

Independent Children's Homes Association  
Representing & Supporting Registered Providers

LATEST

Inside this issue



**Children and Young  
Person's Bill 2**



**A National Voice 5**



**Education above  
Level Three 6**

# Chairs' Welcome

Welcome to our summer newsletter after hurtling through another busy time on the roller coaster that our sector continues to present! The Children and Young People's Bill is in its final stages (see inside for Gary's full report on our political activity), regional commissioning is becoming more prominent, preferred provider lists are being compiled and we enter a new era of innovation and expected efficiency in service delivery.

It is critical to ICHA activity that continuity is maintained and that new members and new committee members join in alongside existing active members to ensure the rich skill and experience base of the ICHA continues to work for our sector and the children and young people for whom we care.

We are pleased to see new committee members who have taken up active roles in pushing forward the ICHA agenda:

Pauline Webster is now shadowing on the political link. Pauline is from Childhood First and it is great to see an ICHA member from the voluntary sector taking on a key role within our committee.

Steve Lord (Special Education Services) has taken a lead role in the production of the ICHA Strategic Development Plan for 2009-10; we are holding a special committee meeting on September 10th 2008 to collate information from discussion and meetings and formulate the first draft which will

be circulated for comment prior to finalising in November, when the final version will be available on the website for members.

ICHA continues to increase membership and we are keen to hear from non-members who wish to find out about the benefits of ICHA membership. Initial enquiries should be directed to Roy Williamson ([admin@icha.org.uk](mailto:admin@icha.org.uk); Tel - 07883033544) who will liaise with Paul O'Leary (Cornerstones) who is our Membership Secretary.

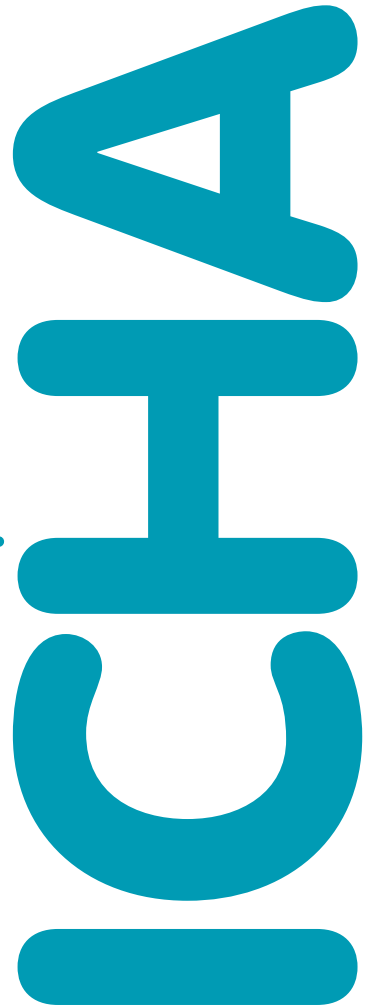
ICHA is indebted to the Committee members and further information on who the committee members are and what their roles are, is described in this issue.

Danny Curran (Care Afloat) and Alison Trainor (Oracle Care) are now over half way into their second years as co-Chairs and it is time to start thinking about succession to these posts. The co-Chair system has worked well over the past 2 years and would be the recommended structure to continue in 2009. Danny and Alison intend to remain as committee members when they step down in January (if you still want us!). The role of co-Chair is one of responsibility; occasionally demanding, always interesting and at times quite exciting as well as fulfilling. Anyone who has a suggested nominee or is interested themselves in this position is welcome to contact Alison or Danny for an informal discussion ([alisontrainor@oraclecare.com](mailto:alisontrainor@oraclecare.com) or [danny@careafloat.co.uk](mailto:danny@careafloat.co.uk)).

We would like to give you a further reminder of the OFSTED consultation on the publication of inspection reports. We urge all members to participate and offer feedback on this important subject. The opportunity is open until September 16th – the link is <http://85.234.135.179/index.php?sid=18654>

Finally (but by no means least!), we have had the first pilot regional meeting for providers in the South & East regions (July 17th 2008 in London). Gary Kent (Political Consultant) joined the proceedings and gave a full update on the progress of the Children and Young People's Bill, and Mithran Samuel, News Editor for Community Care magazine also attended. Feedback from members was very positive, with attendance being much easier through an accessible London venue. Due to the success of this pilot, a second regional pilot in the North West has been scheduled for Monday September 29th at 1pm at Haigh Hall in Wigan. The initial pilot meeting in each area is open to non-members as an introduction to ICHA work and member benefits. The agenda will be driven by local providers in relation to specific matters and issues that relate to that area, in addition to including an update on ICHA activity and any key themes that participants wish to explore. Further details are available from the ICHA office ([admin@icha.org.uk](mailto:admin@icha.org.uk) T: 0845 467 8152).

