

COUNCIL RESPONSE THE NATIONAL CONVENER, CHILDREN'S HEARINGS SCOTLAND ON PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH AREA SUPPORT TEAMS (ASTs)

South Ayrshire Council recognises the requirement to have Area Support Teams in place, under the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.

The Council supports the aims of the ASTs and the need to develop best practice in policy and procedures across the country. This will ensure that Panel Members are trained and supported consistently ensuring the children and young people that require to attend a Hearing obtain a quality service.

The Council encourages closer partnership working and integrated public services as advocated in the Christie Commission Report on The Future Delivery of Public Services. We would expect this to provide improved outcomes for children and families involved in the Hearing System.

A report was therefore submitted to the Council's Leadership Panel on 25 October 2011 which decided the following:

- (1) Noted the proposals for the establishment of an Area Support Team covering the three Ayrshire local authorities;
- (2) Agreed that the Council, in association with the other 2 Ayrshire authorities or otherwise, indicated its support, in principle, for the proposals;
- (3) Authorised officers to hold discussions with the National Convener and Ayrshire authorities on terms of Service Level Agreements and the financial staffing and operational issues arising from the establishment of an Ayrshire Area Support Team.

However before final approval can be considered, South Ayrshire Council will require further clarity on the undernoted:-

- As no new funding is to be provided to local authorities for the provision of support to the Area Support Teams and, in light of the current financial climate, clarity is sought on the funding arrangements for the Area Support Teams, in the short, medium and long term.
- As you will be aware the Clerk currently supports existing CPACs as part of their job. Is it envisaged that the Clerk to the new Area Support Teams will be a full time position? What is the detailed proposed remit for any such post? Or when can we expect to receive this for consideration?. If the situation changes in the future, how will this be dealt with bearing in mind that the Clerk is a paid member of staff from a local authority?
- What is the anticipated role of the Clerk/support workers to the Area Support Teams?
- Is there a template for a Service Level Agreement and if so could it be circulated?
- Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken nationally on the current proposals and if not will one be undertaken in the future?

- When is the approval of the local authorities required to the final proposals and the date for final implementation.?
- At the moment the Authority Reporter attends CPAC meetings, and this gives the Authority Reporter, CPAC and Panel Chair an opportunity to discuss any general issues of concern. It is also anticipated that there may be a link between the Panel and SCRA regarding performance standards. How therefore does the Convener see the relationship between Area Support Teams and SCRA developing?
- As volunteers are a valuable resource in terms of the Hearing Systems the Council seek assurances that their needs have also been consider in these proposals.
- Clarity on the way forward should local authorities not approve the proposals.