

Glasgow Children's Panel

Proposals for the Establishment of Area Support Teams: Consultation response

The Authority Panel Chair's office in conjunction with the CPAC held a consultation and Team Building event in late August to inform the response to the National Convenor's consultation document. The output from that event has been refined to create a single response while attempting to incorporate the range of views from the exercise.

We have taken as given, many of the assertions and comments made within the consultation document and there is wide agreement on the general approach being taken.

Equally it was not felt appropriate to comment on the structures proposed for any other region, nor the number of AST's.

This response therefore confines itself to the proposed Glasgow model with any wider commentary being confined to subjects raised in the consultation where there is a direct implication for the Glasgow Panel.

Responses, cross referenced to consultation document.

1. Background

The aim of improving the outcomes for children and young people through changes to the legislative framework and practice improvement of the Children's Hearing system is one that we whole-heartedly support.

1.1 Noted and agree

1.2 Noted and agree

1.3 Noted and agree

We are only at the start of a process that can deliver these benefits.

1.4 A National Body should in principal be better positioned to deliver on consistency, quality and support for Panel Members across Scotland.

- National standards on training and consistent quality of delivery are seen as a key element in this process.
- National standards on monitoring and appraisal and consistent quality of delivery are seen as a key element in this process.
- A National approach to the management and administration of the system and consistent quality of delivery is seen as key to this process.

1.5 Noted

1.6 Noted

1.7 Noted

1.8 Agree

We note in this section the responsibility of the AST for allocation of Panel Members to Hearings. This is currently the responsibility of the Authority Panel Chair, and not a CPAC responsibility. As the rota generation and management constitutes a significant workload in an Authority such as Glasgow and is currently carried out by volunteers it is worth highlighting this additional responsibility of the AST and the need for the administrative functions associated with the rota to be properly resourced by employed and properly trained staff.

1.9 Noted. Please see 5.6 for response relevant to Glasgow.

1.10 Noted and agree

1.11 Noted.

Please note the members of the Glasgow sub-cpac's must also be taken into consideration.

1.12 Noted

1.13 Noted and agree

1.14 Noted and agree

1.15

The concept of consistency across Scotland is wholeheartedly supported. We believe however that this should not be confused with a "one size fits all" approach to service delivery. While recognising that in smaller Authorities where a full time staff member is not required, a Service Level Agreement makes good economic and practical sense, there are reservations across the Panel community in Glasgow that this model will best serve in the city for Panel Members, council staff, the National Body or the City Council.

There are many environments where an SLA is beneficial, primarily in delivering a known quantified service at an agreed economic cost. However a primary objective of the government reform is to drive service improvement through innovation and best practice and the SLA model does not serve well in this approach, instead creating seventeen silos of 'make do' service. A staff committed to the ideals of the Children's Hearing system, motivated to deliver service improvement and have personal development recognised within the system offers much greater scope to meet these objectives and will not realistically be achieved by staff simply fulfilling a service contract.

On a less tangible point, the public perception of an ambiguous relationship between CHS and Local Authorities should also be borne in mind. Hearings are responsible for holding Local Authorities to Account for the implementation of their decisions and whether reality or not, should not be seen to be beholden or in a cosy relationship with them. To be truly seen as an independent tribunal this link should have clear and unambiguous boundaries.

2. Pre-consultation process.

Noted

3. Area Support Teams – the roles of members

3.1 Noted and agree

3.1.2 Noted and agree

3.1.3 Noted and agree

3.1.4 Noted and agree

3.1.5 Noted and agree

3.1.6 Noted and agree. Please see 5.6 for response relevant to Glasgow.

3.1.7 Noted and agree. We would note that in a large Authority such as Glasgow the Panel Members serving on the AST are unlikely to have a significant Pastoral role as this is supplied by the Area Chairs/Vice Chairs. In the proposed AST structure this is likely to remain the case and in our view would not prohibit a Panel Member serving on the AST from also participating in a complaints process/working group.

3.1.8 Noted and agree. Please see 5.6 for response relevant to Glasgow

3.1.9 Noted and agree

3.1.10 Noted and agree

3.1.11 Noted and agree

3.1.12 Noted and agree

4. Area Support Teams – proposed structures

4.1 Noted

4.2 Noted and agree

4.3 Noted and agree

4.4 Noted and agree

4.5 Noted

4.6 Noted

4.7 Noted

4.8 Noted

5. Glasgow

5.1 Geography and Boundaries

Noted

5.2 City Council and Health Service Areas

The Glasgow Panel has over 650 Members. While there is merit in aligning Panel teams to the three Service Areas, this would produce Panel Teams of over 200 Members in each. Such large team sizes would be difficult to manage, particularly in terms of Pastoral care, Team building, group training and monitoring.

