



An Bord Comhairleach um Achtanna na Leanaí
Children Acts Advisory Board

**Meeting of
Children Acts Advisory Board
Tuesday 23rd June 2009
Phoenix House
Minutes**

- Present:** Michael Donnellan (Acting Chair)
Cathal Flynn, Phil Hanna, Roger Killeen
Finbarr Murphy, Michelle Shannon, Dermot Stokes,
- Apologies:** Cathleen Callanan, Nuala Doherty, Charlie Hardy,
Gerry O'Neill, Jacinta Stewart,
Aidan Browne,
- In Attendance:** Finbarr O'Leary, Jane Craig, Robert Murphy, Clodagh Thorne,

Declaration of Interest in agenda items, by Board Members

- No conflict of interests declared.

1. Minutes of last meeting

- The minutes from the previous meeting were adopted and subsequently signed by Acting Chair, Mr. Michael Donnellan.

2. Matters Arising

- There were no matters arising.

3. Chief Executive Report

The Chief Executive reported on the following topics:

Government Decision

- Publication of legislation to allow for the dissolution of the Board is still awaited.
- The next meeting between CAAB and the OMCYA will take place on July 3rd.

Guardian ad litem guidance

- The Guardian ad litem guidance was officially launched by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and an invited audience on Tuesday the 19th of May in Buswells Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2, a copy of the Minister's speech was circulated. The CAAB are currently pursuing the twin aims of **(i)** communicating the guidance to the stakeholders, and **(ii)** preparing a list of

- GAL's who fulfil the guidance criteria for appointment by the courts, following relevant consultation.

Meeting with Centre for Effective Services (CES)

- A copy of the business plan for the CES has been received and was circulated for the Board's consideration. A further meeting will be held shortly with the Director, Deborah Gbate, to discuss how some of the work of the Board might be addressed following dissolution. **The purpose of the CES is to act as a catalyst for achieving positive outcomes for all children and families** by supporting the implementation of effective, coordinated practices and policies, throughout the island of Ireland. The Objectives of the CES are:
 - **Maximise the availability of high-quality, evidence based children's services throughout Ireland** by facilitating service providers to strengthen their programmes with the support of appropriate expert advice...
 - **Support the development of a more-collaborative, integrated and outcomes-focused children's field** by supporting service providers, policy-makers, the scientific/academic community and funding agencies to work together to deliver joined-up, evidence-based services for children
 - **Inform policy and practice in children's services** by using the evidence gained from children's services and captured through the CES to demonstrate what works
- A discussion arose regarding further information/understanding of the role of CES from the OMCYA as their proposed Research agency mirrors the strategy objectives of the CAAB in the area of Research.

North South Ministerial Council: Research Sub Group

- The CAAB (represented by Robert Murphy) participated in the first meeting of 'The Child Protection Cross Border Sub-Group on Research' in June in Newry.
- A Cross Border Officials' Group (the Child Protection Cross-Border Group) has been established to focus on child protection issues and identify specific areas for collaborative working to mutual benefit. The Child Protection Cross-Border Group, which is jointly chaired by the DHSSPS and DoHC has, in its initial phase, identified a number of matters to be taken forward within a sub group structure, including *'Research with particular emphasis on sharing knowledge and influencing policy and practice within both jurisdictions'*.

'The Child Protection Cross Border Sub-Group on Research will consider the potential for:

- *the **formal sharing of information** on child protection related research (and other inquiries/serious case reviews?) conducted throughout the North and South of Ireland;*
- *the **dissemination of research** (and inquiry/case review?) findings to all relevant child protection policy and practice networks;*
- ***establishing structures/mechanisms** for the development of shared learning and evidence based practice; and*
- ***Identifying potential research initiatives** which might be taken forward on an all Ireland basis to assist key DHSSPS/DoHC child protection policies and priorities.*

The Sub-Group will agree a programme of related activity aimed at exploring and promoting the above objectives to mutual benefit.'

Special Care Discharge Criteria

- The work is on-going with a number of external submissions received (e.g. Ombudsman for Children) including open offers by others to review working drafts. Feedback via the HSE on children's experiences in special care units is progressing. This work is running in parallel with the finalisation of the project on Therapeutic Interventions.

