

## THIS IS WHAT WE CAN DO DIFFERENTLY



The main thing we should do is make sure that children under 18 who commit an offence are referred to the Children's Hearings System and not to Procurator Fiscal or courts.

As long as children aged under 18 appear in courts we need to do these things now:

- Children who appear in court should get the information and support they need to understand what is happening. Things like easy to read leaflets and videos that explain things would help.
- There should be special court times used for children, earlier in the day and with no public in the courtroom.
- If a child is appearing in a court they should be in a different waiting room from adults. There should be activities to help pass the time.
- To help Procurator Fiscals and Sheriffs think about using bail instead of remand they should be told what supports there are for children in the community. Social Work should be given the time to think about what they can offer to help a child stay in the community.

- Children should be on bail for as short a time as possible and with the least conditions possible.
- If a child needs to be on remand this should be in a secure care unit and not HMP&YOI Polmont.
- Children should be given the support they need to remain in the community, or be able to access a secure placement if needed.

We should do these things as soon as we can:

- There might be some very serious cases that involve a child. When this happens there should be new ways to deal with children, not just sending them to adult courts. We need special courts to do this work.
- Any professional person who deals with children (everyone under 18) who are in conflict with the law should have special training to understand the needs and rights of children.

One final important point to end:

- If we want to change how children are treated when they are involved with criminal justice then we need to involve children in thinking about and planning better ways to do things.

