



IASW

Irish Association of Social Workers  
Cumann na hÉireann um Oibrithe Sóisialta

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2007/2008**

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## **Council of the Irish Association of Social Workers 2007- 2008**

### **Executive**

<b><i>Position</i></b>	<b><i>Name</i></b>
President	Marie Therese Mulholland
Hon. Secretary	Vacant
Hon. Treasurer	Miriam Mooney
Communications	Declan Coogan
Conferences and Seminars	Ita Long
International Affairs	Vacant
Membership	Vacant
Executive Member	Aoife McGrath

### **Special Interest Group Representatives**

Ageing (SIGA)	John Brennan/Annette O'Callaghan
Child Care	Ineke Durville
Child/Adolescent Psychiatry (SW in CAMHS)	Declan Coogan
Journal	Vacant
Social Workers in Disability (SWID)	Theresa McDonough/Anna Carroll
Medical	Vacant
Adult Mental Health (SWAMH)	Frank Browne
Student	Vacant
SWIFC	Jean Lyons

### **Regional Representatives**

Eastern	Pat Waldron
Southern	Aoife McGrath

### **Other Representatives**

Children's Rights Alliance	Vacant
IFSW Executive	Monica Egan
NSWQB representatives	Monica Egan / Marie Therese Mulholland
NWCI	Mary Allen
Council of Irish Adoption Agencies	Sheila Gallagher/Ann McCormack

## **President's Report**

Last year I outlined that the Association was facing many immediate challenges. At that time I thought that our problems could be solved more easily than transpired. This year we have faced many crises through no fault of our own. Our website provider had gone into liquidation and while we had taken remedial steps to recover our data, it has been difficult to ensure that our database is correct and up-to-date: as one of the office staff describe it "It's like trying to hold spaghetti in your hands". Throughout the year you will have received various appeals from us asking you to verify data and I thank you for your patience. Problems do not often come alone and we were to discover that the loss of the website had serious implications for collecting direct debits. Realex interfaced with the website and without this facility, collection of direct debits is now done manually. Errors have occurred and we have had to delay collection of direct debits while we established that our information was correct. Many man-hours have gone into this work which is now under control. The Company that took over our website through the liquidator has proved most unhelpful and we are continuing to pursue them to end our involvement with them.

We are not alone in our difficulties with the Company which took over our website. Another organisation had a similar experience and was put to large expense. The fact that Orla Cooke, Office Manager, left the Association to live in Peru immediately after last year's conference was a major blow to the office. She had devised many of the office systems and much knowledge went with her. I had thought that she could advise us from Peru but this has proved more difficult than any of us imagined. It became clear after some time that she would not be able to access the internet easily. At Conference last year we introduced you to Emer whom we had employed to bridge the gap. Orla had managed a short hand-over to Emer. Happily for Emer, but not for us, she was soon to be offered a much better job and we were at a loss again. Since that time we have had two part-time staff: Belinda who was with us for six months and Annie who is with us today. I want to thank Annie who has struggled with a complicated situation for some time. The dangers of depending on one individual and memory have become increasingly clear. It is clear that the Association needs to employ one, but preferably two administrators, who would be backed by a strong Executive who understand the office procedures of the Association. It is essential that we develop an office procedural manual as soon as possible. We have made a start on this and it is a task that needs immediate attention over the next few months. .

Despite the turmoil you can imagine through this description so far, we have worked to establish a new website. You have had a static website for some time. We investigated various providers and opted for a company called Doop Design, having considered many options and taken up references etc. We have agreed with Doop that we retain ownership of our information. They have provided us with training and we are ready to go live with phase one of the new website. Having eventually achieved a clean accurate database, we are in a position to talk with them about phase two which will include members' benefits. I wish to thank Miriam

Mooney in particular, for driving this initiative forward and encouraging many members of the Executive to understand this technical world more fully.

To recapitulate office administrative matters, our aim for end 2008 is to have:

1. A clean, accurate and up-to-date database of all matters pertaining to members
2. An office procedures manual
3. A fully functioning website

There is a lot of work in progress at the moment and we are aiming for completion in early summer.