**Alison Trainor, Danny Curran**  
Co-Chairs



## Diary dates

2nd September – Welsh ICHA Meeting at Children in Wales, Cardiff, 10am – 1pm



10th September – Single Agenda Committee Meeting – ICHA Development Plan 2009 – Thoughts of Others, Birmingham, 10.30am.

29th September – ICHA Regional Meeting – Northern Region – Haigh Hall, Wigan (close to M6) 1pm – 3.30pm.

# Political Report

The Children and Young Persons Bill will become law by the Autumn, after two years of public consultation and parliamentary scrutiny to which the ICHA has contributed.

The Bill promotes four key principles: a) ensuring good parenting from every person involved; b) giving young children a voice in decisions that affect their future; c) ensuring stability and continuity and d) raising the aspirations of children in care.

The Bill was radically changed at its Lords stage but ministers maintained the shape of the Bill in seven sessions of the Committee, which was bipartisan and consensual. This is a landmark piece of legislation whose architecture and assumptions will last for some time. The approximately 150,000 words of the Committee debates will be mined for ministerial promises and clarifications in drawing up statutory guidance to local authorities.

The consensus, enshrined in this law, is that children should, wherever possible, be brought up in their own families and communities. Minister Beverley Hughes told the Committee that the sequence of the legislation is that "when considering the placement options available to it, the local authority must give first preference to placement with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child. Where placement with parents is not possible, the clause requires a local authority to place the child in the most appropriate placement available."

A key provision concerns sufficient accommodation. The Children's Minister Kevin Brennan says it obliges local authorities "to take steps to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation in their area that meets the needs of the children they look after" with regard to the benefit of having a number of accommodation providers in their area sufficient to enable them to perform their duty. He added "that local authorities will have to be able to justify the decisions that they make to provide the sufficient accommodation without commissioning any from third parties."

He conceded "that it will not always be reasonably practicable for every local authority to make provision in its area to meet every type of potential need; but for those particularly complex needs that require highly specialised care, we would expect local authorities to work together to commission the necessary provision on a regional or sub-regional basis. We have been supporting such collaboration through regional commissioning pilots."

His Conservative counterpart, Tim Loughton who played a major role in the Committee proceedings, spelled out his position on London commissioning where several "London boroughs have no children's homes of their own, so rather than specifying rigidly that accommodation must be within a borough's physical boundaries, it would be sensible to have the capacity for joint commissioning across London boroughs to provide a specialist

accommodation provider or to commission from a private, independent specialist provider."

The issue of multiple placements was aired comprehensively. Tim Loughton said that multiple placements should be avoided at all costs and reduced considerably by, for example, sharing the best practice of places such as Barnet. He outlined how "Barnet very boldly decided to invest in its social workforce, particularly child social workers" and developed a buddy system, whereby every child in care was buddied up with an officer from the local authority - the "pushy parent" in the background looking out for that child's educational achievement, health records and so on, and asking awkward questions of the relevant department, social worker or officer when that child appeared to be under-achieving. The local number of looked-after children going to university or equivalent further education is about 12% compared with 1 to 2% of looked-after children nationally.

Talking of the placement hierarchy, Tim Loughton said that "In many cases, the residential care environment might be the best option. I do not in any way mean to put it at the bottom of the pile, but many of us have seen children who have been sent first to residential care simply because of the unavailability of suitable foster care closer to home. I hope that we can get the right balance in the future, but it must be horses for courses, and a question of what is in the best interests of the child."

ICHA representations have made the point that residential care is too often the last resort on the ladder of care and that there are times when the best interests of the looked after child would be better served by jumping first to intensive care to stabilise the child before reverting to less intensive and cheaper placements.

Independent advocacy and representation are vital to the new approach. Beverley Hughes said that "we will require local authorities to appoint a named [Independent Reviewing Officer] IRO for each child to enhance the personal accountability and individual responsibilities of each IRO. We will require IROs to spend time individually with each child before any review, so that that IRO personally establishes the child's wishes and feelings about the issues that will be covered at the care planning meeting.

David Kidney, the Chair of the Associate Parliamentary group on Children in Care spoke with passion about this in moving a probing amendment - to elicit ministerial clarification. David was worried that the IROs' independence could be compromised by their council employers' concerns about costs but withdrew his amendment in the belief that guidance would protect employees from such pressures. This chimes with ICHA representations which alert policy makers to the tendency of some commissioners to put cost above quality in placement decisions.

The Government has established pilot schemes to allow people to remain with their foster families after 18. Labour MP Helen Southworth tabled an amendment to allow vulnerable young people the opportunity to remain with their foster carers until they are 21 years. Her amendment was, however, technically defective and could not be pursued. But the arguments were aired. The ICHA welcomes the pilots but says there should be equivalent recognition for very vulnerable children in care with multiple problems to remain in residential care until 21.

