



An Bord Comhairleach um Achtanna na Leanaí
Children Acts Advisory Board

**Meeting of
Children Acts Advisory Board
Tuesday 1st December, 2009
Gresham Hotel**

Minutes

Present: Jacinta Stewart (Chair), Cathleen Callanan, Nuala Doherty, Michael Donnellan, Cathal Flynn, Philomena Hanna, Michelle Shannon, Dermot Stokes.

Apologies: Roger Killeen, Finbarr Murphy, Gerry O'Neill, Denis O'Sullivan,

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

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.

2) Matters Arising

- Any matters arising were dealt with under agenda items.

3) Chief Executive Report

The Chief Executive report included:

- A report on the ongoing arrangements for the transfer of functions, staff and resources of the CAAB to the Department of Health and Children.
- The rental of Phoenix and in particular the notice of intention to vacate the premises which will be given to OPW. The understanding at the time when the then SRSB agreed to rent the floor in 2002 was that one months notice would suffice. OPW however now appear to be asking for more notice to be given. The Chief Executive proposed that while the option to rent on a month by month basis would continue to be pursued that the Board would approve the rental for a period from 1st of January to the 31st of March 2010, if necessary. The Board accepted this proposal.

- Restorative Practices study visit to Hull was a success and a commitment has been given by some of the attendees to promote the practice. A training initiative is being offered to 24 individuals, with 12 of these progressing to 'training of trainers' courses by June 2010.
- Research Launches: the first launch, Putting Research Evidence to Work, in the Gresham on the 13th of November was well attended at the venue and also by a large audience via webcast. The second will be held on this Friday the 4th of December also in the Gresham and via webcast. This event will launch the programme of research on inter-agency working.
- Childlink Child Protection Hub: The Chief Executive also reported on the proposal that CAAB co-finance the establishment of a child protection hub in co-operation with the Department of Health and Children and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Northern Ireland.
- Board Business Plan: It was reported that all of the activities agreed by the Board for the 2009 Business Plan have been largely completed subject to some tidying up which will be undertaken before the end of the year. The staff of the CAAB were acknowledged for continuing to work diligently in difficult circumstances, to produce a substantial body of work which will add significant value to the children's sector.
- The draft memo which was presented to the OMCYA dealing with the functions of the CAAB post dissolution was circulated and noted by the Board.
- In relation to the future of the Awards for services to children and Young People the value of the awards in the Child Care sector was noted and it was recommended that one person in the OMCYA be allocated responsibility for this initiative in order to ensure its continuance, as it may be difficult for the OMCYA to maintain its 'neutral space' in the future. The point was made that with the changes which are ongoing in the public sector, it is important to recognise the integrity of the OMCYA and trust in the system.
- A copy of the letter from Sylva Langford the Director General of the OMCYA in response to the launch of the 'Putting Research Evidence to Work' report was circulated to the Board. This letter set out progress to date in the area and outlined future plans in relation to some of the recommendations.

4) Subcommittee Reports

a) Audit

The Audit Committee met prior to the main Board meeting. The Internal Audit Review on the System of Internal Financial Controls was presented to the committee by Leo Fleming and Rain Tan from Deloitte. It was reported that the findings were generally positive and that 3 issues of medium importance were identified which have all been addressed and no significant or issues of high importance were found. A report on outstanding issues was also presented to the committee and all issues were pursued in so far as was feasible.

b) Finance

The finance report was circulated and it was noted that the following a projection of expenditure to the end of the year the CAAB will drawdown the total allocation. Some expenditure was behind target but it is expected that this would be fully expended prior to the year end. Any surplus identified earlier in the year is being allocated as

reported in previous meetings and in accordance with the recommendations of the OMCYA.

c) Research

The Research Committee met on the 29th of September and the following points were noted: the Awards are due to be held on the 9th of March in Dublin Castle and are being jointly run with the OMCYA; Board members were invited to notify the executive of any events they are aware of up to the 31st of December, for inclusion in the events calendar.

It was also noted that the CAAB had produced a very substantial body of work and that while it was good to be able to sign off on work of this quality it was unfortunate that the Board would not be around to shepherd the research into the next stage. The point was also made that it was unfortunate that the research team who worked so effectively together in the CAAB would now be dispersed.

5) Reports

- Special Care: The Special Care Discharge Criteria is close to completion, we are awaiting feedback from Queens University and from UCC. The approval of the Board will be required for final sign-off. Five members of the Board were nominated to sign off on the criteria on behalf of the Board. These members were: Cathal Flynn; Jacinta Stewart; Philomena Hanna; Cathleen Callanan and Michelle Shannon. It was agreed that any three of the five nominated members would be able to give approval.
- Tracing and Tracking Study: It is expected that this will be finalised by the end of December. Of the 61 cases included in the study 30 have been admitted to Special Care. It was noted that this will be outcomes based research and that the report has the potential to be controversial. The dissemination will need to be carefully managed and by someone with the appropriate level of authority. It was pointed out that care needs to be taken over how the conclusions or recommendations are presented. The CAAB has been requested to attend a meeting with the HSE to discuss Special Care and High Support.
- Research Programme Update: The research programme was circulated and it was noted that all agreed projects have either been completed or are on target to be completed by the end of the year.

6) AOB

- Two reports are about to be published which may promote negative publicity, the first is on underachievers in school and early school leaving, the second deals with drugs and alcohol and the link with offending behaviour.
- The Chair paid tribute to the work of the Board and its Executive as being exemplary and made particular mention of the management team in her tribute.
- Board Members were requested to sign a copy of the Declaration of Interest form for 2009 and return to Jane Craig as soon as possible.

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