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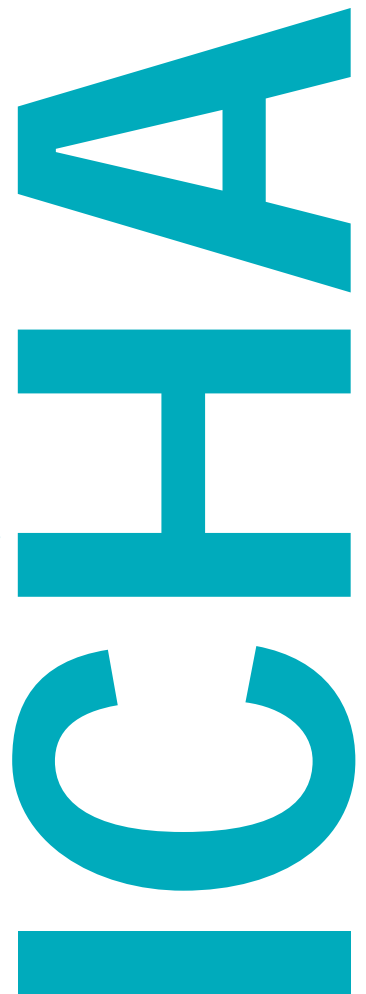
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# Chairs' Report

**What interesting times we live in!**

The past 3 months have been a flurry of activity for ICHA and we co-chairs have been hard pushed to keep up with the various demands on our time. We need more of you to get involved and take advantage of the opportunities available to ICHA as we become even better known.

Requests for our involvement in research, consultations and networking are on the increase, but we and the committee can only do so much – so – come on – don't miss the chance to become active.

**Roy Williamson...**

Our part-time officer has settled in well and has met many members already. His interview in Community Care recently set the scene well and I am sure has helped raise the profile of ICHA nationally. The photograph of him will certainly enhance his reputation!

**Welsh ICHA**

Tom Starkey has been very active in developing this idea and on September 9th he, Roy and I



presented a day conference in Cardiff, jointly with the Welsh Assembly. Some 22 providers turned up to hear Donna Davies from the Welsh Assembly, Roz Waterhouse from CSIW and Gerry Evans from the Care Council for Wales all strongly supporting the idea of a Welsh ICHA as the body with whom they would liaise to develop residential care for children and young people.

Many thanks to them for their interesting – and enthusiastic – presentations and support.

Their presentations should be available on the web-site for members to view soon.

A further meeting is to be held soon for Welsh members to develop the group.

This important new 'branch' of ICHA has already attracted a number of new members and will in the future give ICHA members direct contact and dialogue with the Assembly and others to help develop quality childcare in Wales.

**The Office**

Chris has stayed involved part-time for the past couple of months to help us while we make other arrangements.

We are now close to making final arrangements for a new part-time secretariat and Chris will be concentrating on developing her

bed & breakfast (special rates for ICHA Members?) in Llandudno. Good Luck for the future Chris!

We will be informing members of the new arrangements soon.

**Sedgemoor**

Sadly, the demise of the major provider has only proved the points we have been making consistently for the past 2 years, about the volatility and vulnerability of the market place.

It is especially sad when young people's lives are subject to sudden change and decisions made by financiers

We can only hope that the Sedgemoor facilities that have been taken over by other providers will benefit from a more sound financial basis and that the young people lucky enough to be in children's homes that have not been closed, will experience a seamless transfer of ownership. They should not even be aware that any change has taken place.

**A meeting with the Minister**

On October 24th the 3 chairs met with Kevin Brennan MP, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Children, Young People and Families. Earlier on the same day, we also met with Shadow Minister for Children, Tim Loughton MP.

*continued on page 3*

**Diary dates**

**Next Committee Meeting:**  
5th December 2007 - Birmingham.

**Welsh Meeting:**  
13th November 2007 - Cardiff.

Following the successful meeting held in Cardiff in September, this follow-up meeting has been arranged. Full details will follow.

**ICHA AGM:**  
30th January 2008 - Midlands. this is an important meeting and all paid up members will be entitled to vote for the Co-Chairs and Committee for 2008.

