

CHILDREN'S HEARINGS SCOTLAND

Consultation on:

Proposals for the Establishment of Area Support Teams

Response from Western Isles Children's Panel Advisory Committee

The Western Isles Children's Panel Advisory Committee welcome the recommendations contained in the Consultation Document and, in particular, welcome the proposal to establish an Area Support Team for the Western Isles.

In relation to paragraph 3.1.3, which states:

"The local authority nominee may be an elected member, but in order to minimize potential conflicts of interest, I propose that local authorities should nominate individuals who have an interest in the hearings system but who do not hold an office that involves close oversight of children's social work services, for example, the chairmanship of the relevant committee."

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar agreed that elected members who held the office of chairman/vice-chairman of, for example, the Education and Children's Services Committee should not be excluded from membership of Area Support Teams. The Comhairle felt that this could work to the advantage of the Area Support Team rather than be seen as a potential conflict of interest. The Comhairle felt that if chairs/vice-chairs were excluded from membership of Area Support Teams, this could lead to the loss of experienced members at a time where continuity and experience of the system is needed most.

