

# Volunteers needed for the Children's Panel

✘ Edinburgh residents interested in joining the Children's Panel can find out more about the rewarding role, as a national roadshow hits The Gyle Shopping Centre this Wednesday (26 August).

Staff and existing panel members will be on hand to talk to shoppers about the Children's Panel and answer any questions, as the six week search for 560 new volunteers across the country gets underway.

The Children's Panel, which is unique to Scotland, improves outcomes for troubled or at risk children and young people who are in need of care or who have offended.

There are currently 2,500 volunteer panel members across Scotland dedicating their time to attending children's hearings. However, new recruits from a range of backgrounds are needed each year to ensure the system continues to offer the best possible support.

Children's Hearings Scotland, the body responsible for the recruitment, training and support of panel members, urged those who have compassion, the ability to listen and an interest in the welfare of children and young people within their community to apply before the 30 September deadline.

Men in particular are being urged to come forward, to ensure hearings have the right representation as law requires both men and women to sit on each hearing.

Ken Timmins, 67, from Colinton, has been a member of the Children's Panel for just over a year.

He said: "If anyone is thinking of joining, I'd encourage them

to find out as much information as possible and apply.

“The training and support you get is second to none, so it doesn’t matter what background or skills you have as everyone has something different to bring.”

As well as coming to the capital, the roadshow will visit ten other locations across Scotland in a bid to boost application numbers and find the right individuals for the role.

Boyd McAdam, National Convener and Chief Executive, Children’s Hearings Scotland said:

“We’re looking forward to getting out and meeting with potential panel members as our recruitment roadshow gets underway.

“It’s a great way of raising awareness of the Children’s Hearings System, and answering the questions people may have about what being a panel member involves.

“We welcome applications from anyone who feels empathy towards the situations some children and young people in Scotland face. We provide the training to help you have the skills – what we need is your time, your commitment and your compassion. The training is rightly demanding, but is also rewarding. As I can testify, having undertaken it, it can be fun and sociable as well.

“There is no such thing as an ideal panel member. We need a mix of ages from 18 upwards, and from a variety of backgrounds. We also need a mix of both males and females to ensure that the national Children’s Panel has a variety of experiences and perspectives. If you think you have what it takes, then I’d encourage you to apply.”

Applicants need to be 18 or over. The deadline for applications is 30 September 2015. To find out more about becoming a panel member, visit [www.childrenspanelscotland.org](http://www.childrenspanelscotland.org).

