18. Arguably, a child who can vote can sit on a jury - I would say, ideally, the MACR should be 16 with the age for jury service also reduced to 16	I want to re-emphasise the importance of juries - the MACR and the minimum age for jury service should be equal, regardless of

		where they fall. How can we hold someone responsible for their actions if they aren't old enough to determine someone else's guilt?
16	Better understanding of actions/consequences	
16	At 16 they still have some knowledge and should know what they are doing is wrong and has consequences. But I do feel that because they are 16, they can still go to children's panel and get the support and services/organisations to support them as part of their consequences. We should be trying to stop them from reoffending rather than putting them through our majorly flawed justice system.	Children who are in care or have ACEs™ or are vulnerable should be given additional support.
16	Reached a reasonable level of maturity and education. Need to realise consequences of actions. Holistic support rather than punitive punishment to avoid reoffending.	
16	I believe that as a young person/teenage develops, they will make mistakes and test boundaries. However once a person reached the legal age of an adult, I believe that by then they should already be well educated on the law, and the consequences behind breaking the law	Overall, I believe that as a young adult it is inevitable that people will make mistakes and push limitations. However, I also believe that wither a person knows right from wrong, or is aware of certain consequences depends on that persons education and upbringing. I also believe that young teenagers are getting to more trouble and breaking the law more often. I definitely think there should be consequences for that, but in a productive and constructive manner, so that that person learn from that mistake
18	Deemed 'adult' across other areas at this age, so seems appropriate to apply in this situation.	
16	You can leave school and move out at this age	N/A
12		
17	very helpful	the age should be raised for prison and charges.
16	Same age as marriage, legal sex, and by that age should know right from wrong however I do believe at that age a young person would still need support rather than be punished	N/a
17	because I was young and done stupid things	more supports needed earlier.

15	Because you are still learning about life when you are younger and if you make some mistakes doing this it should not mean that you are a criminal. Also I think if you are already convicted of a crime when you are young then there is nothing to stop you doing it again because you have already now been seen as a criminal	No
18	Cause people under 18 are still learning and experiencing new things	
14	I think different people have different upbringings and that can impact what people do and if they get in trouble. Not everyone has had the same upbringing	
10	because of past crimes for example; the James Bulger Murder	no
17	Depends on people's brains and if they know things	no
18		
16	Because they're a young adult and younger wains are still growing up and not yet understanding what goes on and you are responsible for u at 16 your mum and dad aren't anymore when u turn 16	
16	If young people are able to move out and get a job at 16 they should be held accountable for breaking the law as they are doing things that adults would do	
16	Because your a young adult	If your under the age of 16 and have committed a crime that is severely bad you should get what you deserve
18	Because at 16 u are still learning n can still break the law without realizing sometimes	Police sometimes aggravate people and do more harm than good and cause a reaction
14	We are more responsible at this age	
16	Because when ur are 12 and 14 u don't release how big and a thing it is it not just stop that	
12	Because many mature at this age and would be responsible for any other of their actions	no
18	i think this because at the age of 12 the human brain is still developing. They are still kids who don't fully understand the consequences of their actions. At the ages of 18-20 the human brain has most likely fully developed and the person who has committed a crime is a legal adult. Again they are kids, the 12-17 year old, so throwing them in jail at such a young age will ruin their lives	At the end of the day, the 12-19-year-olds are still kids. They still have their whole lives to live and putting them in jail at such young ages, or getting in serious trouble with the police can bring down the opportunities and chances life has set for them. I do hope this gets read and you take this into consideration. Thank you xx
14.5	Because you should be mature at this age and accept the consequences for your actions	

