

Proposals for the Establishment of Area Support Teams on behalf of Orkney' Children's Panel and Orkney CPAC

Following consideration, Orkney's Children's Panel and CPAC endorses the recommendation, as set out in the consultation document "Proposals for the Establishment of Area Support Teams".

In particular we support the conclusion set out at 4.3 of the document:-

I also considered a joint Island AST to cover Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles, given that it would only have to support around 60 panel members and that there is a low volume of hearings in the Island communities. In addition, It could be argued that the individual Island panels are over-represented and have a disproportionate influence within the Children's Panel Chairs Group, when compared say with Glasgow, which has one voice for more than 650 panel members. Again, however, I took the view that the only consequence of this model would be increased costs in terms of travel and time commitments that would be required to make it work, without delivering better support for panel members.

We endorse section 13 and particularly support the statement at 13.6:-

In reality, a joint AST for all the island panel members could only operate effectively as 3 largely autonomous sub-committees and I believe that such an arrangement, apart from the consequence of additional costs, would dilute the local dimension of the panel and the support that could be offered to panel members.

However we, do have a number of questions, and would ask that the National Convener consider and address these as further work is carried out during the establishment of the Area Support Teams (AST):-

1. What will be the duties and roles of the ASTs and who within the ASTs will undertake these? We consider that all members of the Orkney AST will undertake all roles given the small numbers involved.
2. What flexibility do ASTs have to appoint additional members and/or sub committees for additional tasks?
3. There is a need for clarification of the funding for expenses for **both** the Children's Panel and AST members – will these be paid via local authorities as is current practice or at a national level?
4. What compulsory training will AST members need to undertake? We do have concerns about the venues where this training will take place and the travel associated with attendance.
5. Currently, the CPAC is chaired jointly and the Children's Panel Chair is supported by two Deputies. We would like assurance that the National Convener has flexibility, given the appropriate justification, to appoint a joint Chair or Deputy, within the newly established AST.

6. We would suggest that there should be an Appointment Day when all members transfer across to the AST and that this should be co-terminous with the transfer of Panel Members to the National Panel.

Yours sincerely

Chris Giles and Lesley Scarth Joint Chairs of Orkney CPAC
Ian Blair, Chair of Orkney Children's Panel