Many positive things happened over the year. We have had a higher profile in the media and I refer you to our display here today. I wish to thank Declan Coogan for being so available and responsive to the media. This has drawn attention to current issues that are important to us as a profession and has kept our profile high.

I wish also to thank Ita Long who took major responsibility in organising today's Conference. Throughout this year, all of the Executive have been willing to take on tasks beyond their role and give much time. I thank Miriam, Aoife, Declan and Ita for their commitment and support.

The usual work of the office has been ongoing and we have dealt with many queries from members, non-members and the public. We have produced one issue of the Journal and another one is at an advanced stage of production. I wish to thank Monica Egan and Trish Walsh for their work on these Journals. You have also received many communications through email and regularly in *INFO*. Ita and Aoife have been responsible for the production of *INFO* and I thank them on your behalf. As usual we have sent reports and letters, responded to requests for social work opinion on a variety of issues to government departments and we have met with the Union to forge stronger links, so that the profession is well represented. There has been much activity in special interest groups and in particular the Southern group, which has shown great commitment and much support to Executive.

Now we need to look to the future. We need a strong Executive, where more volunteers take specific roles and thus the workload would be shared more. We need to develop the office to deal with the considerable workload and to ensure that a change in personnel does not unduly affect the day-to-day operations. The new Executive has to decide on a strategy and decide how to achieve goals on a year-to-year basis. The rescue operation has happened and now the Association can build on the positive energy that social workers have to invest in the profession

**Marie Therese Mulholland (President)**

## **Hon. Treasurer's Report**

2007 has been a year of considerable change and challenge for the Association. The liquidation of our Web & Database provider, the departure of our office manager, Orla Cooke, and the incompatibility of our new computer software (Vista) with the AIB Ibanking system, and with some of our members' computers, all posed challenges for the Association.

However, despite the above we have managed to

achieve a 5.37% increase in subscriptions.

Following negotiations with AIB we have ensured an increase in bank interest payments on our deposit a/c. Overall income is down by 5.19% mainly attributable to a decrease in advertising receipts.

During 2007 we purchased two PCs, a printer and laptop. We also commissioned DOOP to create a new Website. We chose DOOP following a rigorous selection process and have been satisfied with their service to-date.

A new category of expenditure on 'Subcontractors' occurred during the year as we needed to source expertise to advise on choice of Web Design company, database & problems associated with Vista. The continued financial stability of the Association is dependant upon, at least, maintaining (and ideally increasing) the current level of membership and augmenting its income from advertising. Executive and Council, along with the office admin staff have all worked really hard throughout the year to meet the challenges. I wish to thank all concerned for this effort and for the teamwork involved. I will be stepping down as Treasurer this year but do hope to remain involved, particularly with the website.

**Miriam Mooney (Honorary Treasurer)**

### ***Some statistics on membership.***

Full time workers	73%
Part-time workers	7%
Non-working, Retired &	
Overseas	11%
Students	7%

These are approximations.

### ***Conferences & Seminars Report:***

The 2007 Annual Conference took place in April last year. The title of the Conference was '*Do Men Matter? Gender Inclusion & Social Work Practice*'. The conference speakers were Prof. Bríd Featherstone from Bradford University, Dr Jonathan Scourfield from Cardiff University and Prof. Alastair Christie from University College Cork. The next edition of The Social Work Journal will be based on the Conference. We hope that this will be available in May.

We had to postpone the seminar on Research with Suzanne Guerin but hope to run this seminar in the autumn.

Ideally it would be great to be able to plan conferences and seminars well in advance of events taking place and be able to produce a brochure of events for a twelve month period. However, this would require a small committee of members. So if any members would be interested in being involved in the planning of conferences and seminars, please contact the office at office@iasw.ie. Once the planning of the programme is completed, it should be possible to do the work of the committee by email. I hope that some members will consider getting involved.