**ICHA Conference:**  
27th February 2008 - London.

# Political Report

The ICHA delivered a strong message on the need for quality residential care to the heart of Whitehall and Westminster as policy-makers limber up to debate the landmark Children in Care Bill.

Co-Chairs Danny Curran, Vivien Snape and Alison Trainor met Children's Minister Kevin Brennan for an hour of detailed discussion.

The Association's submission had been studied by the Minister and his key officials in advance and the delegation emphasised key ICHA policy points.

The ICHA's two-year long process of engagement with Ministers as well as Downing Street advisors and MPs interested in policy towards children in care is beginning to bear fruit.

Mr Brennan told ICHA officers that "I completely acknowledge the important role played by residential care in the provision for children and young people and that, for some, it is the best option."

The Minister was pushed for details of the Children in Care Bill to be announced in the Queen's Speech on 6th November. The Bill will turn the Care Matters White Paper, launched in June, into law.

The then Education Secretary Alan Johnson outlined its purpose: "For too long society has failed children in care and it is nothing less than a scandal. We should have the same aspirations for these children as we do our own."

The ICHA delegation also held a cordial and businesslike discussion with the Minister's Conservative counterpart, Tim Loughton MP, who will speak for the Opposition on the new Bill.

The Bill is being finalised but the Minister gave us advance notice of its four main themes: Parenting, Ambition, a bigger Voice for children and young people and Stability.

The Bill goes to the Commons for First and Second Readings and then into a Standing Committee of MPs for line-by-line, clause-by-clause scrutiny and amendment.

Alison Trainor said: "We will scour the Bill in fine detail and let MPs have our views. The independent sector and the ICHA should play a positive role in improving commissioning, placement and the quality of residential care. We will collaborate with Government to ensure that quality is the watchword of policy. False economies only lead to higher social costs in the future."

**Gary Kent**



## 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.

## A hitchhiker's guide to legislation!

The government generally follows this roadmap.

It first produces a Green Paper for discussion and consultation. Once it decides its policy this becomes a White Paper – the expression of its policy preferences.

Civil Servants then turn this into a Bill – an often long and very detailed series of clauses written in sometimes arcane legal language.

This proposal for a new law, or a proposal to change an existing law, is then presented for debate before Parliament.

Bills are introduced in either the House of Commons or House of Lords for examination, discussion and amendment.

The First Reading debate is a quick formality.

The Second Reading debate is longer and provides an opportunity for MPs to talk in general terms about the Bill and stake a claim to being selected to be a member of the Standing Committee.

The exact size and length of the Standing Committee depends on the Bill but can take a few days or several weeks of very detailed examination and votes.

Government backbenchers usually take a backseat as Ministers seek to argue their case with the Opposition parties seeking to amend the draft law and to trip them up.

Some of the Government's supporters may, however, be acknowledged experts in the particular issue under discussion and can play a more active role.

Governments are generally loath to accept amendments to their drafts but can do so. MPs will often table "probing amendments" which aren't pushed to a vote but which can flush out arguments and, if they have not been voted on in Committee, can be tabled when the Bill goes back to the Commons or the Lords for vote by the House as a whole.

When both Houses have agreed on the content of a Bill it is then presented to the monarch for approval (known as Royal Assent).

Once Royal Assent is given a Bill becomes an Act of Parliament and is law.

(Thanks to our resident Babel Fish, Gary Kent, for this translation of the process!)



# Developing an Integrated Qualifications Framework

The Children's Workforce Network is developing an Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF) for the children's workforce.

The IQF is a set of approved qualifications that allows progression, continuing professional development and mobility throughout the children's workforce. It aims to ensure all qualifications are accessible, fit for purpose and recognisable across different occupational groups within the sector. The IQF will be available across England by 2010 and will

benefit anyone working with children and young people.

IQF development is now at a truly exciting stage. The Children's Workforce network has agreed the inclusion principles and processes for partners to use in the testing stage of the project. These principles and processes were developed by CWN members and attendees at the regional events in the summer.

By using these principles for a number of test units and

qualifications that are being developed over the next year, partners will be able to evaluate how useful the principles are in practice. The intention is that they result in robust units and qualifications that are worthy of the IQF brand.

