

**2015-
2016**

**Irish Association of Social Workers
Annual Report**

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Representing Social Work in Ireland since 1971
A Member of the International Federation of Social Workers

Table of Contents:

IASW Board of Directors and Council	3
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Board Reports:

Chair Report – Donal O’Malley	4
Vice Chair – Aisling Coffey	6
Company Secretary – Billie Anne McCauley	7
Treasurer – Trish Sweeney	7
Membership Officer – Trish Mylan	7
The Social Work Registration Board CORU – Joe McCarthy	
Council Liaison - Patrice Reilly	8
The IASW Social Work Awards – Paula Donohoe	8
Office Manager Report – Danielle McGoldrick	10
Professional Development Co-Ordinator – Cliona Murphy	10

Special Interest, Affiliate & Associate Group Reports:

Social Workers in Foster Care – Cahal McHale	11
Southern Region – Zoe Linnane	14
Social Workers in Adult Mental Health – Mary G Killion	15
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Social Workers– Eoin Barry	16
Child & Family Social Workers – Maria McGloughlin	17
Primary Care Social Workers – Barbara McDonagh	18
Ageing – Bernadette Casey	19
Probation – Saragh McGarrigle	21
Social Workers in Disability – Emer Haastrup	22
Practitioner Research Group – Sarah Donnelly	22
NEW Social Workers – Claire Costello	23
Associate Groups	
The Irish Social Worker Journal – Frank Browne	24
The International Affairs Group – John Brennan	25
Affiliated Groups	
The Head Medical Social Workers – Amanda Casey	26
Council of Irish Adoption Agencies – Cathal Clifford & Eileen Conway	

Board & Council Members 2015 - 2016

List of Board Members:

	Chair – Donal O’Malley Treasurer – Trish Sweeney Joe McCarthy Patrice Reilly Sandra McDonagh (resigned Feb’16) John Brennan (co-opted Mar’16)	Vice Chair – Aisling Coffey Secretary – Billie Anne McCauley Paula Donohoe Trish Mylan Frank Browne
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Special Interest, Affiliate & Associate Group Representatives:

	Ageing (SIGA)	Bernadette Casey
	Children & Families	Joe McCarthy
	Child/Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS)	Eoin Barry
	Southern Region	Zoe Linnane & Mary T Kenny
	Social Workers in Disability (SWID)	Emer Hastrup
	Social Workers in Probation	Saragh McGarrigle
	Adult Mental Health (SWAMH)	Mary G Killion
	Primary Care	Barbara McDonagh
	Retired Members	Pat Waldron
	Foster Care	Cahal McHale
	Practitioner Researcher Group	Sarah Donnelly
	New Social Workers	Claire Costello
	The Irish Social Worker Chairperson (Interim) The Council of Irish Adoption Agencies Head Medical Social Workers International Affairs Committee	Frank Browne Cathal Clifford & Eileen Conway Amanda Casey John Brennan

Introduction

It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the IASW staff, Board & Council, to present to you the IASW Annual Report for 2015-2016. This report aims to give you an overview of the activities undertaken by your professional body, the Irish Association of Social Workers, for the benefit of all the social workers in the Republic of Ireland. The various sections document the work of the members of the Board, the various Special Interest & Associate Groups, and our Office Manager and CPD Officer over the last twelve months

The continued growth and development of our profession within Ireland and the ability of the Association to continue to work towards enhancing social work practice as well as addressing the concerns of social workers and those that we work with is reliant on members giving what we can of our time and all of us making equitable financial contributions. I hope you will share this report with your social work colleagues who aren't yet members of the Association and encourage them to join their professional body.



Donal O'Malley
Chairperson

Board Reports

Chair Report

Donal O'Malley

Firstly, I wish to thank the IASW staff, Danielle McGoldrick and Cliona Murphy. They have been and continue to be the 'engine' of the Association. The information, guidance and support that they offer in their respective roles to the Board and I, and to you as the members, ensures that the Association runs effectively. Secondly, I would like to thank this year's Board who have worked tirelessly on behalf of all the members of our Association. And thirdly, I wish to thank the various Chairs' of the Special Interest and Associate Groups and the many individual members who over the last 12 months have given their time to ensure that we have a vibrant and active Association.

Last year the Board developed a three-year strategy for the Association and set about implementing that plan this year. It is hoped that this strategic plan will form the basis of the work-plan for successive Boards. The strategic plan, which members of the Board have shared with Special Interest Groups over the last number of months, will give focus to the work of the Association and enable us to make substantive progress in a number of key areas. Over the last 12 month's members of the Board have each carried a "portfolio" linked to the strategic plan, so progress is already underway.

These are some specific the areas that as Chairperson of the Association, I have undertaken, with the support of the Board and Council members, over the last 12 months.

Engagements with Tusla & HSE management

Over the course of the last 12 months, the Association has continued to make submissions to and meet with representatives of both Tusla and HSE management in order to highlight issue of concern to members in various areas of social work practice. These meetings have enabled a greater understanding of the social work role amongst HSE management and have allowed social workers to contribute to the ongoing development of policies and procedures within Tusla. The recent indication from Tusla that it will be creating a social work senior practitioner post alongside each existing team leader post, is a manifestation of our efforts in this area.

Workforce Development and Health & Social Care Professionals' Representation

The Association has made a number of submissions and representations to the recent Workforce Planning Workshops and in the consultation with the Health and Social Care Professionals section within the HSE, on behalf of social workers and has raised a number of issues that concern the development of the social work profession within the HSE, including the need for financial support for social workers seeking further training, the enhancement of management structures and the development of advanced practitioner posts.

CORU

We are now in the middle of CORU's 24 month CPD cycle, after which social workers may be subjected to an audit. In our meetings with CORU, the Association has highlighted the concerns of our members, in particular with regard to recording and documenting their CPD, and we have maintained a communication pathway with our regulating body that has allowed us to ensure that members' are supported and informed about developments.

Fitness to Practice Legal Expenses Cover

Last year the Board put in place a legal expenses policy for members of the Association that ensured that should a member's practice be called into question they will be afforded the necessary legal supports. This policy has been tested when members have been informed of complaints made against them and these members have reported that the advice and support they have received from our legal advisors has been critical in managing such complaints.

Continuous Professional Development

CPD training continues to be a core part of the Association's business, offering social workers good quality training opportunities in a vast array of areas of interest to social work practitioners and managers. This has become increasingly more important over the last years as CORU has implemented its CPD policy for social workers and as mentioned above, we are halfway through the two-year audit cycle. The Association's CPD Officer Cliona Murphy continues to design a comprehensive training programme that is essential for all social workers looking to maintain their registration and advance their social work practice and their careers.

Health & Social Care Professionals' Alliance

The IASW continues to have regular meetings with the other professional bodies that are or are due to be registered by CORU. The HSCPA, previously known as the PBAI, deals with issues that are common to all the professions and with prior agreement of all membership bodies. The HSCPA seeks to ensure the representation of health and social care professionals on the various clinical programmes and is working with the Dept. of Health to develop a strategy to enhance the representation of and supports for Health and Social Care professionals at all levels of health care policy and implementation.

Promotion of Social Work profession & the Social Work Awards

This IASW has worked hard to promote the role of social work and highlight the positive difference that social workers can make in the lives of the people we work with, through its engagement with the media, alliances with other organisations and also in our dealings with public representatives and State agencies. Over the last 12 months we have had the opportunity in the print media, on radio and on TV to discuss issues of concern to social workers. Details of these and the various press statements that we have released can be found on the website.

This year is the second year of the IASW Social Work Awards. The event has grown with a new category focused on research added. The Awards serve not only to acknowledge the exemplary practice of certain social workers, but also to highlight the important role that social workers play and bringing that message to nationwide awareness. My thanks in particular to the Awards organising committee and our panel of judges for their hard work and dedication that has ensured the continued success and growth of this event.

Meetings with members of the Oireachtas

During the last 12 months, various delegations from Council and the SIGs in Older Persons, Mental Health, Disability, Children & Families and Primary Care met with members of the Cabinet as well as members of the opposition and representatives from the Seanad, in the Oireachtas. These groups highlighted issues of concern for social workers in their specific care group areas, as well as bringing to attention of public representatives our unique experience from the frontline. The relationships that the Association has fostered with public representatives has increased awareness of the role that social workers play and has also allowed the voice of social workers to be heard in Oireachtas Committees.

Some of the issues that the IASW campaigned on in the last twelve months include:

Housing & Homeless

Throughout the year the Association, with the support of its member and through alliances with other organisations, has highlighted various issues with regards to people living in unsuitable accommodation or being subjected to homelessness. The Association used the General and Seanad elections earlier in the year to give voice to this and other issues.