**Ita Long (Conferences & Seminars)**

## ***Communication's Report***

The core public relations objectives of the Association over the last year have included: bringing to the attention of the public the concerns of social workers and of the different people with whom we work and the highlighting of the wide variety of tasks in the social work profession. It seems that when our Association informs media outlets about our concerns and identifies stories that may be of interest to the general public (while respecting confidentiality), we may find an open ear. We also discovered earlier in the year since our last AGM, that it can be useful to make contact with other non-governmental organisations such as our joint campaign with other agencies in July 2007. The position we took as an Association in relation to this issue, demonstrates an effective public relations policy in operation, insofar as we articulated a position in a direct response to members contacting the office and asking the Association to represent their views.

Responding to the requests of social workers and working with the social worker members who had contacted the office about this matter, Marie-Therese Mulholland and I were in contact with, and formulated a press release and sent letters to the Departments of Justice Equality and Law Reform and to the Department of Health and Children, outlining our concerns about the situation of Roma families living on the Ballymun/M50 roundabout in July 2007. A press release was sent to all media outlets and I had a number of telephone discussions with some journalists and reporters. The Association was invited to join in a media campaign facilitated by Pavee Point and a number of non-governmental organisations. Having discussed this with members of the IASW Executive, the Association supported the campaign, was listed as one of the sponsoring organisations and I represented the Association at the Pavee Point Press Conference on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2007. The views of the Association were represented in the Irish Times on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2007 and on the front page of the Saturday Review section of the Irish Times on 21<sup>st</sup> July and page 5 of the Irish Times on the same day. I also represented the views of the Association on the Morning Ireland programme on RTE Radio One on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2007.

The views of the Association were further represented throughout the year in articles in the following media, among others:

The Evening Herald, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2007; the Irish Times 18<sup>th</sup> December 2007; the Irish Times, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008; the Sunday Tribune, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2008; the Sunday Independent 16<sup>th</sup> March 2008; the Irish Times, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

On 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008, with the support of the Association, John Brennan had a letter published in the Irish Times in relation to the concerns of the Special Interest Group, Social Workers on Ageing. This also led to a number of follow-up interviews on local and national radio and newspapers, further highlighting both the needs of the people with whom social workers in that special interest group work, and the diversity of social work roles and interests.

All of us who accept active roles within the Association carry out such work in addition to our social work employment in different services. This means that we cannot, as an Association, monitor every single media outlet to note whenever the Association is referenced. Therefore we would appreciate it if members would contact the office to record any mention of the Association and members' views on such coverage. It also means that when liaising with the media in relation to any social work matters outside the field of our own experiences, the Association must rely heavily on the contributions of members regarding concerns and stories that need to be brought to the attention of the public. We thank those members who have contributed to bringing our Association more into the spotlight in a positive manner and look forward to the on-going proactive involvement of members who contact the office to assist us in articulating a view of the Association in the public arena.

**Declan Coogan, (Communications Co-ordinator)**

### ***Special Interest Group on Ageing (SIGA)***

**Chairperson:** John Brennan, **Secretary:** Marie Kilty, **Deputy Secretary:** Kristen Murphy

#### **SIGA AGM 2008**

Marie Kilty and John Brennan remained on as group honorary secretary and honorary chairperson respectively. Kristen Murphy was elected deputy secretary.

#### **Meetings**

The Special Interest Group met monthly over the past year in the Royal Hospital Donnybrook. The meetings have been well attended and generally lively affairs. We have welcomed social workers employed in an ever-widening circle of agencies and hope that this trend continues.

#### **Representation**

Patricia Daly stepped down as representative of the SIGA on the IMPACT National Vocational Group. Sarah Marsh stepped down as the SIGA representative on the IASW Council. She continues in her role as a director of Age Action Ireland. We would like to thank them both for their input over these last few years. Annette O'Callaghan was elected as the new SIGA representative on the Council.

