



Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019

2019 asp 7

PART 4

POLICE INVESTIGATORY AND OTHER POWERS

CHAPTER 3

QUESTIONING OF CERTAIN CHILDREN

Questioning in urgent cases

54 Questioning of child in urgent cases

- (1) This section applies where a constable has reasonable grounds to suspect that—
 - (a) a child, while under 12 years of age, by behaving in a violent or dangerous way, has caused or risked causing serious physical harm to another person, and
 - (b) there is a risk of loss of life if the child is not questioned immediately.
- (2) The constable may, in so far as necessary to prevent loss of life, question the child about the child's behaviour and the circumstances surrounding it if authorised to do so by a relevant senior officer under subsection (3).
- (3) The relevant senior officer may authorise the constable to question the child as mentioned in subsection (2) only if that officer is satisfied that—
 - (a) there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the child, while under 12 years of age, by behaving in a violent or dangerous way, has caused or risked causing serious physical harm to another person,
 - (b) questioning of the child is necessary to properly investigate the child's behaviour and the circumstances surrounding it (including whether a person other than the child has committed an offence), and
 - (c) it is not practicable to apply for a child interview order authorising an investigative interview of the child because there is a risk of loss of life if the child is not questioned immediately.

Changes to legislation: *Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019, Section 54 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 19 April 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) View outstanding changes*

- (4) In considering the matters mentioned in subsection (3), the relevant senior officer must have regard to—
- (a) the nature and seriousness of the child's behaviour,
 - (b) whether the questioning of the child is appropriate given the child's circumstances (including the child's age and any matter related to the child's behaviour).
- (5) A child in respect of whom authorisation under subsection (3) is granted is not required to answer questions during the questioning authorised by that subsection.
- (6) In this section, a “relevant senior officer” is an officer of the rank of superintendent or above.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Pt. 4 applied (with modifications) (17.12.2021) by 2004 c. 20, s. 56B (as inserted by [The Age of Criminal Responsibility \(Scotland\) Act 2019 \(Consequential Provisions and Modifications\) Order 2021 \(S.I. 2021/1458\)](#), arts. 1(1), **19**)
- C2** Pt. 4 applied (with modifications) (17.12.2021) by 1987 c. 4, s. 2E (as inserted by [The Age of Criminal Responsibility \(Scotland\) Act 2019 \(Consequential Provisions and Modifications\) Order 2021 \(S.I. 2021/1458\)](#), arts. 1(1), **17**)
- C3** Pt. 4 applied (with modifications) (17.12.2021) by 2003 c. 20, s. 31B (as inserted by [The Age of Criminal Responsibility \(Scotland\) Act 2019 \(Consequential Provisions and Modifications\) Order 2021 \(S.I. 2021/1458\)](#), arts. 1(1), **18**)
-

Commencement Information

- I1** S. 54 in force at 17.12.2021 by [S.S.I. 2021/449](#), **reg. 2**

Changes to legislation:

Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019, Section 54 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 19 April 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.

[View outstanding changes](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 18(1A) inserted by [2020 asp 13 sch. 5 para. 7\(8\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 20A inserted by [2020 asp 13 sch. 5 para. 7\(9\)](#)