Direct Provision, Refugees & Migrants

The Association continues to campaign for the implementation of the McMahon recommendations and ultimately for an end to Direct Provision. Maeve Forman and Muireann NiRaghallaigh have recently established a new SIG focused on Migrants and Minority Ethnic Communities which will seek to identify issues and support social workers working with migrants and asylum seekers.

Preferences of Older Persons

In collaboration with Age Action, UCD School of Social Policy, Social Work & Social Justice and the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, the IASW launched a report into the care preferences of older people and how these are not being facilitated because of a lack of community homecare supports. This report was the fruit of research carried out by to Sarah Donnelly and John Brennan who have campaigned this cause for a number of years.

Again, I would like to thank all the members of the Board and Council for their hard work, to Clíona and Danielle for their unfailing dedication to the Association and all its members, and to the many members who have responded to my calls, texts and/or emails at all times of the day or night! Without the hard work of these and other dedicated individuals, we would not have such a vibrant professional body that continues to go from strength to strength.

Vice-Chair Report

Aisling Coffey

It has been my great pleasure to have served on the board of our professional association for the past two years. I have had the privilege of meeting many members who hold their professional practice to the highest standards and continually strive to improve the quality of social work service delivery. The IASW is built on a solid foundation of volunteerism, and our members invest their time, effort, talents and creativity in the interests of promoting our profession and the needs of those we serve.

In the last year, as vice-chair of the IASW, I have collaborated with my board colleagues and our office manager on financial, insurance, contractual, strategic and operational matters, including the commencement of IASW business planning to complement the processes already in place for strategic planning. With my colleagues, I have endeavored to provide a quality service to all member queries channeled through the office, where Danielle continually provides the highest standards of customer service.

In collaboration with Frank Browne and Cliona Murphy, the first IASW standards for professional social work supervision have been published. In developing this publication, standards from the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, USA, Australia and New Zealand were reviewed and valuable feedback was generously forthcoming from a number of members who acted as consultants or "critical friends", as well as board and council members. It is my hope that this standards document will be used as a foundation for further development and continuous improvement in the pursuit of excellence in social work supervision in the years to come.

In response to the needs of our members, Patrice Reilly and I have consulted with social workers across various service settings and agencies to seek feedback on the implementation of the "HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse: National Policy and Procedures". We will be representing your views and seeking your support in collaborating with the HSE to continually improve the quality of social work service delivery for the vulnerable adult.

Perhaps one of the most enjoyable aspects of my board role this year was visiting and consulting with our Special Interest and Associate Group colleagues in SIGA, Foster Care, Probation and the Head Medical Social Workers Group. These groups act as advisors to Association and work hard year round, providing CPD and addressing issues of concern to the profession. Through consultation sessions with our Special Interest and Associate Group colleagues this year, board members were able to elicit valuable feedback that will be used to further improve Association functioning.

The ongoing success of the IASW has no doubt been maintained by the hard work of the Associations two staff members, Danielle McGoldrick and Cliona Murphy, as well as the voluntary efforts of all Board and Council members. I would like to thank all of you for your ongoing commitment and dedication in promoting our profession and improving the functioning of our association.

Company Secretary

Billie Anne McCauley

The Company Secretary is responsible for the efficient administration of a company, particularly with regard to ensuring compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and for ensuring that decisions of the Board of Directors are implemented. Despite the name, the role is not a clerical or secretarial role one in the usual sense. The company secretary ensures that an organization complies with relevant legislation and regulation, and keeps board members informed of their legal responsibilities.

Company secretary is the company named representative on legal documents, and it is their responsibility to ensure that the company and its directors operate within the law.

The main roles of the Secretary are:

In consultation with the Chair agree and circulate the agenda for Board and all relevant committee meetings

- Ensure effective communication with members occurs.
- Check minutes with chair and circulate
- Act as Company Secretary
- Other roles within the last year include:
 - Assist office manager/chair in dealing with issues that have arose in a quick response via email.
 - Respond directly to members of the public with their questions in relation to social work.
 - Review and approve new members.
 - Working towards devising a membership strategy for the IASW.

A number of routine tasks have also been completed with the assistance of the Office Manager including dealing with routine queries. The role of Company Secretary within the IASW work load is easily manageable due to the hard work of the Office Manager.

Treasurer

Trish Sweeney

The role of the Treasurer is to provide financial governance over the IASW activities and to advise the board on financial matters such as new projects, cash flow and oversee the budgets and accounts.

In this role I have been co-authorising and monitoring transactions, reviewing special interest groups funding applications, liaising with the Office Manager who undertakes the day to day accounts and the CPD Officer reviewing financial issues that impact on the Associations financial position. This oversight ensures that all members that value for money is achieved by the IASW in all their business activities.

I also worked closely with the Vice Chair and the Officer Manager to assess funding of IFSW events.

The end of year for 2015 has been audited by John Meade and will be presented and adopted at the AGM on the 17th June 2016.

Membership Officer

Trish Mylan

Building on the work of the previous membership officer Aisling Coffey to grow membership, a qualitative and quantitative analysis of data in relation to membership was undertaken. The results will underpin a new strategy to understand and address the needs of our members and to find ways of increasing membership.

Also established through this research was member's appreciation of items received in hardcopy such as The Social Work Journal and CORU packs.

The board and membership secretary support the request from regional members for IASW to offer more regional events and for IASW to be more relevant to regional IASW members. Certain strategies are being explored. One idea

being followed up is the recruiting and training of regional coordinators to lead on CBT and other events in the regions.

Finally, The IASW is run by members for members, social work is our profession. We invite you to help continue to ensure high professional standards in Irish Social Work by joining IASW and contributing to the future of Irish social work through your professional body ***The Irish association of Social Workers.***

The Social Work Registration Board, CORU

Joe McCarthy

No report for 2015/2016 term.

Council Liaison

Patrice Reilly

The Council Liaison Role was a new role during the 2015/2016 term. During the year I have organised and coordinated a number of sub groups of the IASW Board and Council:

The Promotion of the Role of the Social Worker sub group arose out of members' concerns that the SW role is being eroded across care group settings. The group is composed of representatives from each IASW SIG. This group has drafted a letter to the relevant government departments requesting a meeting to discuss members' concerns. The letter has been sent to the Board for sign off. The group is also currently drafting a document which will aim to clarify to all stakeholders the value of the social work role across MDTs and other settings. The group is planning an IASW CPD event whereby this document will be launched.

The Social Work Housing Action Subgroup was formed to support members to raise concerns with the relevant stakeholders regarding the current housing and homeless crisis. This group is composed of SW members who work in housing and others for whom housing and homelessness is a key issue arising in their daily work. The group drafted a 'Housing Questions for Candidates' leaflet in advance of the February General Elections to support members to raise concerns regarding the housing crisis. The group is currently planning a CPD/awareness raising event for social workers and service users for Winter 2016. The group is also expanding and joining with social workers across Ireland to form an IASW Social Workers in Housing Special Interest Group.

I am also working alongside our Vice Chair in collating members' feedback regarding the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy. We are currently drafting correspondence to the HSE Safeguarding Office to seek a meeting to discuss members' feedback and address the queries. We have also been in touch with our members who work on the Safeguarding Teams offering support to establish a Special Interest Group in the area.

Further to the Marriage Equality Legislation, I have reviewed the IASW Guidelines on 'Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People: A Guide to Good Practice for Social Workers' and 'A Quick Reference Guide'. I am currently liaising with GLEN regarding finalising these.

As Council Liaison Officer, I have supported members with general queries including queries regarding membership and the re-establishing of the Children and Families Special Interest Group. To this end, I have worked with our Office Manager and Vice Chair to develop material aimed at encouraging membership of the IASW and of Special Interest Groups. Although I will not be running for the Board for the 2015/2016 period due to other commitments, I will continue to support the development of the association and its recruitment of members through other activities. I believe it is critical that as social workers, we join, and becoming active in, our association not only to give voice to the issues and experiences of our service users but also to form a strong, cohesive voice in developing and progressing the role and the value of our profession.

The IASW Social Work Awards 2015

Paula Donohoe

For the first time in the history of Ireland the Irish Association of Social Workers held the first Social Worker of the Year Awards on the 4th of June in the Double Tree Hilton Hotel. The Award ceremony was about recognising the excellent, diverse work that takes place in the profession and celebrating the many outstanding achievements of social workers

across Ireland. It also had an important role to play in making social work's contribution know to the wider public. Tribute was paid to the 'life changing' work of social workers at the ceremony where guests recognised the skill and professionalism of frontline practitioners nominated in the 4 categories- Social Worker of the Year, Newly Qualified Social Worker of the Year, Practice Teacher of the Year and Social Work Team of the Year.

