

REPORT

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: LANARKSHIRE CHILDREN'S PANEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 1996/97
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 19 September 1997	Ref: CA/SW/1/ LD/IG	

Children's Panel Advisory Committees (CPAC) are appointed in each Local Authority Area and they are each required to submit an Annual Report to the Secretary of State.

The North Lanarkshire CPAC, prior to the submission of its Annual Report for 1996/97 to the Secretary of State, has forwarded a copy of the Report for the interest of the Council.

The Chair, Catherine Murphy, is in attendance to present the Report and to answer any questions.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee are requested to note the North Lanarkshire CPAC Annual Report for 1996/97.


Director of Administration

NORTH LANARKSHIRE CHILDREN'S PANEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 1996/97

INTRODUCTION

Children's Panel Advisory Committees (CPAC) are appointed in each local authority area. Normally there are five members, three appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland and two nominees from the local authority. CPAC membership is voluntary and members receive only out of pocket expenses. The CPAC is independent of the Council but is supported administratively by the Department of Administration and the Clerk to the CPAC is the Director of Administration.

The CPAC has three statutory functions:

To submit names of possible Panel members to the Secretary of State;

To advise the Secretary of State as required on the suitability of those possible Panel members, and

To advise the Secretary of State on such matters relating to the general administration of Panels as he may refer to them.

The Chair of the North Lanarkshire CPAC who is appointed by the Secretary of State is Catherine Murphy who lives in Motherwell and was a teacher in Coatbridge. She is a former Children's Panel member and was a member of a Sub-CPAC in Strathclyde. The other members appointed by the Secretary of State are Bill Millar from Motherwell, Rosemary Connor from Queenzieburn, Kilsyth and the nominees of this Council are Councillors Suzanne Macleod and Michael Ross.

The Chair of the Children's Panel, who is also appointed by the Secretary of State, is Danny Geddes who comes from Viewpark and he, together with the Authority Reporter, Mr. Gordon Sloan also comes to the CPAC meetings. The Reporters' Office is located in Bellshill although there is also an office in Airdrie.

THE FIRST YEAR

Those appointed by the Secretary of State had experience in the Children's Panel system, although the local authority members had no knowledge of the system. However, it was agreed that the CPAC should look at the past procedures and policies and adapt them to suit North Lanarkshire.

Sub-C.P.A.C.s

In the former authorities the larger areas had Sub-Committees which undertook much of the day-to-day work. In the North Lanarkshire area there had been two Sub-Committees under the former authority, one covering the former Motherwell area and the other covering the former Monklands and Cumbernauld and Kilsyth area. Since an authority of the size of North Lanarkshire required around 160 Children's Panel members it was agreed to have two Sub-Committees, Area 1 to cover Cumbernauld, Kilsyth, Airdrie, Coatbridge, Chryston and Moodiesburn and surrounding villages to be chaired by Mr. Dennis Naidoo who had been a Sub-CPAC member in the former Strathclyde Children's Panel area and Area 2 covering Motherwell, Wishaw, Bellshill, Shotts and Harthill and surrounding areas to be chaired by Mr. Peter Moncrieff who had been Chair of a Strathclyde Sub-CPAC. Nominations for the Sub-Committees were sought from the CPAC members and a recruitment presentation evening was held in Coatbridge in March. Following the meetings it was agreed to appoint to the Area 1 Sub-CPAC Mrs. Linda Hutton, Mr. Frank Cody, Mr. Tom Kinvig, Mrs. Janet Docherty and Mrs. Marilyn Provan and in Area 2 it was agreed to appoint Mr. Angus McArthur, Mr. James Mitchell, Mr. William Gibson and Miss Yvonne Findlay. These Sub-Committees had their first meeting on 7 May to clarify the duties of members, to make the members familiar with the assessment forms and guidelines and to review issues within their areas. During the year Miss Alison McGurk joined Area 2 Sub-CPAC and Mr. James Mitchell and Mrs. Yvonne Findlay resigned and in Area 1 Mr. Thomas Kinvig resigned due to his business commitments. New members are being invited to join.

