

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

A further boost to the view that there is need for constitutional change regarding Children's Rights comes from Dr Ursula Kilkelly of UCC. In a report for the Ombudsman for Children's Office, she pointed out a number of key areas that impacted on children's rights: rights ignored in decisions making; children largely invisible in law; the absence of effective advocacy for children; absence of dedicated supports and services for children especially in areas of adolescent and mental health; training needed for workers to raise awareness of children's rights.

"New Disability Plans -

What they mean for You and Your Family."

The National Disability Authority (NDA) is the main state agency on disability issues. Its job is to provide independent expert advice to the Government. This publication outlines in 5 short sections how a) new disability actions can improve the everyday life of those with disabilities; b) how to access more information and help and c) where and how to complain if one is not happy with the services provided. Outlined is what will apply into the future in terms of needs and services and we recommend this booklet to all in the disability sector if they do not already have it. www.nda.ie 1890 632 631 www.nda.ie

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The views expressed in The Link are not necessarily those of the IASCW and should not be taken as binding the Association or expressing its policy.



The Link

Volume 3 No.2

September 2007

New Minister for Children

Brendan Smith, TD was appointed as Minister for Children following the June 2007 election. He replaces Brian Lenihan who is the new Minister for Justice.

Minister Smith has been a Dail Deputy since 1992 and prior to taking up his current position was Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Food since 2004. Prior to that he was co-chairman of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body and a member of the Dail Committee on Procedure and Privileges. He was formerly Government Chief Whip on the Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and advisor to former Tanaiste, John Wilson, who died recently. Minister Smith comes into office at a time when the actual Office of the Minister for Children has recently located to a section in the Department of Health & Children in Hawkins House, Dublin 2. The IASCW President, Phil McFadden, has written to Mr. Smith wishing him well in his new position and inviting him to open the 2008 annual conference in Waterford.

Another interesting and relevant appointment was made by the Taoiseach when Maria Corrigan was made a senator. Senator Corrigan is a psychologist and indicated, on her appointment, that she hoped to highlight issues to do with the disabilities sector. For those who work in that sector she is someone who obviously should be kept in mind and, hopefully, will be an advocate at political level for all in the area of disabilities.

Annual Conference 2008

Details are being finalised to ensure that the IASCW 2008 conference will build on the success of 2007. The conference will be held at Faithlegg House Hotel in Waterford on February 21st and 22nd. Again, as in previous years, Hotel Solutions will be dealing with bookings and the 'early bird' offer will again apply. Full details will follow with the winter edition of CURAM in late November.

CAAB Conference

The Children Acts Advisory Board (CAAB), formerly the Special Residential Services Board, holds its National Conference in Kilkenny on October 23rd 24th this year. The conference theme is Sharing the Task and booking is through Hotel Solutions at 01-6280111 or booking form at info@caab.ie

CAAB AWARDS FOR SERVICES TO YOUNG PEOPLE

These awards were established to recognise the invaluable work and contribution made by service providers to children and young people nationally under the Child Care & Children Acts. Competitions are open to those providing services (State & Voluntary sectors) for children under the Child Care & Children Acts.

Nominations may be made in respect of an individual team, colleague or you may nominate yourself. Nominations by young people in receipt of a service are very welcome. Submissions may be in the form of a publication, film, poster campaign, project etc.

Entry Forms and Further Information from www.caab.ie or 01-6724100 or info@caab.ie

INSPECTORATE

Marion Witton has been appointed Chief Inspector of the SSI in the Health and Information & Quality Authority (HIQUA). Up to now the work of the SSI, as IASCW members will be aware, was exclusively focused on children in residential care. However, within HIQUA the SSI's role has been expanded to include the inspection and registration of residential services in the public, private and voluntary sectors for older people and people with a disability. Nursing homes are included as are foster care services, day facilities and inspection of children detention schools. The Detention Schools up to now were inspected by the Department of Education & Science but since March 1st this year and the transfer of the Dublin schools to the Irish Youth Justice Service they will now come within the scope of the SSI.

The new Chief Inspector joins HIQUA from the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority in the UK and has many years' experience of regulation of adults' and children's care services.

SHELTERED WORKSHOPS

Social care workers in the disabilities sector will await with interest the outcome of the investigation to be carried out by the Irish Human Rights Commission into rates of pay and working conditions faced by people with intellectual disabilities who work in sheltered workshops.

Dr Maurice Manning, the Commission President, said the issue raised were "very disturbing." The investigation comes at a time when there are calls by some bodies, such as Inclusion Ireland, favouring supported employment in the open market. Caution is urged however because such a move happening quickly might leave some sheltered workshop employees without any employment.