For more information about the IQF and its role in the children's workforce visit [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/projects/integratedqualificationsframework.htm](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/projects/integratedqualificationsframework.htm)

# Chairs' Report

*continued from page 1*

We concentrated our attention on members concerns about the market-place and in particular about commissioning practice, and the lack of recognition of the value of spot purchasing if done appropriately with targets set relevant to each individual young person.

The proposed Children in Care Bill was discussed and we now feel that we should lobby extensively as this goes through its various parliamentary stages. A real opportunity to affect legislation which will have a direct impact on us all in the future. We are particularly concerned about the possibility of unrealistic targets being set for Local Authorities around out of area placements.

Members will have seen the recent article in Community Care denigrating (yet again) residential care. We jointly produced a response to this with NCERCC, NCVCCO & NCA, which was published, and are now actively pursuing publishing some positive examples of residential care in the press.

## Code of Practice

We hope by now all members will have 'signed up' for the Code of Practice produced by Peter O'Neill and other members. This is an important move towards our goals of ensuring members subscribe to high quality residential care in the independent sector.

Finally, thanks to all who have contributed to the ongoing development of ICHA over the past months. We are poised to make great progress over the next year, with a growing membership and enhanced reputation. Keep it up!

**Danny Curran, Vivian Snape & Alison Trainor, Co-Chairs**

## The West Midlands Children's Commissioning Partnership

It has been yet another busy quarter for the West Midlands Children's Commissioning Partnership. In July we held a Provider Forum which was attended by LA staff from the West Midlands local authorities and 130 providers from across England and Wales. There was much interest in the concept of a matching engine and we are currently examining how we will include other children's services, creating a system for a wide range of commissioners which may include independent social workers in practices as envisaged in the White Paper, Time for Change. We are also exploring the potential to include accommodation for unaccompanied asylum seeker children (UASC), disabled children and Tier 4 CAMHS.

In early October, the Department of Health announced additional funding in England for short-term breaks for children with disabilities and their families. It plans to create 20 pathfinder projects in local authorities by the end of the year. The focus will be on developing new provision, including family based short term breaks, respite and outreach services. The purpose is to widen the range of provision available and the accessibility to the services. If you would like to let us know what services you are currently providing and any ideas you have

about service developments please contact Jane Shepherd. There will be a regional group and we want to work with providers to commission and develop new provision within the region locally, sub-regionally or regionally. Several local authorities have expressed an interest in becoming a pathfinder and hopefully by the next newsletter we will be able to announce one or more in the West Midlands Region.

The outcomes framework is now complete. It has been used to influence the development of the national contract for residential care which will soon be launched. The outcomes framework began with the West Midlands (formerly SEN) Regional Partnership who commissioned research from the University of Birmingham. This has evolved and developed further through the WMCCP work stream which Bridget Jones and Annette English chaired. This group involve providers, who generously gave their time as they were keen to develop a framework which was both useful and easy to use but reflected the complexities of providing care for young people. Providers and local authority staff worked well collaboratively and acknowledged that there were issues to consider in the future. For example, local authority staff may not have the skills to set individual outcomes for young people at the

start of a placement. Providers from ICHA, Independent Foster Care agencies and the National Association of Non-maintained Special Schools (NASS) have been involved. The framework will now be piloted over the next few months.

If you would like further information about the project please contact Jane Shepherd [jane.shepherd@dial.pipex.com](mailto:jane.shepherd@dial.pipex.com) or Mark Thomas [markt@folly16.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:markt@folly16.freereserve.co.uk)



# Career Bursary Programme

In previous newsletters we have told you about an innovative career bursary programme to help people leaving care begin a career in insurance. This was launched by the Bollington Group, the UK's leading children's home insurance broker, at the start of this year.

Despite the loss of a trainee since our last report, the remaining ones are now well established and making major contributions in Bollington's accounts and commercial broking divisions. Bollington is happy with the way the scheme has developed and is looking to recruit further trainees which they will be doing over the course of the next few months.

As a reminder, the scheme is designed as a two year training programme, leading to an

appropriate qualification, giving the trainees the chance to develop a career in insurance or in a related area such as IT or accounting.

Bollington have also announced that they are looking into offering discounted insurance premiums to staff working for ICHA children's homes. This would apply to personal lines insurances such as home, motor and travel. We hope to bring you further news of this exciting development in the near future.