A new consensus has been set which gives priority to care in the family, wherever possible and as near to the child's home environment as possible. This is fair enough as far as it goes but a deeper understanding of the role of residential care as well as the specific concerns of independent and voluntary providers is still needed. The next stage is to influence the statutory guidance and to sustain a strategic relationship with ministers and local authorities.



## Gary Kent our political lobbyist – brief profile

Gary Kent has worked in Parliament for two decades and is also active in providing solidarity to Iraqi civil society organisations and seeking to increase integrated education between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

# Bollington

## Protect you and your company against increasing risks from legislation

Increasing legislation is a fact of modern life. Government, local authorities and regulators now have more power than ever before. In addition to this people are far more likely to sue than in the past.

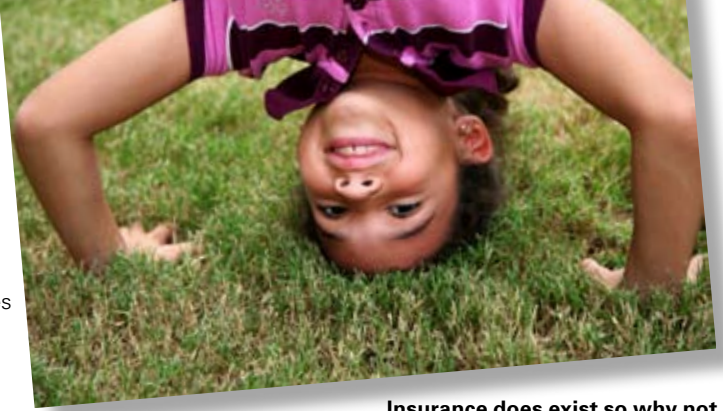
Did you know:

- there are over 60 national regulators in the UK with a budget of close to £3bn\*
- regulators employ 41,000 staff including 12,000 inspectors and enforcement officers\*
- 238,546 employees took their employer to tribunal last year\*\*

New legislation such as The Corporate Manslaughter Act increasingly holds directors, officers, employees and companies liable for their actions. The costs of defending such a charge could run into hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Also defending against actions for the likes of sexual or racial discrimination plus any potential awards made by a tribunal could be substantial.

In fact the risks can come from anywhere – for example a candidate you interview alleges age discrimination after not being selected for employment.



## Insurance does exist so why not get a quotation?

Bollington Care is the UK's leading insurer of children's homes.

You can't reduce the amount of regulation you face but you do have access to the expertise of Bollington to help you defend your business should the worst happen. For a no obligation review of your current arrangements visit [www.bollington.com/care-insurance](http://www.bollington.com/care-insurance) or give us a call on 0845 603 8523.

You need to be sure that you can concentrate on running your business, safe in the knowledge that you and your company have adequate cover if such events happen. Even if you have got some cover at the moment, legislation is changing so fast that this may no longer be adequate.

\*Source Hampton Report 2006 \*\*Source Employment Tribunal Annual Report 2007

## Is there a way of getting more out of your contracts?

These are difficult economic times. Care providers are unlikely to be able to respond to rising costs by simply raising prices. So what can you possibly do, to help save on costs yet increase revenue?

Underpinning your income are contracts for services. In theory, there should be an equality of bargaining positions enabling you to renegotiate the price. I am working on the assumption that this is not so and the Local Authority holds the whip hand.

Under the Children Act 1989, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure the welfare of children in their area. Children placed in residential care are there because they have or are likely to suffer significant harm. Thus, these are children that Local Authorities accept are in a highly vulnerable situation requiring greater care and services than the average child.

The Care Standards Act provides the statutory framework for the provision of residential care. The National Minimum Standards flesh out the framework. Standard 34 requires providers to ensure, " ... **the home is financially sound.**" Standard 34.8. requires providers, " ... **to have sufficient funding to continue to fulfil its Statement of Purpose for the next 12 months.**" OFSTED has the statutory duty to ensure standards are met and take enforcement action where

necessary. NCSC; CSCI and Ofsted have not inspected in harsh economic times. I doubt that Ofsted should permit inflationary pressures to absolve falling standards.

Should Local Authorities refuse to accept higher fees and hold you to a price that endangers the viability of the home, then it seems to me that there is a failure in the duty of care owed by the Local Authority to child/ren that it places. Given the vulnerability of the child, any change of placement is bound to damage his/her emotional well being, jeopardise the child's ability to form lasting and trusting relationships into adulthood; threatening the right to family life. I consider that here is a powerful legal argument to force Local Authorities to reconsider the price it will pay. It adds to the contractual context that there should be a real equality of bargaining positions.

The massive rise in energy and food costs are good and easy examples of where Local Authorities should absorb these increases. Standard 10.3.requires that you provide wholesome and nutritious food; Standard 15 requires you to fund leisure activities and trips; there are transportation costs if you take children to contact with their families.

