



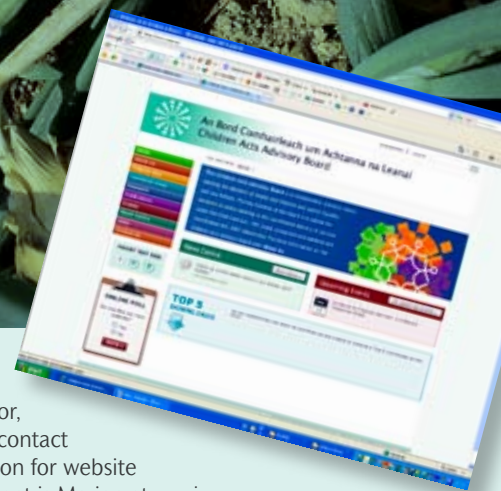
# newsletter

Spring 2008

## Contents

Chairperson's Editorial	1
New Website	1
CAAB Strategy Summary	2
Awards Scheme Summary	3
Calendar of Events	4
Arts & Crafts Competition 2007	4
CAAB Team	5
Updates	6

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## Message from the Chairperson

Since the establishment of the Children Acts Advisory Board in mid 2007 the members and staff of the Board have been fully engaged in putting in place the platform that will ensure the Board can quickly become the organisation that the Minister for Children intended, i.e. an enhanced enabling and advisory organisation involved in co-ordinating work on the operation of both the Children Act 2001 and the Child Care Act 1991.



Jacinta Stewart  
Chairperson, Children Acts Advisory Board

In this newsletter we set out our strategic objectives for 2008-2010. Strategy is concerned with setting the direction, the direction which will assist us in meeting our vision of **coherent, consistent and effective responses** for children. Our strategic priorities are focused on *advice to the relevant Ministers and to the sector, promoting inter-agency working and building the knowledge base.*

The Board's business plan for 2008 is designed to give effect to these objectives. In this newsletter you will see our Seminar and Conference programme outlined and you will receive updates on ongoing projects.

The staffing of the CAAB is now complete and we are delighted to welcome Marion Martin, Amanda Downes, Eva Dobrowolska and Robert Murphy to the staff team. A key appointment is that of Robert Murphy as Head of Research and Information. This appointment underscores the commitment of the CAAB to develop a strong evidence base for its work and to develop sound methodologies for the dissemination of evidence.

The recent Awards for Services to Children and Young People ceremony was a very successful contribution to highlighting effective practices and to providing opportunities to acknowledge good work, to promote inter-agency working and to transfer good practice. Congratulations once again to the overall winners – the Londubh Project from Inchicore in Dublin.

The CAAB looks forward over the coming years to working with and supporting all those who work in the children's sector whether as policy makers, managers or front line practitioners. I would encourage your participation in the events organised by the CAAB and would welcome your feedback on all of our initiatives. It is through working together, challenging and being open to change that we can achieve our vision – **coherent, consistent and effective responses** for those children who most need our support.

## New Website

Over the last few months we have been working hard to develop and update our website in order to improve the site as an information resource and to make it easier for you to use.

The navigation bar appears on every page making it easier to find your way around and we have included new sections on legislation and our functional areas. Our new design gives us more opportunity

to feature our current work, events and publications. If you're having trouble finding something specific there is a search function on the top right of each page.

The website will be updated regularly and will feature the latest news and updates within the children's sector. A conference calendar showing the dates of all sectoral conferences is available for download from the Events page. To assist us in keeping the website up-to-date we would value contributions from people throughout the

sector, the contact person for website content is Marion at *marion.martin@caab.ie*

Please visit [www.caab.ie](http://www.caab.ie) and tell us what you think of our new design. We'll be further developing the website over the coming months so if you have any suggestions for improving the site use the feedback/comment form on the Contact Us page to let us know.

# The Children Acts Advisory Board Strategy 2008-2010

## Vision

Coherent, consistent and effective responses for children who are central to the Children Acts.

## Mission

We will work for children.

We will seek significantly better outcomes for vulnerable children through the co-ordinated delivery of services. We will promote stronger inter-agency co-operation and good practice through the provision of advice, guidance and support and base our work on action oriented research, experience and reflective questioning.