Recruitment

In the North Lanarkshire area the Panel should consist of 160 Panel members, however, at 1 April a considerable number of Panel members had taken the opportunity of reorganisation to resign and only about

110 panellists were transferred. Obviously with a shortage of 50 members, pressure on those transferred undertaking hearings was considerably increased. Recruitment of Children's Panel members takes place annually in the autumn but in this first year of operation the Scottish Office advanced the timetable. The first stage, which is the Scottish Office Advertisements supplemented by local advertising, started in August and the CPAC decided to review the recruitment packs which had been used by the previous authority to ensure that they reflected the situation in North Lanarkshire. As well as updating and amending the recruitment pack the CPAC also produced a new leaflet to be part of that pack which they called "On the Brink".

Any person who contacted the staff in the Department of Administration or the Scottish Office Handling Agency received a copy of the recruitment pack which also invited them to an information evening.

The CPAC decided that there would be two information evenings, one in Motherwell and one in Airdrie, which were arranged by the staff in Administration. The information evenings consisted of the showing of a video about Children's Panels which had been purchased from West Lothian Council and talks from a panellist and the Authority Reporter. Over 100 people attended these evenings and application forms were given to all those who continued to have an interest after having heard what is expected of a Panel member.

The number of people who returned application forms was slightly disappointing but, following shortleeting, 62 applicants were invited to attend interviews over three days at Motherwell Football Club Hospitality Suite, this being the only accommodation available at the time.

After the interviews, the Children's Panel Advisory Committee were able to recommend 52 of the applicants to the Secretary of State for appointment.

Re-appointments

Children's Panel members are initially appointed for two years and thereafter for periods of up to five years. Each year the Scottish Office advise the CPAC of the Children's Panel members who have completed their terms of office so that they can be considered for re-appointment. With 1996 being the inauguration of the new authorities there was an inevitable delay in the submission of the list of those requiring to be considered

for re-appointment being submitted which meant that the process whereby the Administration staff contact Panel members on the list to determine if they wish to be considered for re-appointment had to be undertaken at the same time as recruitment. In North Lanarkshire there were 45 Panel members requiring to be considered for re-appointment and, after the process which requires Sub-CPACs to meet with those wishing to be re-appointed to review their monitoring reports, 35 were recommended to the Secretary of State for re-appointment for the maximum period of five years.

Training

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 required changes to the procedures within the Children's Panel system. It was therefore compulsory for all existing Panel members appointed up to 1995 to be retrained and the CPAC required to negotiate suitable dates and venues for Panel members. During the year there was considerable activity to ensure that those members who had not attended all the training sessions were given the opportunity to catch up and, by the end of the fiscal year, all but 14 had been retrained. Those who have not completed the training are unable to serve on a Panel until such times as they undertake the training which has been missed.

The new Panel members who had been recommended for appointment by the CPAC at the end of November of 1996 also undertook their initial training over six Saturdays from January to March. Of the 54 recommended, all but 2 completed their training and are now part of the Children's Panel.

Each year there is a Children's Panel Residential Weekend and, being one of the larger Panels, North Lanarkshire was offered 13 places by the Scottish Office. The budget which was inherited from the former authority was regrettably insufficient for our purposes throughout the year and it was decided that only seven places should be accepted. This was very much regretted, bearing in mind the benefits which these Panel members chosen can receive from such a weekend and the information and knowledge which they can also pass to their other Panel colleagues.

One of the major reasons for the considerable shortfall in training funds was that the compulsory training for existing Panel members in the new Children (Scotland) Act 1995 required to be funded by the authority. It

had been the expectation of both the CPAC members and the officers from Administration that the Scottish Office would provide additional funding, however, despite representations from this Council and many others, the Scottish Office maintained that their commitment had been limited to funding a training package for the training organisers who would provide training to authorities.