The Social Worker of the Year category was presented by Paula Donohoe, Director of Services for DeafHear. The category celebrated the achievements of social workers. This award category received the highest number of entries. The panel were impressed with the dedication displayed by the 3 finalists, Patrice Reilly from Primary Care in Dublin 2, Christine Hennessy from Barnardos in Dublin 1, Claire O'Regan from the Mental Health Services in Dublin 24 with Christine Hennessy being the winner of this category for her determination to provide an innovative, creative and specialist service where parents find hope, understanding and practical tools to help them support their adopted children on their journey towards secure emotional attachment.

"Totally helped us to change the dynamic in our family."

"Support when we most needed, it made all the difference in the world."

The Newly Qualified Social Worker category was presented by Norah Gibbons, Chairperson of CORU. This award was open to newly qualified social workers. The panel were looking for a practitioner with the potential to become a future role model for the profession. There were two social workers shortlisted for this category – Tara Whelan from the Mater Hospital in Dublin 7 and Louise Conneally from DeafHear in Galway. The winner of this category was Louise who 'gains trust and respect with that perfect balance of professional skill set along with personality traits she possesses'. Her colleagues describe her as approaching 'each work day with enthusiasm and positivity, which not only lifts the spirits of her service users of all ages and capabilities but of her work colleagues too.'

The Practice Teacher of the Year category presented by Senator Jillian Van Turnout. This category was open to social workers who are involved in mentoring and supervising students and the judges were looking for practice teachers with the ability to successfully motivate and inspire their students. Included in the short list was Majella Hickey from Probation Services in Dublin 7 and David Williamson from Probation Services in Dublin 7. However, the winner of this category went to Aideen McDonnell from the Mental Health Services in Dublin. Aideen is 'fair and considerate' and endeavors to make sure students get as much experience as possible in their placement'.

The Social Work Team of the Year Category presented by Dr. Hilda Loughran, Director of Social Work (UCD). This award celebrated the achievements of social work teams working with children and their families. The judges were on the lookout for a strong, stable team with high morale and one that consistently delivers high standards of best practice. The shortlist included the West Central Team, Child and Family Agency in Donegal, the Dublin North City Fostering Social Work team in Dublin 9.

The winner of the category was the Mayo -Child Protection and Welfare team. The team strived to provide a high quality service and have been creative and dynamic in relation to responding to client needs. The booklet 'A Stone unturned. A guide for families whose children have experienced sexual abuse' and the information leaflets for children are good examples of workers recognising and responding to the specific needs of their client group. Families felt 'listened to and more importantly heard'. They felt they were 'given a say in the outcome for their children'.

Overall the First Social Work Awards was a great success. The IASW would like to thank all the nominators and nominees for their applications. Hopefully next year the ceremony will be as popular.



Office Report

Danielle McGoldrick

The 2015/2016 term has been an extremely eventful and busy period for the association. The majority of my work has focused on; the development, design and implementation of a new payment system for our website. The new system allows us to produce financial reports and statistics, which assist the Board in key decision making processes.

In my role as Office Manager, I have to balance a wide & varied task load, these include:

- Membership
- The Board of Directors
- Council
- All forms of communication to members
- Website development and updates
- Insurance & Legal
- Finance Management
- Publications
- Advertising
- Comm's & PR
- Submissions, policies, correspondence
- General Admin

In September of 2015 we secured a part-time Tus Worker, Jason Doyle. Jason assisted me to with some of the day to day tasks, Jason was hardworking and we very much felt the benefits of an extra set of hands around the office. In April, fortunately for Jason he secured full time employment as an apprentice plumber. We are hoping to recruit a new TUS or CE Worker in the coming months.

I am currently preparing to go on maternity leave in mid-July. Sharon Melvin is once again available to cover my leave, and it reassuring to know that the office will be in safe hands, whilst I am on leave. I will return from leave in February 2017.

Professional Development Coordinator

Cliona Murphy

Since the last AGM, in relation to events:

- A total of 39 CPD events have been held including conferences (SIG & CPD Officer led), training, information seminars and workshops;
- The majority of events (24) were held in Dublin (more than half of the membership is Dublin-based). Events were also held in Athlone, Galway, Sligo, Limerick, Waterford and Cork (15);
- Almost 30 seminars on *CPD & the Requirements of Registration* have been provided nationwide;
- An increased number of interdisciplinary events were held, planned and coordinated with CPD officers from other Health and Social Care Professions;
- The IASW CPD Policy and Folder have been revised to ensure that they dovetail with, and bring added value to, the CORU CPD requirements of registration.

In addition to the **events** outlined above, **support** was provided to members to run events themselves. This support took the form of financial and administrative support including promotion of events through e-mail, Facebook, the IASW newsletter and www.iasw.ie. The nationwide events celebrating World Social Work Day 2016 is a good example. The CPD section of the website has been restructured and is updated on a regular basis. The IASW has also contributed to the development of the HSE Strategy on Education and Development for Health and Social Care Professions through work as a member of the sub group tasked with responsibility for developing the Strategy.

A new service Research Connect was developed with the support of the Practitioner Research SIG and was launched in October 2015. Research Connect is a service that links social workers looking for support to conduct and/or

disseminate research with mentors who wish to provide that support to the profession. A key aim of the service is to support social workers to contribute to the evidence base informing professional practice as a way of engaging in CPD.

Promotion of the work and profile of the Association was progressed by populating the website and Facebook with news about the IASW and its work. This took the form of submissions on proposed policy and legislation, examples of advocacy work taken on behalf of the members and service users, IASW in the media, and presentations from relevant events. A newsletter is compiled and circulated to the membership on a bimonthly basis updating members on the work and achievements of the Association.

Representing the views of social workers on matters of social policy and practice and **advocating for the interests of social work clients** are two key objectives of the Association. With this in mind, a number of submissions were collated on the basis of member and Board views. The IASW also represented social work and service user views in submissions made as members of coalitions of interest such as the Children's Rights Alliance. Submissions can be downloaded from the resources section of www.iasw.ie

A key element of the role has been to **provide information and advice** to social workers in relation to registration, continuing professional development and the *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers*. Seminars on this topic have been provided nationwide and with the launch of CORU's audit cycle on 31st May 2015, will continue to be in high demand. These fora have provided an opportunity to **hear the views of members** and non-members alike, to discuss the issues arising and to **explore options as to how best to represent member concerns**. Key concerns continue include difficulties accessing good quality supervision, the impact of the contexts within which social workers work on their capacity to adhere to the Code, whether the SWRB will provide advice and guidance in relation to conflicts within and about the Code and the risk of complaints of professional misconduct as well as the role of employers with regard to supporting registrants engage in CPD. Many social workers are seeking out support and advice from the IASW CPD Officer in relation to maintaining their CPD portfolio and providing supporting evidence for engagement in CPD.

Special Interest Group (SIG), Affiliate & Associate Group Reports

Foster Care SIG

Cahal McHale

Chairperson: Cahal McHale

Secretary: Karen Hope

Vice-Chair: Derek Hanley

Treasurer: Yvonne Power (Waterford)

The Social Workers in Foster Care (SWIFC) Special Interest Group of the IASW aims to provide its members with a forum where Social Workers, in the area of Foster Care, can express relevant professional perspectives and advocate on behalf of children in Foster Care.

AGM & SWIFC Meetings:

The SWIFC Group held its 2015 AGM on the 24th of October 2015 in Mount Errigal Hotel in Letterkenny. It was held during a break in the National Irish Foster Care Association Conference. Some existing, new members and returned SWIFC members attended. However, in line with the request of the IASW executive that Special Interest Groups hold their AGM and elect new committee members prior to the IASW AGM, the SWIFC arranged its 2016 AGM for 27th May.

This date was chosen to coincide with the Adoption to Foster Care Conference, organised jointly between UCD and SWIFC, where existing and potentially new SWIFC members may be present in larger numbers. The new committee was elected and comprises Cahal McHale who was returned as Chairperson and Karen Hope returned as Secretary, with new Treasurer, Joan Boland.

Since the 2015 AGM, SWIFC committee meetings have continued to be held by phone conference, for reasons of finance/funding, pressure of time and work commitments as well as the wide geographic spread of members. While not ideal, these phone links have facilitated the continuing good work of the SWIFC committee. In addition to the phone conference, one face to face meeting was organised in Athlone on the 14th March 2016. The agenda for the meeting included a phone linkup with IASW vice chairperson, Ms Aisling Coffey, who outlined the IASW strategic plan

which had been circulated before the meeting. The committee offered suggestions and feedback on the strategic plan which Aisling took note of to report back to the Board. At this meeting the committee proceeded with planning arrangements for the May SWIFC learning event (ultimately entitled "Adoption to Foster Care") and a review of progress in the completion of the SWIFC discussion document.