## Ofsted

Susan Evans, Communication & Relationship Manager for the Ofsted's Children's Directorate, attended the ICHA meeting on 3rd October and presented a "Guest Slot" in the form of a question and answer session for members of ICHA. Many members found this very helpful, although not all questions could be answered completely as some were more complex, requiring ongoing attention in the quest for satisfactory solutions. Sue has kindly offered to return to ICHA, to follow up on this as Ofsted continues to tackle specific issues and works towards improving consistency across its inspectorate.

ICHA continues to be a portal for communication for all members on specific issues that they cannot resolve through the NBU. If you have specific issues or compliments that you wish to pass on, please provide full details (names, dates, specific details) to the office [admin@icha.org.uk](mailto:admin@icha.org.uk) and

these will be taken forward by Roy Williamson or Alison Trainor.

Members are also reminded that they can subscribe to Ofsted's free online Newsletter.

All the latest news, views and information about new arrangements to inspection, regulation, plus helpful tips and advice straight to your inbox.

You can access your free subscription on the Ofsted Website in the publications and research section.

It will only take you a few moments and remember subscription is free.

Take a look at the link below which will take you straight to the subscription page [www.ofsted.gov.uk/portal/site/Internet/enitem.186c41866d9cd6c289f87c10637046a0/?vgnextoid=bc38a1cc8342e010VgnVCM1000003507640aRCRD](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/portal/site/Internet/enitem.186c41866d9cd6c289f87c10637046a0/?vgnextoid=bc38a1cc8342e010VgnVCM1000003507640aRCRD)

# Allocating Social Workers: a young person's experience

The Government is in the process of setting an agenda for looked after children that emphasises the need for stability and continuity. We couldn't agree more that this should be a priority and fully back any initiatives that might help this aim to be achieved.

However, whilst we are directly involved in helping to create stability in terms of placements, that is our business after all, there is an area that providers have little control over; the allocation of Social Workers. There is no doubt that the relationship between a young person and his or her Social Worker is key in so many areas; planning for the future, contact with family, legal aspects, working in partnership with providers and so on. Unquestionably, a relationship between a young person and their Social Worker, built up over a period of time, can be vital in helping that young person make positive, informed choices about their life; both within the care setting and in the period following their move into the community and independence.

The following is a chronology of events based on the actual experience of a young person living in a home of one of our member organisations. **It is not a typical example**, members would willingly offer examples of excellent co-working between Local Authorities, Social Worker, the young person and the provider. Unfortunately, **neither is this example unique**. Needless to say, the organisation involved has tried continuously to address the problem and continue to do so. They have been determined to ensure that this young person's transition from Social Worker to After Care Worker goes as smoothly as possible, but have faced an uphill struggle.

As you can see, the level of service received by the young person from his Local Authority in this case has been very poor; we can only work together in the future to prevent such situations from occurring and truly support the Government initiative on stability and continuity.

June 2006 – Billy's Social Worker of 10 years promoted, no longer allocated to Billy.

July 2006 – Case unallocated – no Social Worker.

August 2006 – Case unallocated – no Social Worker.

September 2006 – New appointee allocated as Social Worker.

October 2006 – Social Worker meets Billy at the home.

October 2006 – LAC Review.

December 2006 – Social Worker leaves post. Billy awaiting allocation.

New appointee allocated, new appointee left, Billy without Social Worker.

New Social Worker allocated. New Social Worker left, Billy with no Social Worker.

April 2007 – LAC Review cancelled, no allocated Social Worker.

May 2007 – LAC Review cancelled.

June 2007 – LAC Review. Independent Chair arrives but no Social Worker. Next LAC Review arranged for September.

July 2007 – New Social Worker identified. Social Worker met with Billy.

August 2007 – After Care Worker visits Billy. The worker promises to produce a Pathway Plan.

September – LAC Review cancelled.

End of September – the LAC Review is still pending. No Pathway Plan in place.

Billy is now 16 1/2 years old and getting very angry about 'nobody caring for me'!

