



6.6 Local authority member of the AST

6.6.1 Purpose and functions

Each local authority can nominate at least one member to the AST of which they are a part. The current practice is that these nominees will ordinarily be elected members but this is not a requirement under the Act.

Local authority nominees will have an overview of the Children's Hearings System and the Children's Panel in their area. They will be aware of local issues and act as an important link between the Children's Panel and the local authority elected members and relevant local authority senior officials and departments. They will not be directly involved in the recruitment, selection, recommendation for appointment or reappointment, or practice observation and review processes undertaken by the AST panel practice advisors.

6.6.2 Support and development for local authority AST members

The local authority members may be elected members or officers employed by the local authority or one of the local authorities who have signed up to the Partnership Agreement with CHS for the AST.

The local authority members are accountable to their local authority but in joining the AST they agree to respect the CHS vision, mission and values.

6.6.3 Key relationships

- Area Convener/Depute Area Convener(s)
- all other AST members
- panel members
- AST clerk and their team
- local authority elected members and relevant officers

6.6.4 Key responsibilities

- undertake training to ensure sound knowledge of the role of panel members and the functions of and roles within ASTs
- act as the key link between the local authority and the AST
- work closely with the Area Convener and AST members and advise on the local authority perspective on particular matters, emerging issues etc
- meet with appropriate local authority officials (e.g. social work and education directors) at regular intervals to ensure that there is continuing dialogue between the Children's Panel and the local authority
- consider where and how the local authority might provide any additional assistance to panel members locally



- facilitate partnership working and effective communication between the AST, panel members and other partners and the local authority

6.6.5 Skills, behaviours and knowledge

The local authority member of the AST will:

- understand the CHS vision, mission and values
- uphold the national standards for the Children's Panel at local level
- promote the vision for the reform and modernisation of the Children's Hearings System
- have a sound understanding of the role of the Children's Panel within the Children's Hearings System
- be aware of the legal framework for the Children's Hearings System
- develop a good understanding of the competence framework for panel members and of the learning and development opportunities available to panel members
- have a good understanding of both the local authority environment and the relationship with the Children's Hearings System
- be able to engage with key partners locally and build and maintain good links and communication with local partners
- have a good understanding of needs in terms of hearings in the local area
- promote constructive dialogue and decision making