A second target is the price that you charge for additional services

or staff should the child's needs demand it. In my experience Local Authorities do not give you full information about the child placed. Given the duties on Local Authorities under the PLO as well as care proceedings, there is an abundance of information and professional opinion that never reaches you. Managing a child's needs can often require more resources than originally anticipated. Where the failure by the Local Authority to be open, has resulted in the need for further services, the authority should pay.

Should the Local Authority refuse an increase in price there is always the option of you bringing the contract to an end. For those who run limited companies, you have to consider your fiduciary duties as company directors. Deliberate trading at a loss will imperil the company's future and can expose you to criminal prosecution.

Longer term, consider whether some form of collective bargaining is a way forward. Should you be able to charge a premium if your home has good Ofsted Reports? Should you negotiate a basic cost of care that does not cover the intensity of care that the individual requires, leaving you freer to negotiate the latter element?

Standard 34 should cause you to think carefully about the overheads of your business. Now is a good

time if you have a rent review or lease renewal coming up, to negotiate a lower rent. There are big savings to be made on many areas of expenditure from telephones to printing costs. If you are finding it tough, it is likely to be true for your suppliers.

I need not preach the moral argument on your behalf, it is very powerful. The legal issues I have mentioned may enable you to raise prices where necessary so as to maintain the quality of care that children need and that the state demands they should receive.

**Raphael Silver**  
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# ICHA Regional Meeting

## Southern Region

The inaugural ICHA Regional Meeting was held in London on the 17th July at the offices of Childhood First, writes Nick Taylor – Focus Residential Childcare Services Ltd.

The meeting was well attended with 14 members/potential members in attendance. Also joining the meeting were Mithran Samuel from Community Care and Gary Kent – ICHA Political Lobbyist.

Alison Trainor and Pauline Webster updated those present with issues relating to the National Contract. Pauline had recently attended the DCSF Steering group meeting (see Pauline's notes elsewhere in the Newsletter) and fed back to those present. Interestingly, none of those present had been asked by placing authorities to use the National Contract.

Discussion took place regarding the implementation of the contract and the issue of fee uplift. ICHA has written to the DCSF regarding both matters and are awaiting replies.

Feedback was also given following Ofsted's attendance at previous national ICHA meetings. Those present raised some issues regarding Inspection Reports and conflicting information they had received in relation to response time scales. It was agreed that details of Ofsted's complaints procedures would be issued to members in forthcoming bulletins. It was also agreed that if people had specific issues that they would like addressing, then to inform ICHA who would follow these up. It was emphasised that these need to be detailed and specific.

Sue Evans from Ofsted visited the ICHA General Meeting in Bedworth on 18th June. Full details of the meeting are available on the ICHA Website. Here, Sue shares the top table with ICHA Co-Chairs, Danny Curran and Alison Trainor.

## 2009 ICHA Development Plan

Those present were asked what area's they felt ICHA should be addressing and what issues should be included within the 2009 ICHA Development Plan; to be discussed in September by the ICHA Committee. Areas for inclusion within the Plan were suggested as follows:

### Improving Our Reputation

- It was felt that this issue should address both our relationship with members and the public.
- Colleagues felt it would be advantageous to increase the membership numbers, as this would automatically support the Association's "voice".
- We should be a forum for good practice both in our work and in promoting the Association.
- Could the Association develop accreditation or examine kitemarking?
- ICHA should work towards promoting more positive media coverage of the work of children's homes and residential care.
- Residential care in general should be given a higher national profile.

### Legal Advice

- Could ICHA be a source of advice on both major and minor issues?
- Could we supply model policies, practice documents, etc?
- Could ICHA be a vehicle for greater sharing of policy and practice examples?

### Regional Meetings

It was felt that ICHA was correct in developing regional meetings but that conferences and a central meeting still have a place.

## Outcomes and Evidence Based Practice

- There was a strong feeling that ICHA should be at the forefront of developing a view of how we should measure outcomes, both quantitative and qualitative.
- It was felt that the very good work happening around the country did not always fit the inspection models when outcomes were being sought – ICHA could provide a voice for the promotion of a wider view of how "outcomes" may be represented.

## Commissioning

- ICHA has a role to play in the work around commissioning.

## Influence at a National Level

- ICHA should strive to continue to have a major influence in discussion and events at a national level.
- Continuing to be 'heard' by Ofsted and the DCSF were both clear targets.

Gary Kent – ICHA Political Lobbyist, updated those present on the current state of the Children & Young Person's Bill (see Gary's article). He also informed the meeting of figures obtained regarding the number of placement moves by Looked After Young People. More work is to be undertaken on these figures.

There was a good opportunity for those present to network over lunch. The general feedback was that this first regional meeting had been productive and most had found it easier to attend than the national meetings held in the Midlands, whilst it was acknowledged that there remained a place for some national meetings.

Note: The next Regional Meeting in the Northern Region at Haigh Hall, Wigan on 29th September!