In view of the importance of training to Panel members, the CPAC also set up a Training Sub-Committee involving representatives from the Children's Panel and from the CPAC itself. The Children's Panel Training Organiser was invited to attend when required to review the various aspects of, and to plan future training based on the needs of North Lanarkshire.

CPAC Meetings

The CPAC met as and when required. Early in the life of the Committee that was approximately every four weeks, but it is now around every six weeks.

Over and above the mammoth task of recruitment and re-appointment the Committee has maintained an oversight of the work of the Sub-CPACs in monitoring the performance of Panel members.

The CPAC have also been asked by the Scottish Office to comment on consultation documents. These were related to the Crime and Punishment (Scotland) Bill, restriction of liberty and electronic monitoring of young offenders and the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 Consultation Document on Safeguards.

Other major issues which the CPAC have addressed have been the need to raise with the Reporter the continuing lack of suitable accommodation in which to hold hearings in Cumbernauld and the development of a complaints procedure. The draft paper on a complaints procedure is still under consideration but it is intended that this should be in the form of a written guide available to all Panel members and to those coming into contact with the Children's Panel system.

Costs

The budget for Children's Panel expenses and for recruitment and training was based upon the proportional transfer from the former authority. The figure for expenses was £13,280 and for recruitment and training £8,990. As had been explained earlier the recruitment and training budget was known to be inadequate with the need to recruit over 50 new Panel members and also in the light of the Council's requirement to retrain all existing Panel members following the introduction of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. The CPAC alerted the Social Work Committee to the likely overspend midway through the financial year but since the authority had no alternative, the likely costs were noted with an agreement that there would be a review of the budget for the new financial year.

The actual expenditure for the 1996/97 period was £21,351 for expenses and £15,345 for recruitment and training, being an overspend of £8,071 and £6,355 respectively.

The cost of administrative support from the staff in the Department of Administration is not included in that figure. One Administrative Assistant provides approximately 50% of her time in work associated with the Children's Panel and a variety of other officers give varying amounts of their time. But given the Council's responsibilities this is good value when judged against the overall responsibilities.

For the new financial year the budget for expenses has been increased to £18,280 and the recruitment and training budget to £15,990. The expenses budget is of course difficult to control since costs are based on the work being undertaken by Panel members and CPAC members, but every effort is being made to ensure that the recruitment and training budget is monitored to ensure that the CPAC exercise care and prudence. Again, however, there are certain statutory responsibilities which gives no leeway and should there be major concerns these would of course be brought to the attention of the Council for consideration.

The Children's Panel

The Panel is a statutory tribunal and members sit in hearings in groups of three reflecting gender. They make decisions designed to protect the best interests of children who can be referred to a hearing for a wide

variety of reasons. The children can range from babies to young persons of 16 years of age who are at risk of harm or neglect, who are not attending school or who have committed offences.

The Panel's Chair is appointed by the Secretary of State and is responsible for drawing up a rota which determines when and where Panel members sit.

At selection the aim is to have people from all walks of life appointed to the Panel. Initial appointments are for two years and re-appointments can be up to five years. Despite Scottish Office indications that Panel members should serve only up to 12 years there is no maximum time a Panel member may serve and indeed within North Lanarkshire we have a number of Panel members who have served beyond that period.

Panel members can be from 18 to 60, although the Secretary of State rarely appoints anyone under 20 due to possible age proximity between a young person in front of a Panel and the Panel member.

Employers Responsibilities

Children's Panels are statutory tribunals and members have a right by law to reasonable time away from work. However, some Panel members find that their employer is less than helpful and while official company policy may support their release, immediate line managers can be more difficult due to the effect absence may have on the work being undertaken. With the difficulty which many companies have experienced and with the threat of redundancies and closures over the last few years, the Scottish Office have agreed in the forthcoming recruitment campaign in September of this year to target companies and highlight the benefits which their employees can gain from being members of the Children's Panel.