## ICHA AGM: 30th January 2008

This is an important meeting and all paid up members will be entitled to vote for the Co-Chairs and Committee for 2008. If you would like to stand for one of the posts (or stand for re-election) or have a nominee you wish to put forward, please contact Roy Williamson or one of the Co-Chairs. It is always good to see new people contributing to ICHA's work.

# Ineffective Interventions?: Domestic Abuse and Young People

## Introduction

The political and financial commitment of the government and Scottish Executive, as illustrated through public awareness campaigns and interventions, suggests that domestic violence/abuse is recognised as a significant social problem. Evidence, however, suggests that violence and abuse in interpersonal relationships is not decreasing in prevalence or severity.

Domestic abuse is where one partner in a intimate relationship systematically controls the other; this can be manifest through physical abuse, sexual abuse, control of financial resources, mental / emotional abuse or moreover a combination of these. The characteristics of abusers cut across class, racial, ethnic, geographic, educational, and generational boundaries, but generally the perpetrator is male and the 'victim' is female.

The need for effective interventions, particularly with young people, is evident from the statistics on interpersonal violence. In the UK, one woman in four will experience some form of domestic abuse at some point in her life and two women are killed per week by their former or current male partner (Home Office, 2003a). In roughly 30% of cases children are present whilst domestic violence is being perpetrated (Alexander et al, 2005). We also have evidence which suggests that young people are perpetrating abuse in their own interpersonal relationships. In relation to this, we also know that a significant proportion of young people accept male violence in relationships as normative and often justify this violence (Burton et al, 1998).

## Research

My research aimed to explore young people's attitudes or to investigate whether the anti-domestic abuse interventions and campaigns have had a positive impact. In total I interviewed 77 young people aged between 15 and 18 in ten different schools in Glasgow. They were interviewed in 13 focus groups: four were single-sex (two female and two male) and the other nine were mixed-sex. In total, there were more female participants (43) than male (34) and their ethnicity was predominantly white-Scottish (37 female, 30 male), with nine South-Asian-Scottish (6 female, 3 male) and one Chinese-Scottish (male).



## Young People's Understanding of Domestic Abuse

When asked about domestic abuse most of the young people explained that they understood that it was when men abused their intimate (female) partners. They were also aware that domestic abuse was not just limited to physical violence but covered a range of abusive behaviours.

*"Anything from verbal to physical constitutes as domestic violence. If you seek to physically or emotionally harm another person in your home then it is domestic violence or domestic abuse."* Richard

All the young people agreed that using violence was wrong (except in self-defence) but when they discussed it in terms of the male partner abusing his female partner the young people then sought justifications for it. For instance, the participants were read a vignette about a heterosexual teenage couple whereby the boyfriend tells his girlfriend what kind of clothes he wants her to wear; the girlfriend continues to wear her choice of clothes and her boyfriend physically abuses her because he objects to this. The next excerpt is Richard's response to this:

*"She [the girlfriend] knows that he doesn't like it so she knows that it is going to get on his nerves. Therefore if he hits her, then okay it is not right, but she has provoked him. And if it has been going on for a while then his emotional endurance is just worn right down. ... Depending on how much she has worn him down through annoying him wearing whatever she is wearing, is going to determine the outcome."* Richard

Richard presents a multi-layered justification for why the boyfriend hits his girlfriend and reconstructs the scenario to one in which the boy has been 'provoked'. By invoking this provocation as an explanation for the boyfriend's behaviour it removes his culpability in his violence i.e. he was left with no alternative course of action. Richard's response was typical of all the groups as they explained that it was not 'right' that the boyfriend hit his girlfriend but they all constructed justifications for the boyfriends abuse. In none of the groups did anyone say that the boyfriend should not be telling his girlfriend what to wear in the first place.

## Implications

Interventions have to concentrate on how young people understand the dynamics or power relations in interpersonal relationships. The example above demonstrates that a disparate group of young people with exposure to various anti-domestic violence campaigns still assumed that in a heterosexual interpersonal relationship the man has the right to control his female partner. These young people then justify the violence because they believe that men can tell their partner what to do/wear etc and can thus legitimately dictate the terms of the relationships and the consequences if these terms are disregarded.

