

National Convener

Response to AST Consultation

12th October 2011

Dear Bernadette

West Lothian CPAC agrees with the principle of collaboration in pursuit of improved outcomes and welcomes the suggested solutions from the National Convener. Taking into account geographical, historical, social and community factors, the proposal to join West Lothian with Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Stirling would seem the best solution from the various combinations that were available for central Scotland.

A key outcome following the creation of an Area Support Team should be continuity of front line delivery for children involved in the Hearing System, which retains a local dimension, focusing on available local arrangements, but supported and strengthened by national standards to ensure consistent delivery of the best solutions for the child. Arrangements for ASTs must be robust and scalable to ensure that this key outcome is delivered regardless of the size and composition of the area being supported. West Lothian's Hearing System exhibits a high standard of practice, delivered by dedicated individuals. These are qualities that can be transferred to the Area Support Team suggested by the National Convener. As such, West Lothian's CPAC and administrative support are confident that it can work effectively to deliver the proposed solution.

Whilst the proposals are welcome, there are a number of questions which arise. It is requested that further information is provided in a follow up response from the National Convener or in the report on the consultation process to be issued on 21st November 2011.

- 1) There is some concern over the size of the panel area in terms of travel. Would Panel Members be allocated a hearing centre as appropriate e.g. using preferred postcodes for home and work?
- 2) Clarity is needed in terms of strategy. What are the immediate, short term and long term aims? What are the identifiable milestones and the anticipated delivery dates?

- 3) Is there a timeline for the transition to AST's and what will be expected for the first 100 days after transfer?
- 4) How would change be managed? What sort of change management processes are envisaged to ensure that there is adequate dissemination of procedures etc. and what sort of monitoring arrangements would be in place to ensure compliance?
- 5) What efficiencies and improvements have been identified that will result from the transition to AST's? Have these been quantified? When will these be delivered?
- 6) What is the expected cost of delivering the change process and the ingoing cost of the AST model? How does this compare to existing costs?
- 7) What input would be expected from local authorities in terms of human resources, facilities, catering, expenses and others?
- 8) How would local authorities be reimbursed – would it be an actual costs basis or a set budget?
- 9) What would be the expectation for training – would this be co-ordinated from a central point and delivered locally (and thus repeated within each local area) or will it only be delivered from a central point?
- 10) Will there be Standing Orders for AST's or similar form of guidance defining the roles and responsibilities of AST members?
- 11) Why is the constitution of the central area AST members defined in terms of all existing CPAC members transferring over (without stating a number) whereas the other ASTs have a set number of appointees?
- 12) We need clarity as to the responsibility and accountability of the AST and of its members.

13) We need clarity as to the reporting arrangements from the AST to the centre.

14) Will sub-ASTs be allowed, which can assist the main AST in a similar fashion to the CPAC/sub-CPAC arrangements we have presently? We feel strongly that they should be as they allow knowledge and experience to be built up for new members who can later join the AST and allow AST members to step down to the sub-AST to help at times of peak activity e.g. recruitment as well as retaining their knowledge and experience. It is our opinion that the loss of sub-CPAC members would be a major loss.

15) How would the AST function at an area wide level and at a local level? Would there be an area AST with local or sub-AST's operating at the local level?

16) What kind of support would be provided to the AST and the sub-AST's from the centre and from the local authorities constituting the AST area? Would the support be co-ordinated from one local authority?

17) Would support staff from each of the local authorities still be available to share/use their knowledge and expertise to continue supporting the Hearing system within each local authority area or will there only be one central service?

18) How would the observation rota be managed?

19) How will we ensure that panel members have enough hearings to ensure that they remain competent and confident. The ratios in the consultation paper suggest only 12.4 hearings a year. This should be somewhere in the region of 20 -24 per year?

20) Will we have too many panel members for the area? How will the ideal number be calculated, how will migration to this number be managed and over what timescale?

The AST consultation raises the above questions and we look forward to receiving guidance from you to alleviate the concerns expressed by our CPAC.

Yours sincerely

William D. Macdonald, Chair West Lothian CPAC