## Values

### CAAB...

- Will act independently in accordance with our statutory remit
- Will be open, accountable and inclusive, dealing with all parties in a respectful manner

### Children...

- Have a right to fair access to all State Agencies and the services they provide
- Will have their rights respected at all times
- Will, where possible and appropriate, have services delivered within a family setting
- Will be detained only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period necessary to address the special care needs of each child
- Will be given the opportunity to express their views and influence service development

### Service Providers...

- Will have the benefit of facilitated collaboration, good practice guidance and research-based advice
  - Will be dealt with in a spirit of partnership trust and co-operation

### The Ministers...

- The Ministers are entitled to prompt, accurate and quality advice on request



## Strategic Objectives

### Objective 1: Provide quality advice and guidance to the Ministers and to the child care sector

#### Strategic Actions

- 1.1 Publish guidance on the qualifications, criteria for appointment, training and role of any guardian *ad litem* appointed for children in proceedings under the Child Care Act 1991
- 1.2 Publish and promote criteria for admission to and discharge from special care units
- 1.3 Present views on case applications by the HSE, forming part of applications to the court for special care orders
- 1.4 Publish reports on child care proceedings in the courts
- 1.5 Publish reports on the level and nature of accommodation in detention schools and special care units
- 1.6 Publish reports on support services in detention schools and special care units
- 1.7 Publish an annual report

### Objective 2: Facilitate inter-agency co-operation

#### Strategic Actions

- 2.1 Establish strong formal links with all agencies engaged in the provision of children's services
- 2.2 Develop 'safe-space' to facilitate inter-agency problem solving
- 2.3 Develop and disseminate protocols for inter-agency working including information sharing
- 2.4 Promote and facilitate inter-agency training opportunities
- 2.5 Provide regular opportunities for engagement and information sharing between agencies at national, regional and local level
- 2.6 Support the identification and transfer of good practice
- 2.7 Support organisations in efforts to effect positive change within the sector

### Objective 3: Strengthen the knowledge base of the child care sector

#### Strategic Actions

- 3.1 Collect, collate and analyse relevant data and make available to the child care sector to support decision making
- 3.2 Develop a research capacity through effective utilisation of internal resources and the creation of strong links with academic institutions and research centres nationally and internationally
- 3.3 Develop initiatives which make research accessible to practitioners, managers and policy makers
- 3.4 Develop the research agenda and ensure appropriate research projects are undertaken
- 3.5 Develop and utilise a wide range of approaches to disseminating research findings
- 3.6 Prioritise action-based research which supports practical and pragmatic responses

## Presentation of the Awards for Services to Children and Young People



Left to right: Brendan Smith TD, Minister for Children; Julie Mulligan, Londubh Project; Jacinta Stewart, Chairperson, Children Acts Advisory Board.

*The presentation of the Awards for Services to Children and Young People took place in Croke Park on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2008. During the day 20 shortlisted service providers presented their services and practices to the audience. The presentations ranged across the five award categories of effective practice in the community, in education, in inter-agency working, in juvenile justice and in residential care.*

The awards ceremony took place in the afternoon of February 14<sup>th</sup> and Brendan Smith TD, Minister for Children presented awards to the 20 shortlisted service providers, the five individual category winners and the overall winner. Over 180 people attended on the day and we would like to thank all those who participated and contributed to a very successful event.

We are delighted to report that the overall winner was the Londubh Project! This project stood out as the winner, demonstrating its capacity to meet the needs of children and young people through effective practice in the delivery of services provided for under the Children Acts. It encapsulates excellent inter-agency working

across health and education services and its impact on children is far reaching as it increases their participation in education and addresses their social and emotional needs in a child-centred way.

We have produced a 2008 Awards Report (see our website) to disseminate the good practice of the winning entrants and to acknowledge all entrants to the awards. We would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate all who entered for these awards and special congratulations to those who were successful.

The closing date for the 2009 Awards for Services to Children and Young People is the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2008 and details will be provided on our website. We look forward to receiving future entries and hope that you actively encourage your colleagues to enter.



Left to Right: Brendan Smith TD, Minister for Children and Jacinta Stewart, Chairperson, Children Acts Advisory Board.



Audience at the Awards for Services to Children and Young People, Croke Park, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2008.



Audience at the Awards for Services to Children and Young People, Croke Park, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

# Calendar of Events

The Children Acts Advisory Board is hosting a range of events in 2008; a series of four **Network Seminars**, a series of three **Evidence to Practice Seminars** and a **National Conference**. The specific dates for the events are provided below. You can also download a more detailed Children's Sector Calendar from our website which includes other events in the sector of which we have been made aware and which may be of interest to you.