#### **Issues of concern to members of the SIGA**

Most, if not all of the issues raised in last year's Report continued to spring up as agenda items during the year - community social work posts; shortage of long-stay beds; community services for older people; the effects of the reduction in many services; the inconsistencies and inequities within the health and social care systems; the privatisation of services, plus the government's 'Fair Deal' proposals. The SIGA joined with Age Action Ireland in calling for greater consultation on these proposals. This effort appears to have had some positive effect. The 'Fair Deal' proposal is now the subject of legal and constitutional debate, so it remains to be seen when, if ever, it will finally emerge. In the

meantime, the residential care funding system continues to be inconsistent and inequitable.

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) was set up a statutory basis this year. HIQA incorporates the existing Accreditation Board and the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI). The national standards for nursing home care were developed by HIQA during 2007 via a working group made up of representatives of public, private and voluntary agency representatives, including the IASW. These standards were launched in March 2008. The inspection teams are being recruited at the time of writing this report. The development is a most welcome one. It will hopefully be in place by 2009.

In late 2007, a number of HSE areas started to cutback on financing home care packages because of reported budgetary difficulties. Since then, cutbacks have been reported in other community services, including home help and respite services. This is having a serious negative effect on older persons and their carers. It compounds the effects of the HSE embargo on recruitment of staff felt by all of us during 2007. At the time of writing, the SIGA has highlighted this issue in print and on radio – the effort is on-going!

Primary Care teams are being established and a number of social workers have been recruited across the country. However, the embargo is also having its negative effects in this area of activity – the process has almost ground to a halt, so that social workers who were interviewed for teams during the year, have not been able to take up post, or they have been assigned to child protection work.

#### **Projects**

The sub-group on 'assessment' continued its work during the year and hopes to have a draft for piloting by April 08

#### **Seminar**

A seminar was postponed because of the financial cutbacks across the HSE services.

#### **Finally**

Many thanks to the Royal Hospital for once again facilitating our meetings and to Carmel, Social Work Secretary in the hospital for her continued administrative support.

**John Brennan (Chairperson)**

### ***Special Interest Group Social Work Adult Mental Health (SWAMH)***

#### **2007/8 Executive**

**Chairperson:** Frank Browne; **Hon. Secretary:** Edel Finnegan; **Treasurer:** Donal O'Malley

#### **SWAMH's Objectives Include:**

1. Representing social work in the development of best practice within mental health services.
2. Organising Continuous Professional Development days to contribute towards the professional development of social workers within adult mental health.

3. To provide a forum for adult mental health social workers to share knowledge and practice experiences.

### **Current Situation**

There are over 150 adult mental health social workers in the Republic. However there are still community mental health teams in parts of the country without a social worker or with a social worker covering more than one team. There are also social workers, particularly in the North East that do not have access to a social work line manager. SWAMH is most concerned about these two issues and is writing to key managers within the HSE to address them

Over 100 members are now on our email database and relevant information is circulated between members. SWAMH has an agreed description of the adult mental health social work role, which is on IASW's web site. The 3 key areas of practice are case management, psycho-education and counselling.

The 2001 Mental Health Act is now fully implemented. Part 2 of the Act is being reviewed and SWAMH has made a submission.

SWAMH is most concerned at the delay in implementing a fully trained Authorised Officer Service.

SWAMH is also concerned that the key recommendations of "Vision for Change" with regard to how services are to be funded and managed, has yet to be implemented.

### **Continuous Professional Development Days**

Since our last AGM we have organised the following CPD days: In June the St John of Gods mental health service' early intervention team with young persons experiencing psychosis, presented a CPD on the topic 'Early Intervention in Psychosis'. In November we had a CPD day on the topic of 'Recovery through Empowerment.' The focus was on using a recovery model developed by Mary Ellen Copeland (WRAP) - Wellness Recovery Action Planning. Finally our AGM 2008 was held in March. We had presentations by the CEO of Irish Advocacy, a presentation on a therapeutic technique called Mindfulness and a work shop on the role of Authorised Officer.

### **Executive 2008/9**

A new committee was elected but a chair was not decided on but will be agreed at the first committee meeting in May. The Executive posts agreed are:

**Hon.Secretary:**Anne Duffin. **Treasurer:** Donal O'Malley

### **Working Groups**

SWAMH has a number of working groups led by individuals in the following areas: Later Life Psychiatry - Damien Nolan; Post-Qualifying Training - Patricia Doherty; Ethnicity Group - Stephen Garland.