16		
17	because when your younger young people do stupid things and its when you start to become more of an adult.	
18	Me personally I think that if you are 18 you would most likely know all the laws and rules so if you break one then you should be held responsible.	
14		
21	because you can do a lot of legal things at 21 that you couldn't do when you were younger so therefore if you choose to do something illegal you should have to face the correct consequences.	
15		
18	Perhaps even older since there is now evidence that our brains are not fully developed until 25. I think that anyone below 18 is a child who needs support. No one should have their life ruined by mistakes made at such a young age. Support not punishment is what is needed. 18 would also be in line with the UN rights of the child. Fundamentally it is a human rights issue.	A low age of criminal responsibility is incompatible with upholding children's rights in Scotland. Half of the people in Polmont are Care Experienced and have been failed by adults throughout their lives. It is extremely unfair and must be changed.
16	I think that as not a lot of younger people know a enough about the law and when they have broken the law. I personally feel there needs to me education around what is breaking the law and what's not	No
18	this is when you become and adult.	
18	your an adult.	
14	Fairer	
12	Far too many victims are being forgotten about in favour of those who commit crimes. Responsibility is something everyone needs to know about .	Parents should be held accountable
18	So that everyone has a chance in life	
14		
18	I think it should be at least 16 if 18 or 21 as there have been lots of studies that show brain development in children, young people and young adults does not stop until 21 for most people also young people are still classed as young until 26 so I think they should still be treated as young people until that age	
13	We now live in the age of social media, kids are learning much earlier that they did when I was that age.	They should all be receiving support if going through the criminal justice system. Menial crimes should have more rehabilitative approach that serious crimes such as murder.
14	This is the age I would say most people understand the consequences of their actions	

18	i feel 12 is to young	no
13	once you get to like 14/15 your a young adult and your mature enough to start exams that age then your mature enough not to break the law	
12	fgh	
12	We are in secondary school and we all know right from wrong, even if we live in a household that thinks it's ok to break laws.	I think support should be given along side taking responsibility for their crime at all ages for children in conflict with the law. It's very difficult for some of them to do the right thing when their parents or others are pressuring them, threats of violence. Parents and older siblings and other older people use younger children under 18 to carry out crimes to avoid jail.
21	People under age of 21, whilst might have an understanding of what is "right" and "wrong", might not understand the complexities and consequences of the law. They have not fully matured, are in a period of increased risk-taking that is psychologically 'natural'. Treating young people through the criminal justice system produces more harm for them and their communities and does not encourage the young person's rehabilitation.	
18	You're still developing throughout teen years and might not have a full understanding of consequences or the law, it should coincide with the age of driving and being an adult	
18	As we grow we learn what's wrong and what isn't and by the age we should know how to deal with situations and learn with what we have done	
16	I think you have been at school long enough to know the consequences of your actions. I think you are more of an individual at this age than being part of your family unit	I think it is too low at the moment as 12 is a big age for children where they are moving up to high school and face a lot of different influences and could end up doing things that they didn't know were illegal
18	You are a legal adult the meaning responsibility really falls on your shoulders, when younger you may not know as well as when you would as a legal adult.	That home life and outside life should be taken into consideration and investigated. Things such as trauma can have an affect on the way a person behaves no matter the age.



15	Because at age 15 or 16, you are aware (because of school) the full extent of drugs, the consequences and the trouble you would cause, while at 12 years old, you do not get much talk about crime. Or at least in my experience, my Primary School only talked about the safety measures to alcohol and drugs, but never the consequences.	
14	At 12 and 13 we are still immature and our knowledge of the law is not the best. By 14 we should be held responsible for our actions as by then we know the extent of our actions and the consequences that they will bring.	
16	Because people would be older and more understanding	No except I think the criminal age of responsibility should be 16
13	Because younger children might not always know what they have done is right or wrong	
14	In cases where there is direct harm to others, most people know at the age of 14 that their actions are wrong and should be held accountable for the harm they have caused.	
10	If you commit the crime you can do the time	Panels are a waste of time
16	It is in line with the age of majority in Scotland, which is 16. So from that viewpoint 16 seems consistent. The less kids being criminalised the better.	