## Network Seminars

The purpose of our Network Seminars is to provide an opportunity for consultation and networking by professionals working in the area of children's services. It is hoped that these seminars will provide a forum that will result in new and useful connections being made between staff working in the areas of child care, education, juvenile justice and health. Given the objectives of these events they are invitation only events. If you would like to be considered for invitation to these network events please contact Bronagh at [bronagh.gibson@caab.ie](mailto:bronagh.gibson@caab.ie)

Region	Date	Venue
West	7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> May	Clayton Hotel, Galway City
South	14 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> May	Clonmel Park Hotel, Clonmel
Dublin North East	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> June	Carlton Hotel, Dublin Airport
Dublin Mid-Leinster	25 <sup>th</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup> June	Louis Fitzgerald Hotel, Newlands Cross, Dublin

## Evidence to Practice Seminars

The purpose of Evidence to Practice seminars is to assist services to children in achieving positive outcomes for children by improving areas of practice. Crucial to this is the provision of systematic and empirical evidence relating to areas of concern for practitioners, managers and policy makers. The topic of the first seminar, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May, is A Different Response Model: Re-focusing Child Protection Towards Family Support. Details of speakers are on our website [www.caab.ie](http://www.caab.ie)

Topic	Date	Venue
A Different Response Model	22 <sup>nd</sup> May	The Gresham Hotel, Dublin
Assessment theme	3 <sup>rd</sup> September	Trinity College Dublin
Education theme	19 <sup>th</sup> November	To be determined, Dublin

## National Conference, 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> October 'More than Rhetoric: Improving outcomes for children and their families through inter-agency working'

This conference will examine how to improve the delivery of services to children and young people in Ireland. It will concentrate on how this can be achieved through agencies working together and it will explore the challenges and benefits of inter-agency working from both practitioner and academic perspectives. The aim of the conference is to highlight best national and international practice in this area. The CAAB will present its findings on the current experiences of practitioners in Ireland and focus on future directions. Key dates are as follows:

- 31<sup>st</sup> May, deadline for the submission of abstracts;
- 31<sup>st</sup> July, deadline for the submission of selected full papers;
- 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> October, days of the conference.

## CAAB Arts & Crafts Competition 2007

In September 2007, the Children Acts Advisory Board announced its annual arts and crafts competition which is open to all young people in the children detention schools, special care units and high support units. The winners chosen by a judging panel are reproduced below.

The CAAB would like to take this opportunity to thank all the young people who took part and to commend them on their artistic talent and achievement. We would also like to thank the staff of the schools and units for their assistance. The contact person for information regarding the Arts & Crafts is Clodagh at [clodagh.thorne@caab.ie](mailto:clodagh.thorne@caab.ie).

1<sup>st</sup> Place – Hot Air Balloon



2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Circus



3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Canal Scene



# CAAB Team

We would like to introduce you to the CAAB team and a brief outline of their areas of responsibility. If you would like to communicate with any member of the team you can do so by email at [firstname.surname@caab.ie](mailto:firstname.surname@caab.ie) or by ringing 01 672 4100.

## Management Team



**Aidan Browne**  
*Chief Executive*



**Finbarr O'Leary**  
*Deputy Chief Executive*



**Jane Craig**  
*Head of Corporate Affairs*



**Robert Murphy**  
*Head of Research and Information*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Overall responsibility for research and information and court support.

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Human resources, finance, corporate affairs and board governance.

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Development and implementation of the Board's research and information strategies.

## Operational Team



**Rose Sweeney**  
*Advisory Officer*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Promotion and further enhancement of inter-agency co-operation.



**Jim McGuirk**  
*Advisory Officer*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Guardian *ad Litem* policy, liaising with the Courts Service regarding delivery of GAL guidance and the preparation of reports.



**Ciarán Ó Searcaigh**  
*Advisory Officer*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Strategy implementation, data analysis and statistics, systems development and knowledge management.



**Bronagh Gibson**  
*Advisory Officer*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Development and management of programme of events including seminars, workshops, awards scheme and national conference, and research.



**Gráinne McGill**  
*Advisory Officer*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
'View' on HSE special care applications, criteria for Special Care and Research.



**Marion Martin**  
*Advisory Officer*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Co-ordination and implementation of the CAAB's research programme.



**Amanda Downes**  
*Project Support Officer*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Research and information, supporting the special care Advisory Officer and assisting in the operation of the Board's Library, and general office support.

## Administration Team



**Clodagh Thorne**  
*PA to Chief Executive and Board*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Administrative support to the Chief Executive and the Board. Supporting the human resources and board governance functions.



**Bronwyn Conway**  
*Senior Administrator*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Supporting the corporate affairs and finance functions, and event management.



**Errol Gannon**  
*IT Administrator*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
IT systems and technical support.



**Fiona Mullen**  
*Administrative Officer – Accounts*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Accounts function and supporting events management and corporate affairs.



