

**Meeting of  
Children Acts Advisory Board  
Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2010  
Probation Office, Haymarket**

**Minutes**

**Present:** Jacinta Stewart (Chair), Michael Donnellan, Cathal Flynn, Roger Killeen, Finbarr Murphy, Michelle Shannon, Dermot Stokes.

**Apologies:** Nuala Doherty, Philomena Hanna, Gerry O'Neill, Denis O'Sullivan.

**In Attendance:** Aidan Browne, Finbarr O'Leary, Jane Craig.

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**Declaration of Interest in agenda items, by Board Members**

- No conflict of interests declared.

**1) Minutes**

- The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed, proposed, adopted and subsequently signed by the Chair, Ms. Jacinta Stewart.
- The Chair noted that Cathleen Callanan has resigned from the Board on her transfer to HIQA.

**2) Matters Arising**

- Any matters arising were dealt with under agenda items.

**3) Chief Executive Report**

The Chief Executive report included updates on:

- The secondment of staff to the Department of Health and Children, the Health Service Executive and the Garda Síochana. One person is awaiting assignment to the Revenue Commissioners.
- The follow up to the functions and outputs of the Children Acts Advisory Board.
- The lease of Phoenix House terminated on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January and we vacated the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February. The Board also noted that as we were in occupation on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2010 the Children Acts Advisory Board is required to pay the rates bill for 2010. The rates for 2010 amount to €29,122.95.

- The Comptroller and Auditor General audits for 2009 and 2010. These will have to be carried out separately as the Board is unlikely to be dissolved before the 31<sup>st</sup> of March and the Comptroller and Auditor General has clarified that the longest period for which a combined audit can be carried out is 15 months.

The Chief Executive also drew attention to the following matter:

A copy of the letter and report from the Ombudsman for Children was circulated, the report was in regard to an investigation by the Ombudsman for Children's Office into a complaint which focussed on the actions of the Health Service Executive and the Children Acts Advisory Board. The conclusion of the investigation, that the actions of the Children Acts Advisory Board adversely affected the outcomes for the child, was unacceptable. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children appear to have missed the fact that the Children Acts Advisory Board acted in an advisory capacity only on a pilot basis and had no remit to go any further. The Children Acts Advisory Board gave every assistance to the Office of the Ombudsman for Children during the investigation.

The Board agreed that representations be made setting out the Boards disagreement with the findings and the reasons and that a copy of the reply be circulated to the Board Members.

#### **4) Information Given in Confidence Policy**

This policy has been drafted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The Board approved the policy.

#### **5) Tracing and Tracking of Children Subject to a Special Care Application Presentation of Draft Report by Mark Brierley, SIS.**

Mark Brierley gave an overview of the report and a discussion followed:

- Various concerns were raised with regard to certain comments in the report and it was agreed that some of the wordings would be revised to take account of these concerns.
- The point was made in relation to a reference to ADHD that the report should reflect that it could not be guaranteed that all children in the report had been assessed.
- It was agreed that recommendation 8 should also state that further research is required into the effectiveness of Family Welfare Conferences.
- It was agreed that recommendation 10 and 11 should be integrated into one recommendation 10 a) and b).
- It was agreed that recommendation 16 would be more appropriately placed in the section relating to Policy recommendations.
- It was agreed that Mark would consult with Aidan Browne and Finbarr O'Leary in relation to these revisions.

The Board acknowledged the hard work and commitment given by both Mark and Grainne in completing this research within the allocated timeframe, which was very tight due to the wind down of the Board's functions pending the dissolution of the Board.

It was agreed that a similar launch to previous reports would be appropriate with people invited to consider and respond during a 2 hour seminar at the end of April. The timing is important it should be allowed to 'soak' into the system first for a considered response.

#### **6) AOB**

- The draft final newsletter of the Board was circulated. It is expected that this will be published in the next week.
- The Chair thanked the Board and its Executive.

**The next Board Meeting will be convened to attend to governance matters when required.**