# A national voice

## Amplify 2008

This summer A National Voice, the only Charity in England run by and for children and young people from Care, will be hosting the most significant consultation event for young people in 2008. We'd like you to come along!

To check out the Amplify Report from our last event please follow <http://www.anationalvoice.org/docs/amplify.pdf>

The event will last for two days on the 5th and 6th of August 2008 and allows young people from across England to come together, make friends, learn new skills and share their views with us on how they feel about the Care System and the impact of "Care Matters". They will choose from a wide selection of entertaining and valuable workshops, take part in consultation using modern media, be offered information and advice on a range of issues and get the opportunity to win an amazing selection of prizes including laptops, digital cameras, i-pods and more!

Everybody gets their own room, special food requirements and abilities are catered for and there will even be a series of workshops available for workers. Attendance at this conference will also count towards PRTL requirements for social workers. This is a not for profit event.

If you would like to attend Amplify 08 or would like to know more about booking and fees, please contact our event organiser Mandi Hunt on 01322 274175 or email [mandihunt@mac.com](mailto:mandihunt@mac.com). If this information is suitable for distribution through any of your own networks or channels we would like to encourage you to pass it along.

You can also download booking forms and event information at <http://anationalvoice.giving.officelive.com/amp.aspx>

## Say it Loud! Forum Update Article

In November 2007, A National Voice launched its forum for young people in and leaving Care aged between 5-25 years old in the North West and West Midlands!!! The first forum was a great success and many ideas were brought forward from young people who really want to make a difference and encourage others to do the same!

In December the group decided on the name 'Say it Loud!' Forum and decided that they wanted to tell other young people about the group through this newsletter, so the group got their heads together to think about ideas for the content!

In February 2008, the group came up with some ideas for ANV's latest poll around the role of IRO; they helped to put together the questions and assisted in consulting with other young people from their local area.

In March, the group assisted ANV in planning for a national event held in Manchester on Children

in Care Councils and pledges which was a great success. A young person steering group came up with ideas for workshop content and we enlisted two young people as part-time event assistants for the day.

At the moment Say it Loud! members are helping to plan for ANV's residential event, AMPLIFY08. They have come up with ideas for workshops and are devising the role of the young person "Buddies".

The regional forum is a great opportunity for young people to BOOST their CV by enabling them develop your skills in the following ways: Project management skills as part of a Project Management Team; contributing to/developing a Newsletter as part of the Editorial Team; contributing to /managing your local 'Reverb' Website as a part of the Content Management Team. For further information or to get involved contact Clare either by telephone on 0161 237 5577 or if you prefer by email: [clare.e@anationalvoice.org](mailto:clare.e@anationalvoice.org). We also have a regional Forum in central London and plan dedicated forums for the Midlands and South West by the end of 2008.

## ANV Young Person Member Meets Samantha Morton in London!!

Samantha Morton is a Care-experienced actor who starred most recently in the film 'Control' and has been Oscar nominated twice for her roles in previous films. She first approached A National Voice two years ago and decided she would like to get involved as "one of the team" and meet some of the young members. She dedicated a whole day recently to pay a visit to ANV's office in London to volunteer and meet some of the young people. Young Person, Fiona tells us about her experience:

"It was great, I have never met a famous star before and I have seen lots of her films. We got to interview her to be an Ambassador for ANV and she was so lovely; really cares about young people and making a difference. She talked to us about her experiences being in Care,

she was really passionate about our work and trying to make a difference to the Care system. It was a fantastic day and an amazing experience to meet her!"

We would all like to thank Samantha for dedicating her time and enthusiasm to A National Voice. She is a passionate and inspiring Ambassador and we are proud to have her support.

## LILAC

LILAC is an A National Voice initiative and stands for "leading improvements for Looked-After Children". It is a groundbreaking initiative in which young people who spent a large part of their own lives in care have developed their own good practice standards and been trained to be assessors of local authority and other care services.

The LILAC pilot process has now finished and we are now working with IFP's, ICHA's and Local authorities who have contracted the LILAC team to assess their services.

If you are interested in having your service assessed under the LILAC framework please contact [neil.b@anationalvoice.org](mailto:neil.b@anationalvoice.org)

## This is not a suitcase

Has your Local Authority signed the No Bin Bag Charter? Go to [www.thisisnotasuitcase.org](http://www.thisisnotasuitcase.org) to see the full list. This Charter is a commitment to preventing the poor practice of placing young people's possessions in bin liners when moving between placements. To date over two thirds of all Local Authorities in England have signed this Charter. In this exciting year of Care Matters: A time for change we would like to have all 150 signatures and declare "National No Bin Bag Day". If you can help influence this process in any way please get in touch with Athena at Head Office in Manchester.