**Eva Dobrowolska**  
*Administrative Officer*

**Areas of Responsibility:**  
Support to the operations and administration teams.

# CAAB Updates

## Youth Justice 2008 Conference

A two day international conference 'Youth Justice 2008: Measuring Compliance with International Standards' is taking place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of April. The event is hosted by the Centre for Criminal Justice & Human Rights at University College Cork and is in association with the CAAB. For more details see [www.caab.ie](http://www.caab.ie) or [www.ucc.ie/law/youthjustice2008](http://www.ucc.ie/law/youthjustice2008)

## GAL Updates

Consultation regarding the development of guidance on the qualifications, criteria for appointment, training and role of a guardian *ad litem* appointed in proceedings under the Child Care Act 1991 has continued since the beginning of the year. A consultative working document has been drawn up and was presented to the Board in February. The Board decided, following discussion that a sub committee should be established to oversee the next stages of the process. This sub committee has now been established and its inaugural meeting has taken place. The process with the GAL consultative group came to a conclusion in March, nevertheless, it is the intention of the Executive to continue consultation on an informal basis with those previously engaged in deliberations and with others who also have an involvement in the area. In addition, the Executive is now beginning to consult with services users, i.e. children who have availed of the services of a guardian *ad litem* in the past. Both the Board and the Executive are extremely grateful to all those who participated in the consultation process and look forward to a continuing working relationship into the future.

## Special Care Updates

CAAB will shortly publish research that was conducted on 36 applications for special care made in early 2007. Recommendations from the research cover three areas: management of practice, process and monitoring.

## Therapeutic Intervention Updates

Since the agreement of the terms of reference (as published in the winter 2007 newsletter) a working definition of what is a therapeutic intervention for the purposes of the guidelines has been agreed. Draft headings for the guidelines have also been established and work under these headings has commenced.

## Making Research Results More Accessible

Following a competitive tendering process the CAAB has selected a service provider to help develop initiatives (in partnership with relevant organisations) to make research results more accessible to practitioners, managers and policy makers. The service provider will assist us to select the most appropriate information dissemination mechanisms, to develop a web based 'research database' for the sector, and to establish ongoing mechanisms to provide advice and assistance on a number of issues such as: areas for future research; to contribute to research undertaken; to help identify, source and provide expertise; and to quality check our research through peer review.

## 5 Nations Conference

The CAAB recently participated in the biennial 5 Nations Conference on Children, Young People and Crime which was held in Edinburgh on the 28<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup> February. The title of the conference was 'Finding Common Ground'.

The rapporteur at the end of the conference synthesised the key points from the discussion as follows:

- Do something that meets the **real** needs of children. Do it well and don't let it be undone;
- Common ground is in the search for meaning, belonging and ways of succeeding;
- Pay equal attention to the **wholesale** and **retail** elements of our work;
- It's never too early and never too late to do the right thing and to do things right;

- Stop **whingeing** about the media – engage with them!

The rapporteur noted that for the future the following areas need to be addressed:

- Understanding medical factors – how would this influence what we do (e.g. issues like head injury, emotional intelligence, mental health, foetal alcohol syndrome etc.);
- Training, CPD, retention of staff, inter-agency development of staff;
- Build on common ground; share best practice, exchange, secondment, external work placements etc.

It was noted that our common objective should be to ensure all children grow up healthy, happy and loved. The Lord Advocate noted that: '*Our main aim should be to reduce the supply of children/young people coming into the criminal justice system*'.

## Government decision on IYJS Expert Group Recommendations

Mr Brendan Smith, TD, Minister for Children, announced on 6<sup>th</sup> March that he had received Cabinet approval for the implementation of the recommendations of the IYJS Expert Group on the future development of the detention school services. The government decision includes the following key points:

- **Capacity (Age 10-18 yrs):** Detention schools will provide 167 bed spaces (10 girls & 157 boys);
- **Detention School development** will all take place on the Oberstown Campus in Lusk;
- **Finglas Child and Adolescent Centre (FCAC):** A working group is to be established in 2008 to consider the needs/services required for a vulnerable group of children with specialist needs within the detention facilities and St. Patrick's Institution and a possible future role for the Finglas Child and Adolescent Centre;
- **Governance:** The Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS) will establish and convene a Project Board to ensure good governance and accountability.

This is a very welcome development which provides a clear sense of direction and urgency for the modernisation of the detention school system. A copy of the report is available for download from the Irish Youth Justice website at [www.iyjs.ie](http://www.iyjs.ie).

**Have you got news for us? Your contributions to future CAAB Publications are very welcome.**  
**For further details please contact Clodagh Thorne on 01 672 4119 or email [clodagh.thorne@caab.ie](mailto:clodagh.thorne@caab.ie)**  
**If you wish to download a copy of our newsletter please visit our website [www.caab.ie](http://www.caab.ie)**