The CPAC would intend to supplement that effort through contact with new employers moving into North Lanarkshire as well as encouragement to existing companies (including North Lanarkshire Council) to positively support their employees who have an interest in Children's Panels.

Chair Comments

This has been a stimulating and challenging year for all involved in establishing North Lanarkshire Children's Panel. As Chairman, I am much indebted to the Members of the CPAC, the Area Sub-Committees, Training Committee and Tutors for their dedication and commitment to the maintenance of high standards and to the Panel Members themselves, ably led by their Chairman and his deputies, on whom we depend daily for the quality of the service to children and families.

The inevitable early teething troubles following reorganisation were quickly overcome by the Administration Department of the new Council whose efficiency and friendliness ensure the smooth running of all our procedures.

With such support from volunteers, officers and staff of the Council, I look forward with confidence to the future of the Children's Hearings System in North Lanarkshire.



Chair

North Lanarkshire Children's Panel Advisory Committee

MEMBERS OF THE CHILDREN'S PANEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Councillor Michael Ross
Councillor Suzanne MacLeod
Catherine Murphy
William Miller
Rosemary Connor

MEMBERS OF SUB-CPAC AREA 1 (NORTH)

Dennis Naidoo
Linda Hutton
Frank Cody
Marilyn Provan
Janet Docherty
Tom Kinvig - resigned 27 January 1997

MEMBERS OF SUB-CPAC AREA 2 (SOUTH)

Peter Moncrieff
Angus McArthur
William Gibson MBE
Alison McGurk from - 30 May 1996
Fiona Muraska from - 28 February 1997
James Mitchell - resigned 8 October 1996
Yvonne Findlay - resigned 15 December 1996

MEMBERS OF TRAINING SUB-COMMITTEE

Councillor Suzanne MacLeod
Catherine Murphy
Danny Geddes
Dave McManus
Betty Moore
Linda Smith
Janette Armstrong from - 13 June 1997
Irene Allison from - 13 June 1997.

NORTH LANARKSHIRE CHILDRENS PANEL

AREAS 1 AND 2

LIST OF PANEL MEMBERS

Mrs. Margaret Airlie - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Adelheid Alexander - Motherwell
Mrs. Caroline Allan - Shotts
Mr. Jim Allardyce - Wishaw
Irene Allison - Airdrie
Mrs. Janette Armstrong - Newmains
Mrs. Linda Armstrong - Wishaw
Mr. James Ballantyne - Wishaw
Mrs. Phylis Barton - Newarthill
James Battersby - Coatbridge
Mrs. Catherine Bell - Motherwell
Clive Bell - Chryston
Mrs. Linda Benton - Bonnybridge
John Brennan - Coatbridge
Mrs. Henrietta Brown - Overtown
Mrs. Rena Brown - Stepps
Miss Tracy Jane Agnes Brown - Coatbridge
W. Val Brown - Coatbridge
Mr. George Ian Buchanan - Airdrie
Mr. Jim Buchanan - Motherwell
Elizabeth Byrne - Kilsyth
Mr. Alastair Cameron - Kilsyth
Mr. Harry Carlin - Holytown
Mr. Chris Carson - Wishaw
Mrs. Grace Chalmers - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Sadie Coyle - Holytown
Mr. Gerry Croall - Coatbridge
Dr. John Dalrymple - Dunblane
Maureen Davies - Airdrie
Mr. Jim Docherty - East Kilbride
Mrs. Nora Donnelly - Motherwell
Mrs. Esther Dougal - Wishaw
Miss Jackie Dunbar - Newarthill
Jessie Erridge - Coatbridge
Miss Jane Fallon - Shotts
Maureen Forbes - Cumbernauld