SWAMH also has a link person to IASW Council in Frank Browne, and to IMPACT Trade Union in Donal O'Malley.

I would like to thank all those who have committed their time and energy to the professional development of their colleagues and to development of improved public services.

**Frank Browne (Chairperson (SWAMH) 2008)**

## ***Social Workers in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)***

### **Continuing Concerns - Review of the Mental Health Act 2001, and Draft National Policy on Assessment/Admission of Children.**

Since the last AGM of the IASW, our special interest group has had three regular meetings of the national group, two of which took place in Dublin and one in Cork. We would like to thank those who hosted our meetings and facilitated our clinical practice workshops during the past year.

Last year we reported that neither the IASW nor the CAMHS group was consulted in the drawing up of draft HSE regulations in relation to the assessment and admission of children to in-patient units. The CAMHS group submitted a paper outlining the question that needs resolving from the point of view of social workers in CAMHS and those who avail of our services. We were then invited by the HSE to comment in February 2008 on the further revised draft of these guidelines and it is hoped that we will continue to be consulted on such matters. We hope that in time our papers will be available on the IASW website as before, when the members' only section is established.

### **Consultations with IMPACT and HSE**

Following our meeting in February 2007 with Kevin Callinane from IMPACT, we can report this year that some of us are representing social workers at the reconvened IMPACT/HSE Forum which has a brief to monitor the implementation of the policy document "Vision for Change". Acknowledgement is particularly due to Sheila McKenna and David Hughes who have made contact with the Union a priority. As a result of our involvement with IMPACT, the Union continues to support the position that if a conflict or grey area emerges in relation to work practices, CAMHS social workers can refer back to already existing practices until such time as IMPACT negotiations with the HSE on these issues are complete. Credit is also due to Kevin Callinane, who has demonstrated a determination to include social workers in the implementation and review process, following committed contact from Sheila McKenna and David Hughes.

### **Submission to the Mental Health Commission, February 2008.**

Early in 2008 the Mental Health Commission published an open invitation to the public and to organizations, to submit comments as part of a statutory review of the operation of parts of the Mental Health Act 2001. Neither the IASW nor social workers in CAMHS were consulted in the drafting of regulations under the Act but nonetheless our group made a submission to the Commission outlining the concerns of members of our special interest group and the people with whom we work. We hope that this submission will be included in

the 'members only' section of the IASW website when it becomes fully operational.

### **New Committee and Priorities for 2008.**

The committee of social workers in CAMHS over the past year included Sinéad Freely, Mary McNamara, Sheila McKenna, David Hughes, Lazarus Gildolf and Declan Coogan. Caitriona Hanley and Mary Donohue were added to the committee of social workers in CAMHS at our AGM on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2008. Sinéad Freely was elected as Chairperson and Declan Coogan was elected as Public Relations Officer, as our group agreed with the proposal to share among the committee, different tasks which have required additional work from members. As this is my last report to the AGM on behalf of social workers in CAMHS, I would like to thank the Committee members, especially Sheila McKenna, Mary McNamara, David Hughes and Sinéad Freely who have made my chairing of the CAMHS group an enjoyable and much easier task over the last year. I would also like to acknowledge Nicola Byrne, Aisling Kearney and Margaret Ryan who were part of the Committee in the planning and smooth running of our successful conference in 2006. I would also like to thank the social workers who attended and took part in our meetings over the last four or five years, making our clinical practice and business meetings an enjoyable experience and an effective use of our time. I would like to wish Sinéad every success in her chairing of the Committee, a task that has become more complex over the last few years, but much easier with the support of a hard-working committee.

The priorities of the CAMHS committee for the coming year include continuing consultation with the HSE in relation to guidelines for the assessment and admission of children to mental health services and on-going involvement with the IMPACT/HSE Forum on the implementation and review of the "Vision for Change" policies.