# Education above level three

Education above level three is part of the Government's wider strategy initiated in 2000 for meeting the perceived skills gap and promoting lifetime learning. This policy has resulted in innovative programmes involving partnerships between employers, learning organisations and centres of higher and further education.

Integral to the design of these new programmes to meet the needs of both individual learners/employees and their employers is the recognition that learning takes many forms and can occur in the workplace. Individuals must learn for organisations to progress<sup>1</sup>. In the wider context, Plato recognised educational provision as the key to achieving the kind of society to be established<sup>2</sup>.

In developing the framework for this new educational policy, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) brought together academic-based learning with work-based experience, resulting in Certificates and Diplomas in Higher and Further Education, and Foundation Degrees. According to The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA 2004) Foundation Degree qualification benchmark, the DfES introduced these qualifications in 2000 as an intermediate level in the Framework for Higher Education Qualification for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The QAA describes the Foundation Degree as dependent upon the delivery of integrated work-based learning through close collaboration between employers and programme providers.

One organisation embracing the Foundation Degree is the Mary Walsh Institute at SACCS. The Institute, in collaboration with the University of Wales at NEWI (North East Wales Institute) has co-delivered a work-based Foundation Degree (FdA) in Therapeutic Child Care since 2005. The FdA conforms to the organisation's ethos and delivery of quality training for over twenty years, and encompasses all the statutory requirements set by the National Occupational Standards, Ofsted, the General Social Care Council/CSSIW and the Children's Workforce Development Council.



This is done through a two-year programme covering the statutory training requirements in the first year alongside the therapeutic programmes intrinsic to the organisation, such as 'Integrated Care & Therapy' and the 'SACCS Recovery Programme'. In the second year, seven modules are delivered and assessed in a blend of on-line learning, lectures, mentor support, and group assessments. The further implication for this is seen in the implementation of social pedagogy or more accurately andragogy, defined by Knowles as 'the art and science of helping adults learn'<sup>3</sup>. In simple terms, providing therapeutic child care along with the underpinning knowledge linking theory to practice, to facilitate the education of the workforce and enable them to provide the most enlightened recovery for traumatised children.

NEWI and the Institute working in partnership will also offer a top-up to the Foundation Degree in the form of a BA in Therapeutic Child Care. Over two years this will consist of four modules and a dissertation beginning with face-to-face lectures, followed by online material with a blended approach to assessments. Year 1 will cover social research in preparation for undertaking a dissertation, along with a module that enables critical analysis of therapeutic intervention and related theories. Year 2 will examine the historical and socio-political context

of child care policies and therapeutic child care practices.

Students can then progress to an MA in Therapeutic Child Care delivered by the Mary Walsh Institute in collaboration with Liverpool Hope University. This three year part-time course aims to create and involve an on-line global community, with opportunities to undertake international observations supporting an elective area of child care, such as the impact of trauma on children.

The new strand of education above level three is a government-initiated policy which serves a dual purpose - raising workforce skills and knowledge, at the same time as promoting lifetime learning for the individual. This in turn produces higher education opportunities leading to employability skills, and subject-specialist learning to meet the needs of the global economy.

## Aly Callaghan

Deputy Head of Training  
Mary Walsh Institute, SACCS

<sup>1</sup> Peter M. Senge (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organisation*. New York: Doubleday

<sup>2</sup> A.V. Kelly (2006). *The Curriculum theory and practice* (5th ed.). London: Sage Publications.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm Knowles (1990). *The adult learner: A neglected species* (4th ed.). Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing

## 2020 Children's Workforce Strategy: Update

In the last ICHA Newsletter, I reported on the Government's plans for next steps for the children's workforce, and the establishment of an Expert Group. DCSF has since called for evidence to support the development of the Government's Autumn children's workforce 2020 strategy, which the Department will write, drawing on the advice of the Expert Group.

The six themes of the call for evidence provide some lead in the priorities likely to emerge in the Autumn strategy – workforce capacity, excellence in practice, purpose and roles, improving joint working, what works in

workforce interventions and delivering and managing workforce reform – the delivery chain.

There are some interesting questions posed in the call for evidence:

- What has been done to address capacity problems – and what difference has this made to outcomes?
- How has excellent practice been successfully (a) incentivised/developed and (b) embedded across workforces?
- Does remodelling workforces improve outcomes and/or efficiency. What are the success criteria?
- What impact has the development of

integrated or joint working had on outcomes?

- What support do employers want from Government?
- Where could partnerships in the delivery chain be improved?

DCSF has received a very substantial amount of evidence, which the Expert Group is reviewing. The evidence will be published.