10 SWIFC committee meetings have been held in total since the last AGM on the 24/10/2015 to this date. There were as follows; 10/11/2015, 15/12/2015, 5/01/2016, 23/02/2016, 7/03/2016, 14/03/2016, 5/04/2016, 27/04/2016, 18/05/2016, 23/05/2016, with the 2016-2017 Conference and AGM being held on 27/05/2016.

The minutes of each meeting are distributed to the committee for review and consideration prior to the next meeting. It is hoped that an increased number of face to face meetings can be held in the future, though it is recognised that meeting physically in one location on frequent occasions is unrealistic.

SWIFC discussion document:

The SWIFC committee have continued to work on the development of a discussion paper to reflect the views of Social Workers in fostering on the position and direction of foster care in Ireland. Although progress towards this objective has been slow, the discussion document has been completed and is now in the final stages of editing and review. It is planned that the document will be published and disseminated through the IASW website and other significant vested interests. A formal launch alongside or as part of a SWIFC learning event in Autumn 2016 is also being considered currently. A summary abstract of the main points of the document was drawn up for the attention and information of interested parties at the National IFCA conference and beyond. The document draws attention, not only to areas or matters of concern, but to the positive developments in fostering within Ireland in recent years.

Cahal McHale, SWIFC Chairperson was proposed and agreed to author the report, with input in developing the document from SWIFC committee members, and particular support from Mary Flanagan and Dr. Valerie O'Brien.

National Irish Foster Care Association Conference:

During the National IFCA conference held in October 2015, SWIFC members presented a number of workshops. One which was particularly relevant to the SWIFC group's current concerns was presented by two SWIFC representatives; Karen Hope and Dr Valerie O'Brien. It was entitled: "*The challenge of sustaining a partnership between foster carers and social workers: - navigating the current landscape of fostering in Ireland.*" There was a research dimension to the workshop and the feedback from this will hopefully provide some useful messages in our effort to progress the challenges this area presents. The presence of SWIFC through having a stand, facilitating and participating in workshops and holding the SWIFC AGM was viewed as a positive development in promoting the presence and work of SWIFC amongst a most important grouping, foster carers. It was also part of copper-fastening the working relationship between SWIFC (and consequently) the IASW and IFCA.

SWIFC conference/learning event: From Fostering to Adoption; A Social Work Perspective.

Recent developments nationally in the area of aftercare and adoption, were identified by SWIFC members as requiring further examination, clarity and advocacy. The May Conference, "*From Fostering to Adoption; A social work perspective*" mentioned earlier and jointly organized by the SWIFC committee and UCD, emerged as a response to the identified need to explore the changing national legislative context in Adoption as it pertains to children and young people in care from a social work practice perspective. It was a significant event that the SWIFC committee hopes will contribute to widening discussion and public debate around this important issue. The input and support from the Department of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice in University College Dublin, alongside that of Cliona, the CPD office and Danielle in the IASW head office is greatly appreciated by the SWIFC committee.

Office issues – SWIFC & IASW:

During 2015 the content of the SWIFC Webpage was amended with the relevant updated information which was forwarded to the IASW office for inclusion in the site. The SWIFC membership list has also been reviewed recently and updated.

A motion (3.2.3) proposed by the IASW board for the impending IASW AGM on the 17th of June 2016 is a cause of concern to SWIFC members. In essence, the Board are proposing to 'phase-out' non-members joining Special Interest Groups, in order to prohibit non-members from using the professional body, it's funds, resources and staff without

paying the appropriate membership fee. If the motion is passed at the AGM, the phase-out period will commence June 17th 2016 and will end June 2017. While the rationale for the proposal and amendment was understood and acknowledged by members at a recent SWIFC meeting on the 23rd May 2016, the potentially detrimental impact to the membership and viability of SWIFC and other Special Interest Groups was viewed as a significant concern and could well be counterproductive. Currently approximately 80% of SWIFC members are not IASW members. The matter will be raised at an impending IASW council meeting by SWIFC chairperson, Cahal McHale on the 30th of May 2016. SWIFC members are urged to attend the IASW AGM on the 17th June 2016 where the motion will be considered.

Attendance of a SWIFC representative at Council meetings had been an ongoing challenge which the Chairperson who resides in Donegal had agreed to perform on a temporary basis until the committee were able to identify a member within reasonable reach of the Dublin, in a position to take on this role.

At the recent AGM, the new Vice Chairperson agreed to take on this role and therefore he may also be in a better position to represent the group at other evening events or relevant meetings which arise at short notice from time to time.

Other issues brought to the attention of SWIFC in recent months:

Regional Business Plan – Dublin Mid- Leinster;

In April, the committee received a request from members for guidance in respect of the professional implications of a proposal "Contained in the recent publication of the Regional Business Plan for DML 2016, for a comprehensive change to the delivery of the Fostering Service by reducing the roles, responsibilities and job description of the local Fostering Link Workers."

As with many areas of professional practice, there were variant views reflected at the committee and further consideration is to be given in respect of the various issues raised in documents submitted. The teams involved have referred the matter to IMPACT in respect of the IR issues but a number of the professional practice issues raised deserve consideration by the profession.

Irish Attachment in Action;

Earlier this year a new initiative had been pursued to establish a network of carers, educators and a range of professionals based throughout Ireland, North and South, who are interested in promoting and applying the use of attachment theory in their work. The group, which has chosen the name Irish Attachment In Action (IAIA), has formed a Steering Group, of which Cahal McHale, SWIFC Chairperson, is a member. The group are currently drawing the attention of individuals and relevant bodies, both voluntary and statutory, to the development of this Network. The group are currently seeking the views of the IASW for such an initiative and hopefully the association's support and perhaps the nomination of a representative who would be willing to contribute to the aims of the network.

IFCA – TUSLA consultation process; funded by Atlantic Philanthropies;

In early 2015 the Irish Foster Care Association had received funding from Atlantic Philanthropies via Tusla to carry out a consultation in respect of challenges faced by foster carers and social workers. Individual stakeholders were invited to participate in a series of workshops around the country from February to April as part of this national consultation process. SWIFC submitted a request in April 2015, through the IASW to make a submission to the consultation and continue to await the opportunity to be invited to do so. The development of a meaningful consultation process involving both Foster Carers and Social Workers is commended by SWIFC and viewed as timely, considering the extensive developments in fostering and the impact of this on both parties in recent years.

Summary of current and future focus of SWIFC as identified in recent SWIFC meetings:

- Pursue options and develop thinking arising from the recent Adoption to Foster Care Conference.
- Completion of the SWIFC Discussion Document on Fostering in Ireland.
- Planning around how best to ensure the dissemination and consideration of the issues identified in the document by the significant vested parties in fostering in Ireland.
- Continued pursuit of SWIFC advocacy role, ensuring the voice of social workers in foster care contributes to the debate within and about fostering and social work practice in alternative care provision in Ireland.

Southern Region SIG

Zoe Linnane

Chairperson: Zoe Linnane

Vice Chairperson: Mary T Kenny

Co-Secretary: Catherine Barrett and Henrietta O' Meara

The IASW Southern Special Interest Group (hereafter called the SIG) was formed on April 17th 2015. The main objectives of the group were to re-establish a network of contact and support for social workers in the south of Ireland and to facilitate and encourage local CPD events. While we have worked at achieving some of our objectives, we have also had our teething issues and challenges. One of our biggest challenges was trying to facilitate a time that works best for meetings and this was an ongoing issue throughout the year. The members of the Board of the Southern S.I.G. are Catherine Barrett, Mary T. Kenny, Zoe Linnane and Henrietta O'Meara

Terms of Reference of Group

Initially the group was referred to as the IASW Southern Branch. Clarification from IASW Head Office highlighted that under the terms of reference of the IASW, the group is a Special Interest Group (SIG) and not a southern branch of the IASW. The Southern Region SIG is the only geographically based SIG and it is envisaged that local SIG groups around specific social work areas of interest may develop from this group. It was further clarified that a SIG group elects a board of four people and it does not have a committee. All members of SIGs are welcome to attend meetings other than Board meetings.

Networking

Over the past year, we have strived to build up a database of email contacts of social workers in the south of Ireland and we currently have over sixty people on our mailing list. We were unable to obtain a membership list of contacts from Head Office because of Data Protection issues, but head office emailed all members in the southern region to ask their permission to pass on their contact details to us. We received over twenty new contacts through this effort.

All new contacts were invited to complete an online survey as to why they were interested in joining a S.I.G. and their overwhelming response was that they wished to network with other social workers and to attend CPD events.