Anyone can contact any member of the committee to raise any issue of concern and for any information in relation to our work. I would like to thank everyone on the committee for commitment to the work we have undertaken, for their generosity and for their contribution of ideas and their skills.

**Declan Coogan (Public Relations Officer, CAMHS.)**

### **Special Interest Group of SWIFC**

The Social Workers in Foster Care committee have been pursuing the resolution adopted at last year's AGM to find out more about how foster care services are organised nationally. The results of a questionnaire are being analysed and will be presented at a Seminar being organised jointly with the Irish Foster Carers' Association in May 2008. Much time has been invested by the Committee during the year in the design, circulation and return of the questionnaire on foster care structures but it is anticipated that it will be time well spent as it should provide a pool of very useful information. The title of the Seminar which is to take place in Ardilaun House Hotel, Taylors Hill, Galway on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2008 from 9.00am – 3.45pm is '*Working in Partnership. Raising the Standards*'. This seminar will also be addressing the issue of standards in foster care and we are currently

canvassing the views of SIG members on the present level of adherence to the National Standards for Foster Care. The feedback received will be reflected in the discussion at the Seminar in May.

The Group also made a submission in February to the Joint Committee on the Constitutional Amendment on Children through the IASW office.

The SWIFC AGM will be held following the May seminar in Galway and we aim to discuss setting up regional SWIFC groups to maximise the level of participation of members nationally. It is intended to devote more time during the coming year to sharing information among members throughout the country on aspects of clinical practice in the area of foster care.

**Cahal McHale (SWIFC Assistant Secretary)**

[cahal.mchale@hse.ie](mailto:cahal.mchale@hse.ie)

### **Southern Branch Report**

The Southern Branch moved into a dynamic second year in 2007 with a proactive Committee which included Terry Bradshaw (Chair), Annie Kelly (Vice-chair), Rachel McCormack (Secretary), Orla Jennings (Treasurer), Ann Doolin O'Brien (CPD Officer), Aoife McGrath (Southern Rep), Carmel Donovan (PR Rep), and members without portfolio including Carol Buckley Lyons.

Many objectives were outlined by them in 2007, which proved to be an exhaustive but proactive year for the committee. The Southern Branch continued to focus on facilitating free continued professional development workshops on a bi-monthly basis. The workshop topics were diverse in nature from suicide awareness and treatment, fostering/adoption research findings, to social work in medical settings.

Further to this, two Committee members Rachel and Orla formed a core part of the organising Committee of the National Conference titled 'Child Protection and Welfare Social Work: A Changing Profession in a Changing Ireland.' The conference proved to be a huge success in terms of unprecedented turnout, and the national media coverage it generated. Also the conference was the first initiative of its kind in terms of utilising an inter-agency power of the HSE, UCC and IASW. The media coverage from the conference highlighted the complex nature of social work practice, and the resource issues that impact on daily social work practice. The Southern Branch continued to harness the influence of the media until the end of the year in order to highlight new service challenges in the HSE (the introduction of the employment controls) and how this impacts on best practice. In terms of media activity the Southern Branch is not only focused on highlighting resource issues but also promoting the expertise of Social Work in practice. In this regard other media liaisons included Terry very recently presenting his expertise on Interviewing Children for RTE Radio 1.

Further to the continual professional development focus in 2007 the Southern Branch also prioritised local issues with regard to policy and staffing and service difficulties. One of the key issues was investigating the ad-hoc resourcing and role-out of Primary Community & Continuing Care Teams (PCCC) and the inclusion of Social Work. In relation to this issue formal meetings were convened by the Southern Branch, with local HSE managers, Childcare Managers, Principal Social



Workers and PCCC Social Workers. Such meetings facilitated the sharing of information, provided an education component to management as to the generic role of Social Work, and also outlined the changing climate of PCCC Social Work, which differentiated from recommended initiatives. Such investigations highlighted the issues and new expectations faced by Social Workers in the HSE in adapting to the transformation programme and in the reconfiguration of staff to PCCC staff. Such discussions will be ongoing, but have facilitated a unification of social workers across areas of expertise.