Best practice on Guidelines in the use of Physical Restraint (Child Care: Residential Units) (2006)

The nominees from a number of key agencies had the first REVIEW meeting on 19th June following on initial one-to-one meetings to agree a working format. Some of the policy/practice issues arising were:

1. The use (and practical understanding) of Single Separation.
2. Duty of care and the exercise of professional judgment (part 9)
3. Absence without permission (part 13).
4. A more challenging population of children/young people in residential care/children detention schools
5. Use of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) as a standalone – no mix with other systems of intervention.
6. Requirement to have endorsement by Department of Education and Science, Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Irish Youth Justice Service, Health Service Executive, Social Services Inspectorate/HIQA and CAAB

The Review should be completed during July '09 following a further meeting and an agreement of suitable text to be endorsed by the key agencies/departments.

OMCYA & CAAB Inter-Agency Booklet (incorporating the Child Care Act 1991 & Children Act 2001 (as amended) :

- The draft of the booklet has been completed by the CAAB and following delivery of a presentation draft by the printers will be forwarded to the key agencies for short reference and agreement on content. A peer review by a legal practitioner and /or legal academic is under consideration prior to approval by the Board.

OMCYA (& CAAB) 'Awards for Services to Children and Young People' 2010

- An initial meeting has been held with the OMCYA to plan for the 2010 event. Feedback has been received on the planning of the event, content, advertising, focus etc. In order to take account of budgetary constraints, Dublin Castle has been proposed for 19th March 2010. The OMCYA are keen that the CAAB take the event forward based on the track record to date. A further meeting during July 2009 will allow for agreement on a plan of action and provide for applications to be received by December 2009.

Evidence to Practice Seminar

A very successful evidence to practice seminar on the topic of Restorative Practices was held in the Gresham Hotel on the 19th May last. The event was attended by 250 people in the venue and another 150 people attended at five locations around the country to view a webcast of the proceedings.

A breakfast meeting was held with all presenters, senior practitioners, managers, policy makers on the following morning to consider how this approach might be advanced. Further meetings are to be held shortly with the CAAB planning group.

Significant interest has been shown by a number of groups, organisations and individuals across the country in advancing this approach as part of the Interagency Panel Group, the CAAB is facilitating a pilot training programme on restorative practices involving the HSE West (residential) and Barnardos, Northern Ireland. Discussions are ongoing subject to HSE staff availability, costings and training options.

Future Board Meetings

A draft agenda for the Board meeting on Tuesday the 8th of September was circulated for deliberation. This meeting is proposed as a review of the key functions of the CAAB as well as an opportunity to focus on the learning from the Board's activities since July 2007. The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs has accepted an invitation to attend the morning session and the Director General of the OMCYA is in a position to attend the closed session in the afternoon.

A number of other guests may also be invited at the discretion of the Board. Discussions arose with regard to CES attending the full board meeting and it was suggested that they might be invited to make a short presentation informing the board of their new role.

- It was decided that CAAB's board room was not suitable for the September 8th meeting and an alternative venue is to be considered. All board members were asked to make a strong commitment to attend this meeting.

4. Subcommittee Reports

a) Finance

- The Management Report for May 2009 was signed off and it was mentioned that CAAB is within the expected budget to date.
- It was noted that CAAB have one staff vacancy which will not be filled due to the current climate.

b) Audit

- The Audit Report was circulated and noted.

c) Communications

The Communications committee met on the 9th of June and the following points were noted.

- A literature review of international and national research regarding PREW has been undertaken. The CAAB Website will be expanded to provide databases of research reference material.
- The summer edition of the CAAB newsletter has gone to print and will be circulated accordingly.
- The IYJS are publishing a report on the Garda Diversion Projects and will also be publishing their Annual Report for 2008.
- The HSE will publish the Laxton Report shortly.
- The VEC Youth Affairs section has transferred to the OMCYA.
- The NEWB is to incorporate the school completion programme, the Traveller Teacher scheme and the Home-School Liaison programme in September 2009.
- The next meeting of the Communications Committee is scheduled for mid September

5. Presentation: Organisational Case Studies on Inter-Agency Co-Operation.

- Mary Rafferty gave an overview presentation on the Organisational Case Studies on Inter-Agency Co-Operation. It is hope this research report will be published following peer review in October 2009.

6. Presentation: Audit and Analysis of Irish Literature on Children in Detention and Out of Home Care Project.

- Anne Clarke from Eustace Patterson Limited made a 15 minute presentation on the Audit and Thematic Analysis of literature on Children in detention and out of home care in Ireland. It is hoped this research report will be published in the last quarter of 2009.

7. Quarterly Stats on Special Care.

- The quarterly stats on Special Care were circulated and noted.

8. AOB

- **There was no other business**

The next Board Meeting will take place in The Probation Office, Haymarket, Smithfield, Dublin 7 on September 8th 2009 from 9.30am until 5pm.