Our networking efforts also involved the circulating of information on training events that were happening in the southern region that were relevant to social work but not exclusively organised by the IASW.

At a national level, Board members of the Southern Regional S.I.G. have attended Council meetings in Dublin on behalf of the S.I.G.

CPD and other events.

Since April 2015, the Southern Regional S.I.G. have facilitated the following;

- Presentation by Dr. Maeve Hurley from Ag Eisteacht on *Brief Encounters* Training at Blackpool Social Work Department.
- Presentation by Sharon Lambert on *"Adolescent Substance Abuse and Young People"*. A fully booked out CPD Event in Blackpool Library.
- Celebration of World Social Work Day at The River Lee Hotel. A morning of celebration and reflection on the role of social work in Irish Society.
- Presentation by Joe McCarthy on behalf of the IASW Board at Blackpool Social Work Department.

Other topics were considered for CPD events but it was highlighted that there are already a number of CPD events organised by other groups in the southern region and that it would be better to promote and give our support to these groups and not go into competition with them.

Looking Ahead.

Any group can only be as strong as its membership, so it is hoped that membership of the IASW will increase in the southern region over the coming year. Currently, all four members of the Board of the Southern S.I.G. work for Tusla Child and Family Agency and this is a very unbalanced representation of the many social work roles in the southern

region. This issue will be addressed at the A.G.M.

Adult Mental Health SIG

Mary G Killion

Chair: Mary G Killion

Secretary: Anna Carroll

Committee Members: Laura Thompson, Paul Guckian, Eileen Ni Shuilleabhain, Sinead Lawless, Elaine Donnelly, Linda Curran, Lorraine Kelly, Tara Niemeyer, Regina McNamee, Sylvia Cahill, Orla Prendergast.

Since September of last year the Committee has met on four occasions and had a teleconference in lieu of a meeting on one occasion.

Two new members joined the committee since September 2015 including, Sylvia Cahill and Orla Prendergast.

The CPD event in November 2015 was held in the Aishling Hotel Dublin – with the Capacity Legislation as the Central Theme. Professor Mary Donnelly, Faculty of Law, UCC was the Keynote Speaker. Tim Hanly Lead Principal Social Worker for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults services also spoke at the conference.

The event was over-subscribed and the costs were adequately covered.

Suggestions for the next CPD included:

- CAMHS and AMHS interface
- SW role and the complications
- A practical application of the "Fair Deal".
- Bereavement and Mental Health.
- Self-Care – burn out.
- The Interface between AMHS & TULSA
- Clinical programmes: steering group about eating disorders, BFT, Self-Harm, DBT.
- Trauma work in Adult Mental Health
- Day on the role of a mental health social worker.

While the committee is involved in circulating a lot of correspondence from 'Head Office' to SWAMH Membership – we have put additional energy in to the following issues:

- Mental Health Reform Position Paper on the benefits of 'Talking Therapies and Medication'

In reading this draft paper we discovered that there was no mention of Social Workers' role in Talking Therapies. We decided that we would conduct a survey of all the Talking Therapies and Psycho-Social Interventions provided by social workers in mental health services nationally. The survey questionnaire designed by two of our committee members (Elaine Donnelly and Lorraine Kelly) will be undertaken through the Survey Monkey 'service'. Social Workers in CAMHS will be invited to take part in this survey also. Feedback will be collated by Elaine and Lorraine and then sent to Mental Health Reform – in a report format. The results will also be circulated to Social Workers in Mental health services nationally.

This led us to us considering two other issues namely:

- The need for a position paper on the role of Social Workers in Adult Mental Health Services. The SWAMH SIG has agreed to research this issue and to draft a position paper for consultation with Social Workers in Adult Mental Health Services nationally. They will liaise with social work colleagues in the Dublin area who have already undertaken some research in relation to this question.
- The need for social workers in AMHS to evaluate psycho-social interventions and to increase their skills and confidence in relation to evaluation, research and publication. With this in mind the committee felt a research CPD event was a priority as a means of encouraging and supporting social workers to engage in research – as a means of valuing good practice and excellent service initiatives that social workers are engaged in.

The May 20th CPD event is titled 'Strengthening Evidence Base for Psycho-Social Interventions' - and will take place at the Sheraton Hotel in Athlone.

Earlier this year there was a decision at council level to set up a cross SIG group to examine the Erosion of the Role of Social Work as a result of service re-organisation within the HSE. Each SIG group drawing up a position paper on the

role of Social Workers in that particular service area might be a more pro-active way to counter the erosion of the social work role.

Although the 'Safe Guarding Vulnerable Adults' Policy is not as yet implemented within Adult Mental Health Service's Social Workers are familiarising themselves with its requirements, and are trying to incorporate it in to their current practice – by liaising closely with their social work colleagues (in the Safeguarding service) in relation to allegations of abuse of Vulnerable Adults. One of the SWAMH SIG members, Sylvia Cahill (Principal Social Worker) has agreed to represent Social Work on a national committee which is reviewing the effectiveness of this policy. The committee has not yet met - at the time of writing this report.

On Friday April 8th the SIG met with Donal O'Malley (IASW President) – who was seeking feedback in relation to how the IASW might increase its membership.

The following is a summary of our feedback to Donal in relation to how the IASW might attract more social workers to become members:

- An **explicit** and **strategic** plan **for social workers nationally to access** the annual **€14,000 budget** (given to the IASW by the HSE) for **specialist training** that will enable social workers to provide evidence based interventions.
- That the IASW have an **effective** (i.e. paid – fulltime or halftime) **Public Relations Officer – who will represent the Social Work position** to the media – who will inform the public about the limitations placed on social workers due to limited resources – but also speak about structural inequalities (as a result of political decisions) that frustrate and impede the work of social workers – **but more importantly impact negatively on the lives of the people we are providing a service to.**
- As much as possible to hold IASW events outside of Dublin
- To support social workers in every service area in **drawing up a position paper** in relation to the Social Work role in that service area
- To support social workers in relation to adequate grade structures – that are **consistent** nationally in all service areas - which will provide for safe governance of social work practice, and the opportunity for effective professional development

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services SIG

Fiona Coyle & Eoin Barry

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health service (CAMHS) special interest group provides a national forum for social workers working in CAMHS or interested in this area of work. We meet and discuss issues of relevance, contribute to relevant national policy, facilitate CPD, and have representation on relevant national groups. The group normally meet 3 times per year. Our meetings are split into a business meeting and time given for CPD training. Alongside these national meetings, there is constant communication and liaison between the members of the committee. The committee responds to regular queries and opportunities for input on behalf of the wider group.

Since our last AGM on 2/02/15 the group met twice with a third meeting time given to a joint conference with our Social Work colleagues in adult mental health.

- 02/02/15 – SIG -St Patrick's Hospital, Dublin 8
- 16/04/15 –Joint conference - Harold's cross
- 28 /09/15- SIG- Lucena clinic, Rathgar.

Summary of activities and key issues addressed by the SIG

- The introduction and review of the National CAMHS SOP. In June The CAMHS Service Improvement group launched the SOP and this is due for review in July 2017. Concerns have been expressed around the process and lack of consultation afforded.
- The expansion of the Social Work discipline within CAMHS and the need for training and support for new to CAMHS Social Workers. The need for parity with multi-Disciplinary team colleagues particularly around the allocation of training budgets. This has become more pertinent for social work in light of registration.

- We have contributed to the MHR/CMHC presentation before members of the Oireachtas. Sarah Houston represents our sig at the Children's Mental Health Coalition.
- Principal Social Workers in CAMHS are now included in the National Social Work Managers Group and are regular attendees at their meetings.
- The issue of transferring files from CAMHS to AMHS - the implications for Data protection
- Communication with and support from IASW through meeting and emails we work to enhance communication between our professional body and social workers in CAMHS. This SIG is represented on the IASW council.
- Sustaining the CAMHS SIG and ensuring the groups relevance.
- CPD and Training: -
 - The Impact of Sexual Violence on young people, awareness, education, and opportunities.in this presentation Grainne Muldoon, Social Worker, CAMHS looked the issues associated with the impact of sexual violence on the mental health of young people. Particular consideration was given to the new challenges posed by social media. (02/02/15)
 - There was a joint conference between CAMHS and SWAMH. The conference looked as social work as a champion of lifespan mental health solutions. The speakers included the Minister Kathleen Lynch, Dr. Margo Wrigley, HSE National Clinical lead for Mental Health, Ms. Gloria Kirwan, Ass. Professor in social work, TCD. There were a number of workshops that looked at interagency working across AMHS and CAMHS, a particular intervention in child to parent violence and discussion on the barriers and enablers to social work delivering lifespan mental health solutions. (16/04/15)
 - Cliona Murphy, CPD officer, give a very comprehensive presentation on CPD. Which encouraged Social workers to reflect on all aspects of their learning. Cliona highlighted how best to document and present material being considered for CPD. (28/09/15)
 - Fiona Coyle, Senior Social worker led a mindfulness session.
 - Nicola Byrne, Principal Social Worker give an overview of the Standard Operating Procedures introduced nationally in June 2015. Nicola facilitated a discussion on the experiences and challenges of implementing the SOP which should be fully operational in all CAMHS.