The City Panel is currently organised in six teams each of around 100 Members. It is generally agreed that these Team sizes can be managed by the current Area Chair, deputy, training committee and sub-cpac structures.

Our current view is that we should retain six Area teams as at present but form them into three 'pairs', each pair co-terminal with the Service providers for the purposes of liaison with relevant partner agencies.

In the longer term we would look at the best way to merge the Areas and at the same time form meaningful smaller Pastoral care groups within the enlarged Areas. There seems no overwhelming case to move to such a model immediately and contact arrangements with the external agencies are being managed appropriately meantime.

Given this dynamic we would recommend that the National Convenor is not prescriptive in establishing structures outwith the AST but allows for adaptability to meet changing needs in the formation of the support hierarchy.

The central activities of coordination, dissemination and representation currently carried out by the Panel Chair office remain and form too large a task to be sensibly placed on a single person (volunteer). As well as the manifold coordination and management tasks, there is significant Panel representation required at various committees and liaison bodies including: CPC, Children's Service Executive, Youth Justice, Chief Executive meeting, SCRA, LAAC, Social work and Police as well as with other sector service providers and external bodies too varied to account. Our view therefore is that the National Convenor should appoint three Panel Members to the AST to perform similar functions to those carried out by the Panel Chair's office.

5.3 Size of Panel to be supported by the proposed AST

Glasgow is the largest Panel Area. It continues to make sense to keep the Panel as a single body dealing with a single local Authority.

Although the Glasgow Panel has Members who live out with the City boundaries, it has been policy that potential Members must have a direct connection with the city through employment or other relevant activity.

The advent of the National Body enabling a more flexible deployment of Members should have recruitment benefits for both Glasgow and neighbouring Authorities.

5.3 Existing joint/cross-boundary CPAC or Panel working

There are no specific cross-boundary arrangements currently in place. As noted above the flexibility offered by a National Panel Membership may offer opportunities for cooperation and ease member transfer in future.

5.5 How this proposed structure would deliver better support for panel members locally

The size of the Authority and workload carried out by the CPAC, sub-committees, Panel Chair's office and 12 Area Chairs and deputies, is very significant. There is clear benefit however to keeping the Panel as a single entity as there are City wide matters that can be best dealt with through a single AST.

We can see no benefit and perhaps a great deal of downside in merging any of the adjoining Authorities to Glasgow.

5.6 Membership of the proposed Glasgow AST

As noted previously the size and workload involved in managing the Glasgow Panel is significant. This is currently achieved by a structure of CPAC plus Area sub-committees (54 members at strength) and a mirror structure in the Panel Chair office (3 x Ministerial appointees and 2 x rota management volunteers) plus Area Chairs and deputies (12) (see chart).

It is neither practical nor sensible to directly appoint all of these individuals to the AST and there is general support for maintaining a hierarchical structure as at present. After consideration we would recommend an AST structure as follows:

- The AST is likely to require an interim disposition of up to twelve Non-Panel Member National Convenor appointees to accommodate the current six sub-committee Chairs as well as the existing CPAC members. It's envisaged this number would reduce over time with natural wastage to around six "non-Panel Member" appointees not including the Chairperson.

Clarification is sought over the membership of CPAC sub-committees. We understand all sub-committee Members will have to be appointed to the AST to hold a valid remit, that being so, what options are available for making the working of the AST practical? (Limited voting rights for sub-committee Members or an Executive AST committee seem to be possible options.)

- One Local Authority appointee.

The Local Authority may require more representation than this, particularly with a possible requirement for someone who manages or can represent the SLA.

- Three Panel Members be appointed to the AST to better represent the membership, and to enable a spread of roles and workload, one of these members to be designated as "Panel Leader" or similar for ease and clarity of decision making and Panel representation internally and externally.
- An AST member (non-Panel Member) to chair AST Area sub-committees.
- Sub-committee Members be appointed to carry out monitor/recruitment functions for the Area and City. Currently 36 members (At full strength: 1 per 12 Members = 54)

As noted above, clarification is sought on the status of the monitors of whom Glasgow currently has 36 and would have 54 if at full strength.

- Area (Panel Member), Team Leaders and deputies be appointed to carry out Pastoral and local training activities. Currently 12. (At full strength: 1 per 35 Members = 18)
- **Clarification is sought as to whether the Training representative is a member of the AST or guest.**
- Clerk

There is a danger that the attending Clerk will become the gate-keeper of the SLA between the Local Authority and the National Body. If an SLA is agreed with the Local Authority, this should be a clearly separated responsibility such that the Clerk does not have a confusion of roles.