Alex Forrest - Coatbridge
Dr. Richard Foster - Bonkle
Stephen Foster - Coatbridge
Mr. Danny Geddes - Viewpark
Ann Gillespie - Airdrie
Philomena Gomm - Coatbridge
Mrs. Christine Gordon - Stepps
Mrs. Bridie Gorman - Airdrie
Mrs. Beryl Gowland - Cumbernauld
Mr. Kenneth Grant - Cumbernauld
Miss Marie Elizabeth Grant - Coatbridge
Mr. Charles Gribbons - Uddingston
Miss Janette Haddow - Motherwell
Maureen Hall - Cumbernauld
Miss Melanie Hall - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Margaret Hare - Shotts
Leslie Harkness - Airdrie
Mr. Ian Harrison - Airdrie
Charles Hawkes - Cumbernauld
Margaret Hill - Coatbridge
Mr. Raymond Hirst - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Anna Hughes - Airdrie
Margaret Imlah - Coatbridge
Mr. Charlie Irvine - Cleland
Mr. Robert Jardine - Carluke
James Johnston - Cumbernauld
Elizabeth Johnston - Bishopbriggs
Margaret Jones - Coatbridge
Mr. Gerry Kearney - Motherwell
Mrs. Patricia Keen - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Isobel Keir - Mossend
Helen Kellie - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Anne Kelly - Uddingston
Miss Margaret Kelly - Motherwell
Mrs. Catherine Laverie - Cumbernauld
Janet Lawson - Cumbernauld
Robert Loudon - Cumbernauld
Margery MacFarlane - Milton of Campsie
Mrs. Sandra McAllister - New Stevenston
William McCart - Coatbridge

Mrs. Charlotte McCluskey - Tannochside
Mrs. Patricia McGhee - Mossend
George McGill - Coatbridge
Mr. Douglas McIntosh - Hamilton
Kenneth McKirdy - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Denise McLay - Cumbernauld
Mr. Richard McLeod - Stonehouse
Mr. David McManus - Cleland
Mr. James McNeill - Cumbernauld
Miss Monica McShane - Shotts
Mrs. Joyce McSkimming - Moodiesburn
Williamina McTavish - Cumbernauld
Mr. William Marshall - Airdrie
Anthony Martin - Coatbridge
Mrs. Patricia Martin - Motherwell
May Miller - Coatbridge
Gordon Moncur - Cumbernauld
Betty Moore - Cumbernauld
Mr. Daniel Mullen - Airdrie
Mr. David Murdoch - Cleland
Miss Euphemia Murray - Wishaw
Mr. Thomas Nixon - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Anne O'Neill - Cumbernauld
Edward Osbourne - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Susan Paterson - Motherwell
Mrs. Sandra Phillips - Cleland
Ronald Provan - Airdrie
Mrs. Marion Pryce - Uddingston
Mrs. Elizabeth Reid - Cumbernauld
Miss Michelle Ritchie - Motherwell
Mr. Andy Robertson - Motherwell
Mr. Jim Ronney - Douglas
John Scott - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Christine Sharp - Airdrie
Miss Fiona Shaw - Airdrie
Miss Karen Anne Shaw - Coatbridge
Miss Angela Shields - Newarthill
Mr. David Short - Shotts
Mrs. Karen Smith - Motherwell
Lynda Smith - Cumbernauld

Mr. Paul Smith - Motherwell
Margaret Steele - Bellshill
Mrs. Shona Stein - Airdrie
Mrs. Katrina Stepek - Hamilton
Mr. Iain Stevenson - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Jean Stevenson - Motherwell
Mrs. Janette Stewart - Coatbridge
Mr. Ian Sutcliffe - Wishaw
James Taggart - Airdrie
Mr. Craig Tannahill - Shotts
Mrs. Jean Taylor - Motherwell
Mr. Jim Thomson - Motherwell
Mr Colin Thomson - Motherwell
Mrs. Christine Todd - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Elizabeth Tolson - Symington
Mrs. Eileen Usher - Cumbernauld
Mr. Phillip Usher - Cumbernauld
Mrs. Catherine Ward - Shotts
Mr. Robert Watt - Tannochside
Eric Wright - Cumbernauld