Committee elected February 2015:

Nichol Byrne (Chairperson), Sonia Neiland (Secretary), Sharon Galligan, Bernadine Hanratty, Declan Coogan, Eoin Barry, Fiona Coyle, Mark James, Olivia Fagan, Paul Longmore, Sarah Houston, Sheila McKenna.

In September 2015 Nichol Byrne resigned as chairperson as she changed jobs and Sonia Neiland also resigned as Secretary as she was going on leave. Fiona Coyle and Olivia Fagan took on these respective roles for the remainder of the year.

I would like to thank the Committee members, for all their commitment, time and hard work over the past year. On behalf of the committee I would like to thank those who organised the venues and booked speakers and those who facilitated the clinical practice workshops at our meetings.

Please feel free to contact any member of the committee at any time with any queries about the work of the CAMHS SIG committee.

New Committee elected February 2016:

Eoin Barry (Chairperson), Olivia Fagan (Secretary) Sheila Mc Kenna, Titi Sokan, Fiona Coyle, Sarah Houston, Lorraine O Reilly, Claire Foley, Brid Griffin, Siobhan Kelly-Lynn Harney, Maria Gate, Sharon Galligan.

Child & Family SIG

Maria McGloughlin

Despite a successful conference in February 2015 and participants who expressed an interest in becoming involved with the Children and Families SIG, 2015-2016 has been a quiet year for our SIG. Despite this a submission was made on the Guardian ad Litem Bill. Since April 2016 we have been more active and have held a number of meetings. Maria McGloughlin has been elected as Chairperson, Joe McCarthy is the regional chairperson with responsibility for the

South and Aoife Bairead has been elected secretary. Maria attended the launch of Care Leavers Network with Donal O'Malley on the 23rd of May. The SIG is in the process of developing work plan but three items have been agreed for prioritisation, meeting with the Minister for Children, raising the issue of Senior Practitioner Posts with TUSLA and requesting feedback in respect of the ongoing development of the Case Management Tools. It is also planned that a conference will be held within the current working year.

Primary Care SIG

Barbara McDonagh

Chairperson: Barbara McDonough

Vice Chair: Mary McNutt

Secretary: Sylvia Melbourne

Training Officer: Patrice Reilly

Non-Executive Officers: Noreen O'Brien & Clare Lynch

Meetings:

Since the last AGM, the Primary Care Social Work Special Interest Group has met twice: November 2015 and February 2016. The next two SIG meetings are scheduled for June 2016 and November 2016. There was a CPD element at the November 2015 meeting which was a presentation by Clodagh O'Sullivan, CNS at St. Vincent's Hospital on Alcohol Misuse in Adults. A CPD element will also be incorporated into the June 2016 meeting. Donal O'Malley Chair of the IASW attended the February SIG meeting to present on the association's Strategic & Business Plan.

The purpose of the SIG Meetings is to provide members with an opportunity to discuss and respond to issues impacting on Social Work practice in Primary Care; share experiences and knowledge; and engage in CPD. The venue for SIG Meetings is changed for each meeting to afford Social Workers who cannot travel to attend meetings and have greater involvement.

The SIG Committee, as outlined above, has met three times since the last AGM: October 2015, January 2016, and April 2016. Further SIG Committee Meetings are scheduled for July and October 2016. A SIG Committee member has attended all IASW Council meetings and provided written reports on work undertaken since the current Committee was established.

Work undertaken by the Primary Care Social Work Special Interest Group during the 2015/2016 Committee Period:

Supporting the Development of Regional Groups

The Non-Executive Officers took the lead on supporting the development of regional groups and exploring the use of teleconference as a mechanism to participate in SIG Meetings. This piece of work is ongoing and progress will be reviewed in autumn 2016.

Follow up regarding the Primary Care Social Work Business Case

The Primary Care Social Work SIG completed a business case in April 2015 titled "Social Work in Primary Care Teams: The Added Value - A Business Case". The purpose of this document is to clearly explain the value social work brings to Primary Care and makes recommendations regarding an appropriate governance structure for Primary Care Social Work nationally. This document was sent to John Hennessy, HSE in 2015 and has been sent to him again in 2016 requesting that it be brought to the attention of the National Primary Care Operations Office for consideration.

Online Forum:

Continued use of the online forum set up on the HSE intranet for Primary Care Social Workers to discuss practice issues.

SIG Participation on IASW Working Groups:

The Primary Care Special Interest Group was represented by members on two working groups set up by the IASW – "Erosion of the Social Work role" and examining the impact of SAGE Advocacy Service on social work roles.

National Primary Care Social Work Documents:

We are reviewing all research that has contributed to our role document over the past 6 years in order to develop a practice document and a complimentary suite of documents which will be compiled of: an information leaflet, role document and practice document. A sub group of the SIG has been established to develop two national information leaflets for use by Primary Care Social Workers, one for Service Users and one for professionals. The leaflets have been forwarded to a newly established Principal Social Workers in Primary Care Group (HSE group) to have these leaflets approved as HSE leaflets, signed off by each CHO and printed by HSE print services.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy & Procedures

The SIG has raised issues with and provided feedback to the IASW regarding the new Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy, its implementation and impact on the delivery of Primary Care Social Work Services.

Weekly E-mail Communication with SIG Members:

Information e-mails from the IASW are collated and circulated to SIG Members on a weekly basis via the SIG Committee Secretary.

Delivery of an Annual Conference

The 2015 Primary Care Social Work Special Interest Group Annual Conference took place on 2nd October 2015. The title of the Conference was "Primary Care: The Added Value". The Conference had both academic speakers from International and Irish third level schools and past and present Primary Care Social Workers and was very well attended. The topics for the conference included: **Evidence Based Practice; Ethical Practice in Social Work; Social Work in a Healthy Ireland; Advocacy in Social Work; Safer Better Healthcare; and Intervening Briefly, Motivational interviewing.**

Future Plans:

- Continue to provide a supportive venue for Social Workers in Primary Care to: discuss and respond to issues impacting on Social Work practice in Primary Care; share experiences and knowledge; engage in CPD; promote an understanding of the role and practice of Social Work in Primary Care amongst all stakeholders; contribute to the development of Social Work in Primary Care in Ireland at macro and micro level.
- Encourage membership of the IASW.
- Review the Terms of Reference and working documents of the Primary Care Social Work SIG.
- Update the database of SIG Members during summer 2016.
- Hold a joint annual conference with SWID and SIGA SIGs in October 2016. Planning is underway and we are considering topics that we feel will be of interest to Social Workers across care groups. At present the topics being explored include working with carers who have an Intellectual Disability or Mental Health concern, thinking ahead in planning end of life care, safeguarding, working with Service Users from multi-cultural backgrounds, the Capacity Act in practice and self-care on MDTs.
- Hold an AGM in October 2016.
- Publish a paper regarding the development of the Primary Care Social Work Service, 2001 – 2016.

Older Persons SIG

Bernadette Casey

The past year was a very busy and eventful period for SIGA members.

John Brennan stepped down as chair at the AGM in 2015. SIGA members thanked him for all his time, hard work and support over the years, and wished him the very best in his retirement and every success in his future. John continued his support of SIGA throughout the year. For example, he attended many SIGA meetings and continued to represent SIGA on the NCPOP Working Group. As a member of the NCPOP, he is chair of a new interest group of the Working Group composed of health and social care professionals and pharmacy representatives. The group is known as the Inter-Professional Interest Group, NCPOP. The group aims to collaborate on issues of concern to members; raise the knowledge and understanding of each other's roles and promote inter-professional working. John has also engaged in a joint research project with Dr. Sarah Donnelly on the perspectives of social workers on the preferences for older persons about care services and older persons' involvement in decision-making about their care. This project was

discussed at a SIGA meeting with Age Action Ireland in early 2015. Sarah Donnelly led on this project with the support of her colleagues in the UCD School. It was a collaboration involving SIGA, UCD, Marita O'Brien from Age Action Ireland and Emer Begley, from the Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI). The final report on this project was launched this year.