Interventions on male interpersonal violence (from domestic abuse to 'date rape' and sexual assault) have to begin with, and retain, a focus on gender relations and dynamics between women and men in interpersonal (heterosexual) relationships. Arguably, until young people's understandings of male power within interpersonal heterosexual relationships are understood, challenged and dismantled, interventions for young people will continue to be ineffective.

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# The ICHA Annual Conference

This ICHA Annual Conference, organised in partnership with Careandhealth, will provide a unique opportunity to explore with providers and commissioners why investment in high quality residential care for children must be sustained and developed and to consider the impact of the plans laid out in the Care Matters: Time for Change White Paper and the new legislation in the Children in Care Bill. The conference will also allow providers of residential care to consider with local authority senior managers and commissioners how to ensure they can help meet the challenge of ensuring that every child in care has the "right placement" and is able to experience both stability and also the continuity of relationships which, together, can lead to successful outcomes.

The White Paper states: "it is ... essential that our reforms focus on ensuring that the residential sector provides good quality care and that it is a valued and dynamic setting able to support children in

their development and enable them to move on where appropriate...". There is also acknowledgment that despite the emphasis over recent years on the value of foster care, residential care has an important role to play as part of a range of placement options "and indeed " for a significant number of children, a residential placement will be the right choice"

Issues addressed in the White Paper which will be explored at this conference include the pivotal role of good commissioning, both locally and regionally, in raising the quality of placement provision "and allowing good providers to flourish". For the first time there will be a statutory duty on local authorities to have in place sufficient provision of quality placements locally which will include placements that meet the need of children from diverse backgrounds. The National Contract for Residential Care will improve the way local authorities contract with providers.

Ofsted will have the key role in

raising the level of compliance against national standards and in enforcing regulatory requirements. The White Paper recognises that at present more independent providers comply with the standards than local authority homes but that most providers still fail to meet them. We are delighted that Christine Gilbert, Chief Inspector of Ofsted, will explain to the conference Ofsted's progress in its first year and future plans for the inspection of residential care.

Speakers at this conference will also include Kevin Brennan, Minister at the DCFS, who will explain the Government's plans following the publication of the White Paper and the Children in Care Bill; Andrew Christie, Director of Children's Services, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and ADCS lead on Care Matters, will talk about the importance of effective commissioning and the implications of the Care Matters White Paper reforms and the Children in Care Bill for local authority relationships

with residential care providers; a presentation by young people in, and from care from A National Voice on the importance of giving young people placement choice and a review of the evidence from research about why residential care is an effective option for some children from Jonathan Stanley, Principal Officer at the National Centre for Excellence in Residential Care (NCERCC).

Conference participants will be able to attend two workshops which will cover a range of important issues including a case study demonstrating best practice in commissioning, visiting advocacy, why residential care is a positive option, improving the skills of the residential care workforce and best practice in keeping in touch with children post care and caring for children with challenging behaviour.

## Objectives

### Key Issues:

- Residential care as a positive option
- Children in Care Bill and Care Matters: Time for Change White Paper
- Placement choice for children and young people
- Ofsted's inspection programme for residential child care
- Procurement, purchasing, contracting and commissioning
- Visiting advocacy
- Out county placements
- Solo placements

### Conference aimed at:

- Voluntary and independent providers of residential child care
- Local authority commissioners for children's placements
- Members of ICHA
- Heads of children's services, managers responsible for children in care and social workers in local authorities children's services departments
- Residential workers
- Independent reviewing officers
- Inspectors
- Researchers
- Policy makers

## Speakers

### Conference Chair:

David Kidney, Chair of All Party Parliamentary Group on Children in Care

### Speakers include:

- Kevin Brennan, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Children, Schools and Families
- Christine Gilbert, Chief Inspector, Ofsted
- Andrew Christie, Director of Children's Services, Hammersmith and Fulham and ADCS
- Benni-Jo Tyler, Senior Policy Officer, A National Voice
- Jonathan Stanley, Principal Officer, National Centre for Residential Child Care (NCERCC)

## New Members

ICHA is pleased to welcome a further 6 new members since the last newsletter:

The Eagle House Partnership - Northwood  
Sandcastle Care Ltd - Blackpool  
Pebbles Care Ltd - Leeds  
New Options - Holywell  
Southern Care Ltd - West Sussex  
Lifetime Opportunities - Lancashire

We additionally have several applications currently being processed. Enquiries about membership can be directed to [admin@icha.org.uk](mailto:admin@icha.org.uk) or by telephoning 01948 830008. We have a website with a dedicated members' area and encourage members to make suggestions and comments to further improve membership benefits.