The HSE continues to be affected by staffing and service delivery issues and this has remained a topical issue for the Southern Branch as we moved into 2008. The Southern Branch has formulated a strategic plan of action in relation to staffing issues and intends on advancing this by utilising the political forum. The Southern Branch will be convening an open meeting in April between social workers in practice and politicians in Government.

The Southern Branch is also keen to focus on policy developments. It had come to the attention of the Southern Branch that other professions and management in the HSE were not clear as to the professional training and role of Social Workers. It was also clear that there is no formal policy document in place that outlined Social Work training, practice, and expertise. The lack of clarification has resulted in Social Work being side-tracked in terms of new employment initiatives in the HSE. The Southern Branch has taken on this task of addressing this gap in designing a structured policy document that deciphers the duties and best practice in generic Social Work. This is a work-in-progress but will hopefully be adopted as a policy document by the National IASW and available to all social work practitioners.

In March 2008 our AGM was held with Phil Mortell (Chair of Limerick Branch of IASW) presenting on his motivations in terms of IASW involvement. From this inspiring presentation, a full committee was re-elected for 2008-2009. We are delighted to welcome new committee members to the fold - Steven Peet (Student Rep), Debbie Lynch (UCC Rep), members without portfolio Siobhán Bruin and Theresa Fuller. Aoife has also taken on the role of *INFO* editor for the National IASW. As the committee moves into its third year in operation it will be focused on continuing to promote Social Work in directions of policy, education and staffing. The Committee will further attempt to provide solutions to local issues, to liaise with National networks and to provide a unified approach, in which we hold firm to the belief that *'coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success'* (Henry Ford).

**Aoife McGrath (Southern Representative)**

### ***The Council of Irish Adoption Agencies***

The Council of Irish Adoption Agencies is an umbrella body incorporating all adoption agencies, both voluntary and statutory, in the Republic of Ireland. Council members meet a number of times each year to consider, address and advocate on the basis of best practice in all

aspects of adoption. While it is the agencies themselves who are members of the CIAA, it is the social work professionals directly involved in the day-to-day operation of the adoption services who usually represent each agency at Council.

#### **Activities of CIAA 2007:**

1. The Council of Irish Adoption Agencies has produced two significant reports in the last year one of these is an *'Ethical Framework for Adoption in Ireland'* which had been requested by the Adoption Board.

The second report was a written submission to the Law Reform Commission in response to the Commission's report on *'Aspects of Intercountry Adoption'*. This report drew on practitioners' experience in adoption and also included reference to recent relevant Irish studies on adoption and recognised international literature on the needs of children in adoption. Members of the Executive met with Law Reform Commission to discuss this written submission.

2. In the last year, members of the Executive of the Council of Irish Adoption Agencies have had meetings with representatives from the Adoption Board in relation to ongoing professional practice issues.

4. Members of Council have also been involved in contributing to the *'Standardised Framework on Information and Tracing (November 2007)'* and to the *'Standardised Framework on Domestic Adoption (Awaited).'* Both these documents are issued by the Adoption Board.

5. A member of the Council of Irish Adoption Agencies represents Council on the Crisis Pregnancy Agency committee.

6. Council provides training for social work professionals involved in adoption practice three times a year. The next training event will focus on the experience of trans-racial adoption.

The Council of Irish Adoption Agencies is represented on the IASW Council by Sheila Gallagher and Ann McCormack and we thank IASW for allowing us to join them at Council and look forward to working in close collaboration with our professional body.

Contact details:

Sheila Gallagher: [stattractasadoptionsociety@eircom.net](mailto:stattractasadoptionsociety@eircom.net)

Ann McCormack: [ann.mccormack@mailn.hse.ie](mailto:ann.mccormack@mailn.hse.ie)

Chairperson of Council of Irish Adoption Agencies:

Marian Bennett: [marian.bennett@hse.ie](mailto:marian.bennett@hse.ie)

**Sheila Gallagher**

### ***IASW Office Report***

There have been many changes in the office since AGM 2007. I started in May 2007 and received some training from Emer who left for another position at the beginning of June. Belinda joined the office in August and stayed until November when she received full-time employment.