In 2015, Bernadette Casey became Chair of SIGA and Anette O'Callaghan was Secretary. A new SIGA Executive Committee was then established in 2015 that focused on three agreed priority areas for 2015 to 2016. These included (i) Promoting the role of professional social work advocacy; (ii) Communication; and (iii) Education, including a new 'Tag a Talk' initiative that was developed over the past year to promote CPD opportunities for social workers, to increase attendance and participation at SIGA meetings, and to educate and engage more social workers nationally on issues relating to social work and older people.

The Executive Committee Officers organised a national conference in 2016, titled '**Issues affecting the future of the social work role in the field of ageing**: the practical application of social work advocacy, policy and adopting a rights based approach'. The conference topics included: End of Life Directives by Professor Des O'Neill, Consultant Geriatrician; Practical application of the Vulnerable Persons at Risk Policy by Siobhan Nunn, Principal Social Worker, Safeguarding Protection Team, Service for Safeguarding of Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse; Social work advocacy and a rights-based approach by Dr. Sarah Donnelly, Social Work Lecturer, UCD; and Practical application of the principles and guidelines of the Decision-making (Capacity) Act by Mary Condell, Solicitor. The conference was booked out and the feedback was extremely positive.

SIGA meetings were held every second month in the Primary Care Centre, Pearse Street, Mark's Lane, Dublin 2. Thanks to Cathy Carrie and HSE for the facilities. Attendance at the SIGA meetings throughout the year was consistently good, particularly when the 'Tag a Talk' presentations were given by expert outside speakers. The topics were (i) Dementia by Matt Gibb, Social Worker and Acting Director of the Dementia Services Information and Development Centre; (ii) CORU registration and CPD process, by Michelle Byrne, Primary Care Social Worker and Committee Member of the IASW Newly Qualified Social Workers SIG; and (iii) Alcohol use and misuse and the Impact on the Health and Wellbeing of the Older Person, by Clodagh O'Sullivan, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Addiction and Mental Health, St Vincent's Hospital. Thanks to all the speakers for such excellent presentations and a big thank you to Anette, SIGA Secretary, who was very proactive in organising the talks throughout the year.

SAGE were invited to give a brief presentation on their independent volunteer advocacy service and published quality and safety standards document. A good discussion followed with a particular focus on professional social work ethics, roles and responsibility of advocates, how SAGE advocates can work with professional social workers across the sector for older people, clarifying boundaries, the line of accountability and code of ethics for volunteer advocates when working with older people and, in particular with social work clients. A member of the SIGA Executive Committee continues to represent SIGA on the IASW cross-SIG working group on responding to the impact of the rolling out of volunteer independent advocates on our profession nationally.

SIGA Executive Committee members also volunteered their time to engage in activities that involved professional advocacy for change in relation to social work with older people, their family members and care-givers across the sector. This involved written correspondence, participation in sub working groups and submissions to campaigns for policy change, such as, developments in delivery of Home Care Packages, Nursing Home Support Scheme, the rolling out of independent voluntary advocacy free service, the establishment of the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Service and the working group for the promotion and protection of the future professional social work role to prevent the further erosion of our profession. SIGA members have suggested obtaining information on government policy, business, funding and strategic plan for the future employment of social workers. It was also noted that national advocacy organisations for older people have been silent on the lack of access to professional social work support for older people across Ireland.

Aisling Coffey, member of the board of directors, IASW, attended SIGA and gave an excellent brief on the future of the IASW, and sought feedback and suggestions from SIGA members on developing the Association's future strategy and optimising support for its members.

Anette O'Callaghan, SIGA Secretary, attended a meeting with Minister Kathleen Lynch in June 2015 on issues relating to geographic inconsistencies and inequality of access to services for older people; interim and residential care and cost; HIQA standards on single room and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults, and impact on bed availability; housing facilities with no real option between LTC and independent living.

Matt Gibb is currently corresponding with SIGA on the lack of a national strategic approach to the construction of appropriate housing for older people who wish to downsize from larger properties. SIGA will place this on its agenda to advocate for the placing of this issue on the public policy agenda in the future.

A member of the SIGA Executive Committee is also representing the group on issues relating to the increasing erosion of the professional social work role. This is a work in progress in conjunction with the IASW.

Members of SIGA expressed concerns with the overall lack of consultation with our profession on the reconfiguring of the senior case workers, Service for the Protection of Older People into the Service for Safeguarding of Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse, in particular, for older people at risk of abuse in their community. The focus of this new service appears to be predominantly on service settings across the sectors for older people, and people with disability, aged from 18 years upwards. Another concern relating to this new service is that it does not include vulnerable adults residing in private residential care settings who are at risk of abuse. This is seen as a serious inequality and human rights concern and needs to be addressed as a priority for the coming year.

Some events relating to ageing and older people were regrettably missed mainly due to the demand exceeding the availability of SIGA volunteers to attend. For example, the Genio Annual Dementia Conference in December 2015; the DSIDC's Annual Conference in November 2015 on Education Generation; and events run by the Gerontology Society of Ireland. The enormous amount of voluntary work that was carried out by individuals on behalf of SIGA was much appreciated. On behalf of SIGA members, I wish to thank the Executive Committee and volunteer members of the three subgroups, for their time and hard work throughout the year.

SIGA members are very keen to continue to engage in events and activities that help to support and promote our profession, and social justice issues for older people. It was agreed that the support by principal social workers, and line managers, is paramount in order to enable SIGA members to participate and engage with these issues, and the challenges that social workers face in the future.

Probation SIG

Saragh McGarrigle

The Probation Special Interest Group (SIG) held four meetings in the last year, which provided as forum for Probation Officers to discuss areas of common interest and provide feedback to the IASW. The SIG was represented at the IASW quarterly Council meetings, thus contributing to the work of the IASW.

On the 15th October 2015 the SIG hosted a talk by Gareth Noble, solicitor, about victims of human trafficking. Gareth outlined a recent High Court case he was involved in where a possible victim of human trafficking was being prosecuted for criminal offences. Included in his presentation was information about assessment for indicators to identify victims of human trafficking.

A representative of the SIG continues to attend the Probation Service working group on Continuous Professional Development. Over the year the Probation SIG has increased, both in terms of attendance at the SIG meetings and the mailing list of interested Probation officers. The SIG's AGM will take place on 30th June 2016. The SIG executive wishes to thank the Probation Service management for ongoing support of the SIG, particularly with regard use of rooms for both SIG meetings and events. We also thank Danielle, IASW office manager and board of IASW for their support throughout the year.

Disability SIG

Emer Haastrup

In October 2015 SWID hosted its annual Conference in the Aisling hotel, Dublin. The topics were current and diverse and included presentations on Case Load Management and Progressing Disability for Children's Services. There was much debate and some onward goals and actions that arose from the day. The feedback from evaluation forms collated by the IASW were very positive and all felt there was learning from the generated discussion. We were also delighted to note that we had our highest level of participation to date with over 120 conference delegates in attendance on the day.

SWID is currently working on its conference for 2016 with a new and exciting option being explored. SWID are currently in discussions with PCCC and SIGA around the option of hosting a joint Conference between the three SIGS. Details to follow.

In 2016 following much anticipation the new Capacity legislation was signed into law, however this has as yet to be enacted. There has been a general consensus among SWID members that the Bill contains much that needs clarity as well as a recognition that there is an immediate need for training for social workers in this area.

The working group on "The Erosion of the Social Work Role" has had its first meeting on the 22nd February 2016. Again there was agreement that it appeared that services across the areas were either diluting social work roles, confusing social work/social care work roles, not replacing social workers or indeed other disciplines were engaging in what are social work tasks. This working group is active and our Chair Person Claire Convery will feedback to the committee as the issues are addressed and actions are developed.

SWID welcomes the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse, New National Policy and is fully on board with the need to protect Vulnerable Adults. However, it has raised a number of concerns around the thresholds, the difficulty with zero tolerance (more reported concerns). SWID presented feedback to the IASW council raising their concerns with the New Policy.

SWID continues to highlight the difficulties with Progressing Disability particularly around supervision of staff, career pathways, the current DLP structures and the lack of any clear policy and governance within the NDT teams in Kildare. On a more positive note, SWID welcomed Frank Brown of IASW to our Committee meeting on the 15th April. There was active debate about how IASW interfaces with our SIG, a Q & A around how IASW could be more effective in working for its members and options on how to bring issues forward for discussion at IASW Council level.

Sibshops – SWID are delighted to announce that Don Myers, the founder of Sibshops will be offering training to social workers. Although a date has yet to be confirmed it looks likely that this will take place early in 2016.