# Annual Conference Timetable

Time	Speaker	Speech Title – Key Themes
9.15	Registration & Refreshments Exhibition opens	
9.50	Welcome and Opening remarks from morning chair: David Kidney, Chair of All Party Parliamentary Group on Children in Care	Welcome & Chair's opening remarks
10.00	<b>Roy Williamson</b> , Executive Officer, ICHA	Introduction to role and aims of ICHA
10.10	<b>Keynote</b> Kevin Brennan, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Children, Schools and Families	Keynote address:
10.40	<b>Christine Gilbert</b> , Chief Inspector, Ofsted	Ofsted - one year on
11.10	Coffee/Tea	
11.30	<b>Andrew Christie</b> , Director of Children's Services, London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and ADCS lead on Care Matters	Implications of Care Matters: Time for Change White Paper reforms for local authority relationships with residential care providers
12.00	<b>Workshop session 1</b> <b>12.00-13.00</b> <b>A. Procurement, purchasing, contracting and commissioning – learning from our experiences</b> Jonathan Stanley, Principal Officer, NCERCC <b>B. Residential child care as a positive option</b> Roy Williamson, Executive Officer ICHA supported by ICHA members <b>C. Visiting Advocacy: A Kickstart to Participation</b> Emma Leenders, Visiting Advocacy Manager, Voice with young people <b>D. Keeping in touch: A common sense framework for keeping in touch with young people post placement</b> Janet Rich on behalf of The Charterhouse Foundation, Bryn Melyn foundation, NCERCC and The Fostering Network <b>E. The National contract – what it will mean for residential child care</b> Sika Smith, Northants County Council and Coordinator of the National Care Contract coordination and monitoring team <b>F. Improving the Skills of Residential Care Workforce</b> <b>Children's Workforce Development Council</b> <b>G. Post 16 support – plans for the future, DCSF</b>	
13.00	Lunch, exhibition & networking	
14.00	<b>Benni-Jo Tyler</b> , Senior Policy Officer, A National Voice	Placement choice for young people - making it a reality
14.20	<b>Workshop session 2</b> <b>14.20-15.20</b> Workshops repeated	
15.20	Coffee/Tea	
	<b>Afternoon chair:</b> Roy Williamson, Executive Officer, ICHA	
15.35	<b>Jonathan Stanley</b> , Principal Officer, National Centre for Residential Child Care (NCERCC)	What Works in Residential Child Care: identifying the 7 elements and the successful 5-tiered strategy for residential child care necessary in every region
16.00	What are the challenges ahead for independent residential child care providers? Discussion with ICHA Co-chairs and expert panel	Panel Chair: Jonathan Stanley, Principal Officer NCERCC
16.25	Closing Remarks	
16.30	Conference ends	

## ICHA Committee Members 2007

### Chairs

#### Danny Curran

Link for Press Releases  
& Nominated Spokesperson

#### Vivien Snape

Link for NASS & potential partnerships  
Representative for NCERCC, WMC and National Contract

#### Alison Trainor

Link for Political Lobbyist,  
Gary Kent  
Representative for publications  
Representative for Ofsted

### Treasurer

#### Tom Starkey

Representative for CWDC, CSIW

### Membership Secretary

#### Greg Watson

Representative for Members  
& Sponsors

### Committee Members

#### Mike La-Borde

Representative for Website

#### Karen Mitchell-Mellor

Representative for Children's Rights & Conference

#### Peter O'Neil

Representative for Marketing  
& Conference

#### Paul O'Leary

Representative for CRB

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# ICHA Moves forward with its Welsh proposals

A Meeting held at the Marriot Hotel Cardiff on 19th September 2007 was by any standards a rousing success. Representatives of 22 different private sector providers of children's homes in Wales heard informative presentations from Donna Davies (Head of Children's First Team), Roz Waterhouse (Development Manager of Looked after Children) and Gerry Evans (Director of Standards Regulation for Care Council for Wales). All three speakers actively endorsed the ICHA and stated that they believed that the formation of a Welsh ICHA would contribute to the ongoing, developing strategy for vulnerable children in Wales by giving private sector providers

of children homes an improved, constructive and collective voice in the forums within Wales, in order to work in partnership to improve the outcomes for looked after children.

