

*Social Work Professionals working in fostering in Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Galway, Roscommon and Mayo established this special interest group which has provided a strong active link for social workers working in the foster care services. While the group had initially been meeting in the West over a number of years, it has now developed a national profile with members in almost all areas of the country.*



For up-to-date information see SIGs in IASW Website:

[www.iasw.ie](http://www.iasw.ie)

# S.W.I.F.C

**Social Workers in Foster Care  
Special Interest Group**

### **Mission Statement:**

*To provide a forum which will offer Social Workers in the area of Foster Care a professional voice to express relevant perspectives and to advocate on behalf of children in Foster Care*

### **Objectives of SWIFC**

1. To promote the professional interests of Social Workers who work in the area of Foster Care
2. To promote the achievement of the highest professional Social Work standards in the area of Foster Care
3. To develop a strong voice to advocate on behalf of children in Foster Care and to promote their best interests
4. To promote optimal standards for children in Foster Care
5. To highlight the need to actively encourage permanency planning either with their birth family or in care for all children with whom social workers are involved.

6. To nurture the primacy of the fostering dyad (Foster Carer / Foster Child) where it is in the best interest of the child and promote the concept of continuity of care for the child.
7. To promote secure and healthy attachments with a recognition of the developmental needs of children in care.
8. To recognise and promote, the importance of familial bonds, especially with siblings and extended family.
9. To liaise with the IFCA and other fostering organisations at local, national and international level.
10. To establish professional expertise in the area of Fostering from a Social Work perspective. To be available to both governmental and non-governmental agencies as a professional voice in the area of Foster Care.
11. To promote and encourage research and development in all areas of foster care practice. This will include:
  - a. child development
  - b. training methods and materials
  - c. assessment processes for Foster Carers and children in care
  - d. triadic attachment
  - e. contact and access
  - f. support systems, policies and procedures for both Foster Carers and children
  - g. legal frameworks and national standards
  - h. the principles of permanency
  - i. support systems for Social Workers in Foster Care
12. To establish links with third level colleges and universities in Ireland and to promote specific training in foster care.



2008 Conference Participants and Members at the SWIFC AGM 2009

Committee officers Contact Details - Email:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Chairperson:</b><br>Anna Gill (anna.gill@hse.ie)         | <b>Vice-Chairperson:</b><br>Ciara Mahoney (ciara.mahoney@hse.ie)  |
| <b>Secretary:</b><br>Mary Flanagan; (maryb.flanagan@hse.ie) | <b>Assistant Secretary:</b><br>Cahal McHale (cahal.mchale@hse.ie) |
| <b>Treasurer:</b><br>Karen Hope (karen.hope@hse.ie)         | <b>Assistant Treasurer:</b><br>Marie Morris (marie.morris@hse.ie) |

**PRO:**  
Colette Toland;  
(colette.toland@hse.ie)