

Perth and Kinross Children's Panel Advisory Committee

Consultation Response to the Proposals for the Establishment of Area Support Teams

Having carefully considered the proposals concerning the re-organisation and re-grouping of Angus, Dundee and Perth and Kinross Children's Panel Advisory Committees (CPACs) into one "Tayside" Area Support Team (AST), we in the Perth and Kinross CPAC are yet to be convinced that this will either be a positive move or the best way forward for the welfare of our children and young people. These concerns are predominantly based on recent experiences following the merger of our areas within the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA). There is a feeling that we have lost the individual and local element which added to the experience of attending hearings for both families and panel members, and the result has not been an improved experience for anyone.

Whatever the outcome, we feel it important that we retain a few essential elements of our current practice. This would be the minimum to preserve our identity within what would be a new combination of three disparate areas, and serve Perth and Kinross as well as we do now:

1. We would like to retain the input we have previously had in recruiting and monitoring panel members to the Perth & Kinross Panel.
2. We would like to retain our local training evenings for the panel in order to promote team building and inform panel members of local issues and resources.
3. We would like to be represented by a member of the Perth & Kinross Panel at the committees that are currently attended by Chair or Deputies - Child Protection Committee, Youth Justice Committee, Performance & Planning for Children's Hearings Group in particular. We feel this is another way in which we can keep panel members informed of local issues and also have input if necessary. We also feel it is of benefit to Perth & Kinross to have us represented.
4. We would like to be represented by a member of the Perth & Kinross Panel at any group formed in place of the current Children's Panel Chairman's Group.
5. We would hope that careful consideration would be given to the operation of the panel roster within the local area, to enable the current flexible arrangements regarding panel member availability to remain.

To date we have had no indication of where the Tayside AST will be located, which local authority will provide the "dedicated clerk", how the neighbouring local authorities will fund the new office, and how often the office will be manned, etc. Service level agreements with local authorities have yet to take

place. This information is also crucial for each of the three CPACs to arrive at a more considered decision.

Joy Knight
Chair
Perth and Kinross CPAC