

**Scottish Child
Abuse Inquiry**

EASY READ

INFORMATION BOOKLET



**Information for people who have experienced abuse in care.
We call these people 'applicants'.**



What is the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry?

- This Inquiry is investigating the abuse of children who were in care in Scotland, within living memory until 17 December 2014.



A child in care includes anyone who was:

- in foster care
- in a children's home
- in a long-term healthcare establishment
- in a young offenders institution
- in a residential or boarding school.



Who is in charge of the Inquiry?

- The person in charge of the inquiry is Lady Smith.
- Lady Smith is a retired senior Scottish judge.



What powers does Lady Smith have?

- The law that applies to the Inquiry gives Lady Smith a wide range of powers.
- Lady Smith's powers allow her to:
 - investigate and hold public hearings
 - order people, including those who were responsible for the care of children, to provide evidence to the Inquiry. This may include records and other documents.



What does Lady Smith do with the evidence?

- Once she has listened to and studied all the evidence, Lady Smith makes findings about what happened, how it happened, and who was involved.
- She may specifically criticise people who were involved.
- She may specifically criticise people who were responsible for protecting children in care.
- She may make other criticisms.
- She makes recommendations for what needs to be done to protect children from being abused in care.



Can you give evidence to the Inquiry?

- We want to speak to anyone who has experienced abuse in care.
- We also want to speak to anyone who has information to share with us about someone they know who was abused in care.



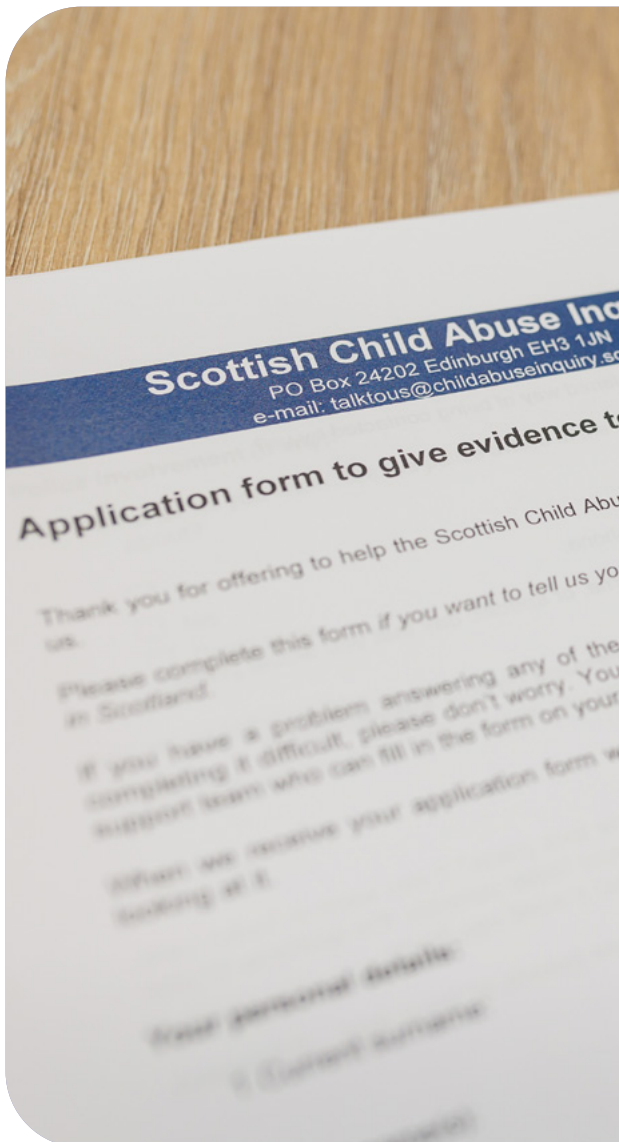
Supporting you to give evidence to the Inquiry

- Sharing your experience or the experiences of other children might be hard.
- Together we can find the best way for you to provide your evidence.
- The Inquiry has a team of experienced Witness Support Officers who can help you through the process.
- **We will work with you to help you feel safe when you speak to us.**



How can you apply?

- You can contact the Witness Support Team on **0800 092 9300** and they will take your information over the phone.
- You can fill in a short form. We can post or e-mail this to you.
- You can apply from our website at **scottishchildabuseinquiry.scot**



What happens when you talk to us?

- We will need to ask you some basic questions. These will include your name, your date of birth, and how we can contact you.
- We will ask you where you were in care and when this was.
- If you were not in care but want to tell us about what happened to someone who you know was abused as a child in care, we will still need to ask the same questions.
- We will not ask you to go into detail when you apply and we do not need to see any records of your time in care.



What happens next?

- If we are able to investigate the experiences you want to tell us about, we will arrange to meet with you.
- We meet with you so that we can ask you about those experiences and write down what you tell us in a statement for you to sign.
- The Inquiry calls this a private session.

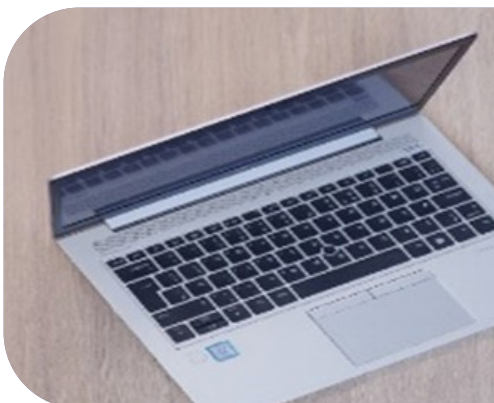


- You can bring someone with you to give you extra support.
- You can also let the Witness Support Team know if you need any other help, like a BSL interpreter.



Protecting others from harm

- **We must tell the police the name of anyone who you tell us abused you or someone else.**
- The police must be able to check if these people are still a risk to children or to others.
- We will not normally tell the police your name unless you want us to.



Preparing your statement

- After your session, we will write what you have told us into a witness statement.
- We will let you know when this has been done.



Reviewing your statement

- We will meet with you again to review your statement.
- You can make changes if you want to. You can also take things out or add things in.



- Once you are happy with your statement, we will ask you to sign it.
- Your witness statement is then evidence to the Inquiry.
- **After you have signed it you cannot change that statement or take it back.**



What is a public hearing?

- The Inquiry holds public hearings so that Lady Smith can hear evidence in public.
- These hearings take place in our hearing room in Edinburgh.
- Members of the public can attend.
- Legal representatives of those taking part in the hearings may also attend.



- Some applicants who have given a witness statement will be asked to give evidence at these public hearings.
- **If an applicant is asked to give evidence at a public hearing but does not want to, they do not have to.**

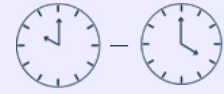


- **If you are asked and you do want to attend, the Witness Support Team will support you and help you feel safe.**
- You can also bring someone with you for support.



How to contact us

- You can phone us on:
0800 0929 300
- **Our phone line is open:**
Monday to Friday
10 am to 4 pm



- You can e-mail us at:
talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot



- You can write to us at:
**SCAI, PO Box 24202,
Edinburgh, EH3 1JN**



If you are deaf or hard of hearing you can:

- use the Relay UK service
- contact us through an online BSL interpreter at **www.ContactScotland-BSL.org**.



When you contact us, please let us know if:

- you have any concerns
- you have additional support needs that might mean you need to share your experiences in a particular way
- English is not your first language
- you need special arrangements because you are in a young offenders institution, prison, or somewhere similar.