

Children's Hearings Scotland Board Paper Agenda Item 3.1

Date of Meeting	19 th January 2012
Paper number	CHS1112 - 036
Title	National Standards for Scotland's Children's Panel
Purpose	The purpose of this paper is to present to the Board the plan for developing National Standards.
Recommendations	The Board is invited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the plan• Provide comment on the standards document and consultation questions by 26th January
Attachments	A final draft of the consultation document and consultation questions will be distributed to Board members at the meeting on 19 th January.
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Agenda Item 3.1

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present to the Board the plan for developing National Standards, including the consultation process and plans to use the feedback from the consultation to create and launch the final version of the standards.

Final drafts of the consultation document and consultation questions will be distributed to Board members at the Board meeting on 19th January.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is invited to:

- **Note** the plan
- **Provide comment** on the standards document and consultation questions by 26th January

3. Background

- 3.1 The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 and the wider modernisation programme will make consistent, high quality hearings for every child wherever he or she lives in Scotland a reality through changes for panel members and the way they are supported:

- the creation of a national children's panel, with panel members recruited, trained and working to national standards, while still mainly sitting on hearings within the area where they live or work
- the dissolution of Children's Panel Advisory Committees (CPACs), and their replacement with Area Support Teams (ASTs) which will have responsibility for supporting and managing the system at the local level

- 3.2 National Standards of practice for panel members, area support team members and CHS staff and Board members are a central plank of the modernisation programme, and will be the starting point for:

- making clear what people can expect from each other, and developing codes of conduct
- developing and delivering training
- developing new procedures and evaluation and appraisal processes

The standards will also include standardised rates for expenses for panel members and AST members, along with clear standards for the method and timing of expenses payments.

- 3.3 The Standards have been developed by benchmarking against other national standards (Investors in People, Investing in Volunteers, National Standards for Youth Justice and others). They have been drafted with expert input from the Scottish Government Children's Hearings Team, CHS Board members and CHS staff, and tested by dialogue with the CPAG standardisation working

group and with c45 panel members and CPAC members at the Practice, Recognition and Modernisation event in St Andrews in November 2011.

4 Proposal and Discussion

4.1 The objectives of the consultation process are to:

- consult widely and capture the wealth of views, knowledge and experience available within the children's hearings system
- use these to create the highest quality series of standards that everyone involved can apply to all aspects of their practice
- inspire and enthuse panel members so that they want to be part of the reform process, with the aim of minimising the number of resignations
- demonstrate how support for panel members will be improved
- give potential AST members clarity about changes in the way they will equip and support panel members
- give confidence to people who have doubts or worries about the reform process
- give the CHS board and staff confidence that the standards in their final form are robust and workable

4.2 The consultation will be carried out in two parts:

1. A written consultation document sent to panel members, CPAC members and other stakeholders, with specific, targeted consultation questions for people to respond to. This will be sent hard copy to panel members and CPAC members to ensure the best possible coverage of panel members, and so that people are not expected to print a large document at home. It is intended that in future more and more communication with panel members will be carried out electronically through Panel Pal. However, at present the email address data held is not considered complete enough to use for this consultation.

The consultation will close 8 weeks after the documents are posted out.

2. A series of consultation workshops held across the country aimed at gathering feedback by face to face dialogue, at the same time as promoting the standards and building relationships with and among the panel community. These will be aimed predominantly at panel members and take the form of two 2½-hour sessions in one day, with approximately 30 panel members and others attending each, and including lunch or an evening meal as a crossover where panel members from both groups can meet and socialise. This will provide the opportunity for CHS to engage with c420 people in 14 sessions. The sessions will be facilitated by CHS staff and it is hoped that Board members will be able to attend some of them.

4.3 **The outline timings are as follows:**

Major milestone	Date
Document, questions and covering letter finalised, posted on CHS website and sent to printers	31 Jan
Hard copy posted out to panel members and CPAC members	13 Feb
Consultation workshops held in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, and Inverness	Feb/Mar
Consultation closes	10 Apr
Consultation report distributed	10 May
Standards revised in light of feedback from consultation and further tested with key stakeholders	May/Jun
Revised standards to Board meeting	14 May
Final version of standards complete	22 Jun
Launch event(s)	Jun onwards
Standards used to create national procedures, inform training development and design future recruitment campaigns	Ongoing

4.4 Further work will be required during the period from April to June to agree the format, launch arrangements and distribution of the final version of the standards document and how the standards will then be used to inform training delivery and support processes for panel members.

5 Resource Implications

5.1 **Staff** – the Director of Panel and Area Support will oversee the project with the National Standards Project Officer as lead officer. Support will be provided by the Communications Officer and Admin Assistant(s). Work plans are in place to carry out this work.

5.2 **Financial** – costs for printing and distributing the documents and for running the workshops are shown below:

Activity	Cost
Print and distribution of consultation documents	£ 4,000
Workshops (venues, catering and travel expenses)	£20,000
Contingency for overnight accommodation	£2,000
Total	£26,000