

REPORT

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE		Subject: CHILDRENS PANEL EXPENSES - ALLOWANCES PAID TO OFFICE BEARERS	
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION			
Date: 11 February 2005	Ref: MH/MT		

1. Purpose of Report

The Report invites the Committee to uplift the current allowances paid to the Office Bearers of the Childrens Panel.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Hearing System has been in operation in Scotland since 1971. It is involved with children whose situations may require official intervention either because they have offended or because they have been offended against. It has taken the majority of the children out of the court system.
- 2.2. The Childrens Panel is a group of specially selected volunteers who make decisions about the children who have been referred to Hearings. In North Lanarkshire there are more than 110 Panel Members headed by a Chairperson who is assisted by two Depute Chairpersons.
- 2.3. Panel Members work in two local panels – Area 1(Airdrie, Coatbridge, Kilsyth and surrounding areas) and Area 2 (Motherwell, Wishaw, Bellshill, Shotts and surrounding areas) each Area is headed by an Area Chairperson. Panel Members normally serve in the areas where they either work or live.
- 2.4. The Childrens Panel Advisory Committee at its meeting on 1 November 1996 agreed the current level of allowances paid to the Authority Chair, Depute Chairs and the Area Chairs as follows:-

Authority Chairperson	£20.00
Depute Chairs	£10.00
Area Chairs	£20.00

3. Considerations

- 3.1. The budget for Children's Panel expenses has not been increased since 1996 despite increases in allowances and is, accordingly overspent. Given the nature of the expenditure, it is not possible, by management action, to contain costs.
- 3.2. It has however been over eight years since the allowances paid to the Office Bearers has been reviewed and the nature of duties have changed in that time. Their duties now require frequent use of IT Systems and the Internet. To reflect that, it is recommended that:-

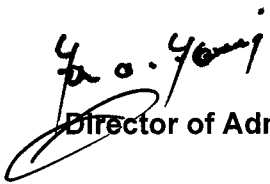
the Authority Chairperson be given an allowance of up to £50 per quarter plus a fixed sum of £5 per month for internet access;

the Depute Chairs be given an allowance of up to £25 per quarter plus a fixed sum of £5 per month for internet access;

the Area Chairs be given an allowance of £40 per quarter plus a fixed sum of £5 per month for internet access.

4. **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee agree the recommended fees for the Office Bearers of the Childrens Panel as detailed in Section 3 of the report.


Director of Administration

Members seeking further information on the contents of this report are asked to contact Mark Hamill on extension 2430.