We deal with phone queries (minimum of 50/week) emails (250+/week), post (80 letters/week); membership applications; database; website; publications; banking and finances – all kinds of everything!! So taking all above into account, please understand if you don't get an immediate response. Many thanks for your patience to-date.

I want to thank all Executive members for all the support. In particular I would like to say how much I appreciate the help and ongoing support from Ita Long over the past few months.

**Annie Moran**

## **INFO**

During the past twelve months we have aimed to circulate *INFO* bi-monthly and have succeeded in doing this for the most part. *INFO* facilitates the Executive and Council in keeping members up-to-date with what is happening in the Association. Members can also use *INFO* to circulate information about events in their particular geographical area and/or area of practice. We would encourage members to use it. Aoife McGrath took over responsibility for *INFO* during the past twelve months.

**Ita Long**

## **The Health and Social Care Professionals Council**

The Health and Social Care Professionals Council (HSCPC) was established on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2007 by the Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney.

The Council has met regularly since that time. The Council was chaired initially by Mr Finbarr Flood who was the Chairperson of the Labour Court for a number of years. Unfortunately due to ill health Mr Flood resigned and was replaced by Ms Margaret Hayes who worked in a number of government departments before taking early retirement.

The membership includes:

### **Health and Social Care Professions Representatives (12)**

Dr John O'Mullane (Clinical Biochemists)  
Ms Margaret Doyle (Dieticians)  
Ms Jacqui Barry-O'Crowley (Medical Scientists)  
Dr Elizabeth Ann McKay (Occupational Therapists)  
Ms Nano Fitzsimons (Orthoptists)  
Ms Jill Long (Physiotherapists)  
Ms Patricia Godwin (Podiatrists/Chiropodists)  
Dr Mitchel Fleming (Psychologists)  
Dr Mark McEntee (Radiographers)  
Ms Monica Egan (Social Workers)  
Mr David Power (Social Care Workers)  
Ms Una O'Shiel (Speech and Language Therapists)

### **Ministerial Nominees (3)**

MsJoan Freeman (Chief Executive Officer, Pieta House)  
Ms Bernie McNally (Chief Therapy Advisor, Department of Health and Children)  
Mr Tom Jordan (Managing Partner, Organisational and Personal Development)

### **Public and Private/Voluntary Health Management Representative (2)**

Ms Elva Gannon (Assistant CEO HSE-EA)  
Mr Tony Darmody (CEO, Kerry Parents and Friends Association)

### **Educational Representative (1)**

Professor James Browne (Registrar and Deputy President, National University of Ireland Galway)

### **General Public Representatives (6)**

Mr Vincent McCabe  
Professor Denis A Cusack  
Mr Michael O'Halloran  
Mr Kevin F Jones  
Ms Mary O'Donnell  
Mrs Joan Johnson

A number of committees were set up to address particular issues. The committees included:

- Governance and Service Planning
- Education Matters
- Registration Matters
- Finance/Staffing/Accommodation/Organisational /Structures/Communication
- CEO Recruitment
- Fitness to Practice Matters.

The committees are mainly made up of Council members but it was agreed that the input of the National Social Work Qualifications Board would be important and so Eilis Walsh has joined the committee on Education Matters and the committee on Registration Matters. It was also agreed by Council members that the NSWQB would receive the minutes of Council meetings.

A CEO has been recruited and is expected to be in post in the middle of May. This appointment will mean that much of the operational work of the Council can begin, such as the setting up the registration boards. Each profession will have its own registration board. It is likely that not all the boards will be up and running at the same time as some of the professions are more ready than others to be regulated. The CEO will be the Registrar to all the twelve boards.

Draft documents in relation to education, fitness to practice and ethics have been developed. A draft application form for registration has also been developed. Further work needs to be done on these before they will be circulated for wider consultation.

With the appointment of the new Chairperson and the CEO, it is likely that registration for health and social care professionals will become a reality sooner rather than later.

**Monica Egan (Member of Health and Social Care Professionals Council (Social Work))**