**Hilary Barnard** is a strategy and change consultant providing policy and project management services to Children's Workforce Network. He edits the bi-monthly CWN e-bulletin which can be accessed at [www.childrensworkforce.org.uk](http://www.childrensworkforce.org.uk)

# Spotlight on Committee Work

*Mike La-Borde has been busy this year, undertaking two pieces of research on behalf of ICHA, that resulted in representations to the DCSF, but mainly concentrating on updating the ICHA Website. Mike writes:*

Currently I am devoting myself to the new website. In summary this will have a new and much improved look, will offer easy navigation, have a much easier to use Discussion Forum and offer the facility for other designated committee members and the secretariat, with minimal training, to be able to update designated sections of the site. This should ensure that information can be put on the site quicker than is currently the case and indeed reduce reliance on me for updating the site.

The site will also be more attractive to the search engines and it is to be hoped that this, and the better look and feel of the site, will lend itself as a better marketing tool for ICHA than is currently the case.

We are on target for launching the new site in September. Currently 80% of members details are on the site and all documents on the existing site are loaded on - a time consuming exercise to say the least - but worth it.

When we launch we will be asking members to carefully check their details since there are likely to be minor errors given the amount of information we are entering. We will advise on a system of reporting any errors on the site nearer the time.

It remains the case that if any members come across any articles of interest or have any useful links that they think would be of interest to other members then please let us know. I am particularly interested in building up a list of reputable companies that can assist members, whether that be from the fitting of fire doors, training organisations, pat testers, or anything else relevant.

Karen Mitchell-Mellor has taken on the responsibility for Children's Rights and is working on how ICHA can help young people and their organisations represent the views of young people in public care. Karen has already met twice with A National Voice which, it is hoped, will lead to co-working and co-operation between ANV and ICHA.

*Pauline Webster* attended the DCSF Meeting on 9th July on ICHA's behalf. The documents disseminated at the meeting are now on the ICHA website, however, here is Pauline's summary of the meeting:

The meeting began with an update on the schools contract, which will have implications on those of us who have education as well as residential provision. The residential outcomes in the National Contract have been used as a chassis to form the educational outcomes.

There will be 10 key KPI's, 2 for each ECM, with a working group to develop KPI's. This contract will be about service specification, the National Contract is about individual placements.

The Fostering contract is nearly ready to launch, it's in the final draft and out for consultation, they too have 10 Key KPI's. They have incorporated an individual progress tracker for individual young people. With regard to payments they have opted for four levels that carers can opt into, each will be performance based. Outcomes can be selected for individual young people and added to the basic cost of placement, leading to some flexibility re local agreements and regional variations; these variations are limited to nine.

Finally the National Contract, feedback for the consultation had only 39 responses from LA's and two from providers.

NC currently being reviewed after its launch, as planned; discussion focused on how to move it forward. One suggestion was to have regional champions who would promote it, the other was regarding increasing fees, it was suggested that this might be specific and that maybe what has been developed for Foster Carers might prove more acceptable.

The issue of termination of placement was raised, another bone of contention, as having got lost over time; this will be on the agenda for next time.

ICHA's letter to Ben Arora regarding the lack of use of the National Contract was distributed and Pauline was told that we will be getting a response to it in the near future.

# ICHA Committee Members 2008

## Chairs

### Danny Curran

Co-Chair, Link for Press Releases and Nominated Spokesperson

### Alison Trainor

Co-Chair, Link for Political Lobbyist, Gary Kent; Representation for publications; Representative for Ofsted

## Treasurer

## Vacant

## Committee Members

### Peter O'Neill

### Jim Sullivan

ICHA representative on West Midlands Consortium.

### Paul O'Leary

Membership Secretary

### Mike La Borde

Website Co-ordinator

### Karen Mitchell-Mellor

Children's Rights

### Steve Lord

Lead role in the production of the ICHA Strategic Development Plan for 2009 - 2010. Support on the Political Work

### Anthony Walters

Diversity Champion

### Richard Hilditch

WICHA Member

### Paul Thomas

WICHA Chair

### Pauline Webster

Support on the Political Work, including DCSF contact

# ICHA

## Innovative Practice

We are aware of many examples of quality, innovative work practiced by ICHA Members. We would like to share good practice amongst members and to include examples

in future Newsletters. If you wish to contribute an article for the Newsletter please get in touch with us at the ICHA office: [admin@icha.org.uk](mailto:admin@icha.org.uk)

## Membership news

### Next Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting on 10th September will focus on the ICHA Development and Strategic Plan for 2009. Members who wish to contribute their ideas should contact the office at [admin@icha.org.uk](mailto:admin@icha.org.uk).

### New Members

Welcome to new ICHA Member - Motivations Ltd; based in Dudley, West Midlands

## The Children and Young Person's Bill

The Children and Young Person's Bill has been constructively moving through its Parliamentary stages. The contents of the Bill and thus the views of the Government will be familiar to ICHA members and people will have read the NCERCC provided extracts of the debates, and the committee stages, relevant for Residential Child Care. With a view to the sustaining of the residential sector it is interesting to note the similarities and differences in emphasis amongst the political parties.