22. Conclusion

22.1 Noted

22.2 Noted

22.3 Noted

22.4 Noted. Please see response 1.15 for comments.

22.5 Noted

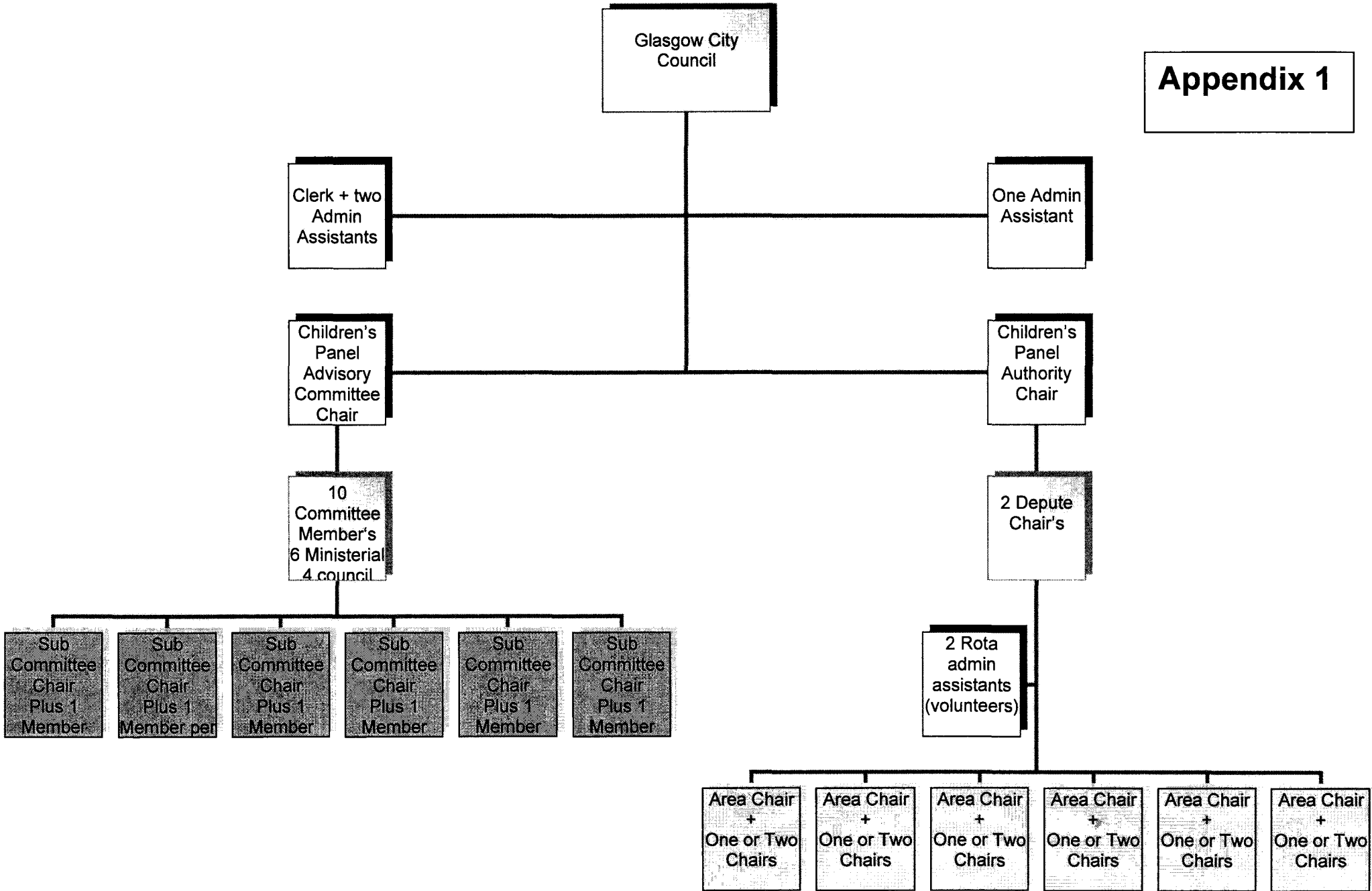
22.6 Noted

Appendices:

Appendix 1 : Current structure Chart

Appendix 2: Proposed structure chart

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

Glasgow Area support Team
Six Non-PM Members
One local Authority Nomination
Three Panel Members
Clerk

Clerk Under a service level agreement with
administrational assistance as required

The SLA solution is not one the
Glasgow Panel Chair's office feels
will offer best value to CHS or the
Local Authority.

