

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	06.03.12
DIRECTOR	Stewart Carruth
TITLE OF REPORT	Aberdeen City Area Support Team - Local Authority Nominee
REPORT NUMBER:	CG/13/009

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the appointment of a local authority nominee to the Aberdeen City Area Support Team (AST).

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Council nominate one elected member to be a local authority nominee member of Aberdeen City AST.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications in relation to this appointment.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other implications in relation to this appointment.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, which comes into force on 24 June 2013, is introducing changes to the way in which children's panels in Scotland are structured and how panel members are recruited, trained, supported and reappointed. The introduction of ASTs is one of the important changes being introduced by the 2011 Act. A related partnership agreement with Children's Hearings Scotland on the provision of related support was agreed to be provided by Committee Services, Legal and Democratic Services.

5.2 ASTs are replacing current Children's Panel Advisory Committees (CPACs) from June 2013. They will be accountable to the National Convener of Children's Hearings Scotland for ensuring that various national standards are implemented. The National Convener will play an important role in ensuring that panel members are supported and trained consistently to the highest standard. The National Convener will have a vital role in relation to the recruitment, ongoing support and development of panel members and panel

practice locally. AST members are expected to work together as a team to provide leadership and support to the children's panel.

- 5.3 Under the 2011 Act, each local authority can, if it so chooses, nominate people to be members of the AST of which they are part. The National Convener **must** appoint one such person nominated by the local authority and **may** appoint others if she considers that appropriate.
- 5.4. Local authorities currently make appointments to CPACs, this provision giving them a continued presence in supporting the children's panel. Local authority CPAC members are usually elected Members, the current appointees to Aberdeen CPAC being Councillors Young and Allan.
- 5.5. There is no requirement under the 2011 Act for local authority AST nominees to be elected members and such nominees could therefore be officers employed by a local authority. Appointed nominee(s) will act as the local authority's representative(s) on the AST and, while remaining accountable to the local authority, are expected to respect Children's Hearings Scotland's vision, mission and values. Such nominees will also have an overview of the children's hearings system and children's panel locally and act as an important link between the panel and elected members, senior officers and departments. They will not be directly involved in recruitment, selection, recommendation for appointment or reappointment of panel members or in panel practice observation and review processes which will be undertaken by AST panel practice advisors.
- 5.6. The National Convener of Children's Hearings Scotland has invited the Council to nominate representative(s) for this area to serve on the Aberdeen City AST. Locally there is not considered to be a need, at least for the time being, to appoint more than one local authority nominee to the Aberdeen City AST. Reflecting the position adopted for the local CPAC, it is considered most appropriate to nominate an elected Member to serve in this capacity.

6. IMPACT

- 6.1 Corporate – This links to the Community Planning safer/stronger and healthier themes and also supports partnership working.
- 6.2 Public - This report is unlikely to be of interest to the public.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Area Support Teams Functions, Roles and Responsibilities published by CHS (2012); and National Standards for the Children's Panel published by CHS (2012).

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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