In debate there were notable contributions from many on the Labour benches; by Joan Humble regarding IRO's and the availability of advocacy; a staunch critique of some residential practice by Ann Coffey; support for structured relationship based care found both at home and elsewhere in Europe by Hilary Armstrong and David Kidney (who spoke wider too in his capacity as Chair of All Party Parliamentary group); running away, well-being and education by Helen Southworth.

Leading on the Bill for the Conservatives, Tim Loughton MP outlined thoughts with an emphasis on supporting family care and foster care. He spoke on improving structures for visits to those placed away from the home area; tighter control over multiple placements and those placed out of authority; introducing a welfare checklist; establishing the post of chief social worker; safeguards for young people in care over the age of 16; requiring schools to have a designated governor for children in care; greater designated powers of consent for foster carers. In debate there were notable contributions from John Berrow and Edward Timpson.

Annette Brooke, leading on the Bill for the Liberal Democrats, focused on: preventative family support services; looked after children in the youth justice system; improved access to independent advocacy; her reservations about social care practices; support for family and friends carers; looked after status for disabled children in long-term placements; and the health and well-being of children in care.

This Bill has allowed a wide ranging look at Children's Services. Though relatively little has been included concerning Residential Child Care, that which has been discussed has had the focus of improvement.

### NICE/SCIE Public Health Guidance: The physical and emotional health and wellbeing of looked after children and young people

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=byID&o=11879>

The announcement and potential importance of this research has largely been overlooked by many across Children's Services. Once reported (in 2010) it is potentially pivotal in determining the scope of what occurs in the Residential Child Care sector. The project leader will gather evidence and provide recommendations for good practice, including cost effectiveness, and of the accessibility and acceptability. It is aimed at professionals, commissioners and managers responsible for the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

This is research that will require the fullest involvement of the sector. It is only on the basis of good evidence that good decisions can be made. The researchers will need to have experienced residential practitioners to assist them.

It is a long term project with long term implications for the residential sector. There will be lessons to be learned along the way and we do not have to wait until the end of the project to implement.

The culture of Children's Services has to become ever more open to evidence-based working. This will require a development of the culture of Children's Services that may be beyond the scope of this work.

With its importance and reference to the residential sector it is worth looking at the scope of the project in some detail.

It will focus on looked after children and young people in medium- and long-term care (more than 6 months) – wherever they are looked after (for example, residential care, foster care, young offenders institution) – up to age 25, and their families.



It will seek to identify ineffective interventions and approaches covering interventions and activities aimed at improving or promoting key outcomes at many levels;

- systems/population level, including national, regional and local policies, assessments, targets, campaigns and multi-agency partnerships;
- community and family level;
- individually based interventions and activities delivered one-to-one, for example, mentoring and advocacy schemes;
- at primary care, education, family or community settings
- tailored interventions and activities in different settings;
- targeted interventions aimed at a specific issue or problem (for example, truancy, or prevention of smoking uptake);
- specialist interventions and activities delivered in a range of settings and aimed exclusively at looked after children and young people, or their families or carers
- interventions promoting access to, and retention in, health and related services, for example, by providing specialist healthcare staff, individual assessments and personalised care plans
- interventions delivered at key transition points (for example changing schools or care settings, or leaving care).

The project will seek to provide answers to many of the questions for which we currently do not have evidence, for example, how effective, and cost effective, are interventions and activities (including participatory approaches) that are currently used to maintain, improve or promote key outcomes, in different settings and at different levels of intervention? Are they accessible and acceptable to looked after children? Does the acceptability, accessibility and delivery of interventions and activities have an impact on their effectiveness?

Especially relevant for Residential Child Care will be evidence concerning how the structure, type and continuity of care that

children and young people receive have an impact on key outcomes for children, young people and their families, and can current systems, frameworks and processes used to identify and monitor health, emotional and social outcomes for looked after children, young people and their families be improved?

A wide range of short, medium and long-term outcomes are proposed including ( please see the link for more detail): physical health outcomes; measures and indicators of mental health and emotional wellbeing; standardised quality of life and health-related quality of life measures; broader socioeconomic outcomes related to health and wellbeing; and most importantly outcomes relevant to physical and emotional health and wellbeing that have been specifically identified by looked after children and young people as important to them.

A concept that people will need to read around is the Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs) as this will be used as the measure though it may be necessary to adopt a cost-benefit and/or cost-consequence approach.

A key finding for the residential sector could be the impact on key outcomes of different pathways into care that children and young people have taken, their reasons for being in care (for example, neglect, physical or sexual abuse, parental mental health or imprisonment), and the age at which they leave care. Outcomes compared for children of similar backgrounds that follow different care pathways (for example, support for staying with family versus local authority care) will also be included.

Of enormous interest will be the conclusions drawn concerning other areas especially the relative needs of children with different patterns of care, for example, repeated short-term episodes of care versus long-term care.

**Jonathan Stanley**