The decision to move forward with the ICHA proposals to form a Welsh Independent Children's Homes Association (WICHA) were endorsed by all the organisations attending and its first meeting will be held on 13th November in Cardiff to allow Welsh ICHA Members to come together and select their first WICHA Committee.

# The National Contract – fit for launch!

The National Contract Steering Group, supported by the DCSF, will be launching the National Framework contract for Children's Homes at NCERCC's conference in Birmingham on 7th November 2007.

This National Contract is the second in a suite of contracts which are being developed in partnership with purchasers and providers (including the ICHA, who have been actively involved since November 2006), and sits alongside the National Contract for Non-maintained & Independent Schools, which was launched in 2004.

The National Contract Steering Group will be meeting regularly over the next 12 months prior to the first review. This group is committed to monitoring the contract and

overseeing the production of a young person-friendly version.

The contract is available on the Every Child Matters website [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk) and both purchasers and providers will be using it from 7th November 2007 and there will be a "frequently asked questions" (FAQ) section on the ECM website which will be constantly updated throughout the initial 12 month period.

We encourage all providers to use the contract and ICHA will continue to serve as a portal for communication for members who wish to contribute feedback – please e-mail [roywilliamson@icha.org.uk](mailto:roywilliamson@icha.org.uk)

## ICHA Members asked to sign up to the Code of Practice

Members will not need reminding that one of the fundamental functions of ICHA, through its work at both a strategic and pragmatic level, is to drive forward the quality of services offered to the children and young people for whom the member organisations have responsibility.

The view has often been expressed that organisations that wish to join ICHA should be prepared to aspire to providing the highest possible standard of practice that reflects our collective aspirations. Over the last few months, we have been working on a 'Code of Practice', with the latest draft having been discussed at both the last committee meeting and the recent general meeting. Members are now being asked to sign up to the code, which is produced here. We feel strongly that this will be yet another indicator to Government, Local Authorities, Commissioners and other relevant parties, that the members of ICHA are fully committed to taking forward the residential sector in partnership with them. We welcome comments – please email: [roywilliamson@icha.org.uk](mailto:roywilliamson@icha.org.uk)

### ICHA Code of Practice

ICHA is the only UK recognised Trade Association of Independent Residential Child Care providers.

ICHA membership defines organisations that are committed to their continually improving outcomes for children.

Membership of ICHA indicates an organisation committed to the key factors of successful Residential Child Care (see NCERCC: What works in Residential Child Care) as demonstrated by willingness to share information and best practice, challenge inequality and raise the quality of services provided.

Membership of ICHA signals a commitment to high quality care and welfare being provided by all involved in the life of a child.

Membership of ICHA supports them to achieve this by the benefits of information, peer support and representation at local, regional and national levels.

Paramount is the safeguarding, wishes and interests, of each child. This is shown by core aspects of

the Code of Practice.

- Act at all times in accordance with the welfare and safeguarding interest of children placed within their service.
- Ensure the wishes and feelings of individual children placed are central to any service offered to them or decision affecting their care.
- Promote a culture of professional openness and integrity in the care of children placed.
- Work individually and collectively to improve services and thereby improve the welfare of, and outcomes for, children placed.

### ICHA members will:

- Provide services which continually meet and strive to exceed National Minimum Standards.
- Ensure all staff are appropriately qualified, trained, supervised and supported to deliver high quality care.
- Ensure resources, systems, policies and procedures are in place to underpin high quality care.
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement throughout the range of services provided.

- Support other members (by practical means or in the provision of information/advice) in the delivery of improved services.
- Safeguarding of children is promoted by ICHA members by 2 important responsibilities:
  - Notify the Executive Committee (and regulatory bodies if professionally appropriate) of any situation which may compromise or threaten the well being of any child placed in a member organisation.
  - Notify (as above) any member who willingly or repeatedly fails to act in accordance with this Code of Practice and/or brings the ICHA into disrepute.