SWID are also happy to announce that social workers in the area of Neurology will be joining forces with us. We welcome them on board and look forward to engaging with them around issues pertaining to their area of expertise. SWID is in the lucky position to have a very active and vibrant team of committee members. We receive and respond to many queries in the field of disability and welcome IASW looking to our committee and its members for requests to comment on topical items that arise in the area of disability throughout the year. We also welcome new members and invite them to join the committee to debate particular items of interest or to participate in the longer term.

Practitioner Research Group

Sarah Donnelly

Regional SIG Groups

Dublin and Cork Practitioner Research SIG groups continue to meet monthly with a small but committed group of members. Members are involved in research at various stages and our SIG tries to encourage members at all stages of the research process including conceptualisation, research design and supporting members to present, write and publish. Galway SIG is more in the starting, developmental phase. They meet less frequently but are developing into a group with statutory, volunteer and academic sectors represented. They also have members that are in advanced stages of writing research articles.

An example of development in Social Work Research

Significant developments are taking place within social work research including; TUSLA social work departments in Galway and Donegal are working in conjunction with the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at NUIG on a study of Outcomes for Permanence and Stability for Children in Care. This is a joint piece of research which can only be undertaken with the active cooperation of the social work departments in each area. As the first large study of its kind in Ireland it will gather information which will inform us about what works best in foster care.

Our Practitioner Research SIG hosted its first National Conference:

'Translating Practice Wisdom to Research -Building Social Work Research Capacity' on Friday 22nd April in Brookfield Health Sciences Complex, UCC.

Keynote Speaker was Elaine Sharland, Professor of Social Work Research, University of Sussex and Louie Maguire, Service User Researcher. The conference was well attended with approximately 60 people present. A parallel workshop was held in the afternoon where 18 practitioner researchers presented papers under the following themes:

- *Different stages of research/process*
- *Ethics*
- *Diverse/Innovative Methodologies*
- *Practitioner Research informing Policy and/or Practice*
- *Participatory/Service User Involvement in Research*
- *Social Work Research with other disciplines*

Research Symposium at IASW National Conference 2016

The Practitioner Research SIG are also helping to host a research symposium for the IASW National Conference on 17th June which will consist of oral and poster presentations.

Special Edition of Irish Social Worker

The Summer edition of the Irish Social Worker will be a special Practitioner Researcher edition and Sarah Donnelly will act as guest editor. Sarah in conjunction with Carmel Halton, UCC will also set up peer support writing groups to help support people through the writing process to publication.

Promoting and Encouraging Social Work Research at Conferences

Our SIG groups are also actively encouraging and supporting members to submit abstracts to the annual HSE HSCP Research Conference in November 2016 in order to promote and heighten the profile of social work research in Ireland and amongst other health and social care professionals.

Linkages are also being made with international practitioner research networks in order to promote and encourage international social work research collaborations.

Newly Qualified Social Workers

Claire Costello

Committee and Group Members:

Chairperson: Claire Costello,

Secretary: Karen Quinn,

Treasurer: Michelle Byrne,

Committee Members: Josephine Kelly, Leanne Clancy, Alan McHugh, Jonathan Horgan

Group facilitators: rotated on a monthly basis

Overview of the Special Interest Group:

The IASW Newly Qualified Social Worker Group invites Social Workers who are in their first three years in their first job in Social Work, as well as undergraduate and post-graduate student Social Workers to engage in peer consultation, as a support for the transition from college to employment.

Key Benefits of this Special Interest Group:

- Continuous Professional Development
- Seek support from other Newly Qualified Social Workers
- Discussion of the issues affecting Newly Qualified Social Workers

Peer Consultation

The NQSW SIG has met once monthly this year since October 2015, to hold peer consultation meetings. The structure of the meetings has remained the same as in previous years: a discussion of an article and a discussion of a case study. The topics of the articles have included supervision for newly qualified social workers, self-care, involuntary clients and self-determination and solving ethical dilemmas. Through discussion of case studied, members of the group have found it interesting to learn from each other about the types of work we engage in and the issues that arise in practice, in the different sectors of Social Work.

There was a large attendance at the introductory evening at the beginning of the year, including an increase in the number of 3rd and 4th year Degree Students and Masters Students attending the group. The group's attendance decreased, however, following the first few sessions. Approximately eight social workers consistently attended the peer consultation throughout the year. The SIG will be holding another information evening in May this year, to encourage a greater attendance at the monthly peer consultation.

Committee Meetings

Committee Meetings are held four times each year to discuss issues arising for Newly Qualified Social Workers, to plan the peer consultation sessions and to discuss the layout for the next Conference. At present, there are eight committee members, ranging in their first year of employment in Social Work to their third year in employment.

Annual Conference and AGM, March 2016

The theme of this year's conference was "Essential Learning for Social Workers." Three important areas of practice comprised the presentations for the day, including continuous professional development, reflective practice and self-care. The speakers included:

- Ms. Cliona Murphy, Professional Development Coordinator, IASW
- Ms. Erna O'Connor, Director of the Masters in Social Work Programme and Assistant Professor in Social Work and Fieldwork Coordinator, Trinity College Dublin
- Ms. Bernadette Casey, Principal Social Worker in Primary Care

Any Newly Qualified Social Workers and Students are welcome to attend and encouraged to join this Special Interest Group.

Associate Group; the Irish Social Worker Journal

Frank Browne

Members of the Journal Committee: Chair Frank Browne (and interim editor)
Steven Peet, Majella Hickey and Susan Commins

The Journal Committee have continued to work effectively throughout the past year. Steven Peet, Majella Hickey and Susan Commins joined the committee during the year and I would like to thank Gloria Kirwan and Saragh McGarrigle who stepped down from the committee for all their hard work and support.

1. Two journals have been published to date. The autumn 2015 journal had a mental health theme and the recently published spring journal was generic in content. Both journals have been received favorably and I think this is to the credit of all those who have spent many hours fine tuning their articles. The articles written to date have been by social work academics, practicing social workers and those from other professional backgrounds. I would like to thank all the members of the Journal Committee Steven, Majella and Susan, who have assisted me in reviewing the articles submitted in a timely manner and in offering constructive feedback to the authors. While the journal is not formally a peer reviewed journal, each article is reviewed by at least two readers.

2. The Journal Committee have updated the author guidelines which the committee believes will assist writers in submitting an article for publication. The guidelines set a standard in terms of the required structure and layout of articles, and this will facilitate more easily articles being made available via Lenus, the HSE open access repository for Irish health publications.
3. Sarah Donnelly who is Chair of the Practitioner Research Group has kindly agreed to be the guest editor for the summer journal 2016
4. I have in addition to being Chair of the journal committee also taken on the role of the interim editor of the journal until an editor is successfully recruited. IASW plans to advertise again for the position of editor of the journal later in the year. The new editor will join the committee as the fifth member

Finally, I would like to encourage all members of the IASW to consider submitting an article for publication. The Journal Committee welcomes both research based articles and also articles with a reflective practice focus. The Journal Committee will offer support and guidance as required. All articles published in the Irish Social Worker Journal are now available after six months, (with the author's permission) to Lenus the HSE open access repository for Irish health publications. This facilitates authors to disseminate their work to a much wider audience both in Ireland and internationally.

Associate Group; International Affairs Committee

John Brennan

Members: Kerry Cuskelly, Anna Deneher, Ineke Durville, Donal O'Malley, Maria Swan and John Brennan (Chairperson)

2018 Global Social Work and Social Development Conference: 'Environmental Sustainability and Community Development':

During the year, the IAC members were engaged with partners from UCD, TCD, UCC, NUIG and the European Anti-Poverty Network in negotiating the bid for this conference to be held in 2018. The Local Organising Committee (LOC) met the three global organisations, IFSW IASSW and ICSW in Dublin in January 2016. The LOC also met representatives from the Korean 2016 global conference organising committee.

It is hoped to finalise the formal agreement this Summer.

We aim to attract up to 2000 delegates from across the globe, so once this phase is complete, we will be winding up the planning activities and will be calling on interested members to get involved in this exciting project.

The next global social work and social development conference will be held in Seoul, Korea in late July 2016. John Brennan and Robin Hanan (EAPN) will attend this conference to promote the 2018 global social work and social policy conference in Dublin and give formal reports to the global organisations.

Ineke Durville and John Brennan met Carolyn Ewart, the Professional Officer with the Northern Ireland Association of Social Work (NIASW), a number of times during the year to discuss the involvement of NIASW in the 2018 conference.

IFSW Meeting in Athens on affects of austerity

Maria Swan from the International Committee attended a successful two-day solidarity symposium in Athens in January. This was organised by the IFSW and involved the seven European countries most affected by austerity. Spanish colleagues are leading a follow-up project.

IFSW World Social Work Day 2016

WSWD was celebrated on the 15.02.2016. A number of successful events were held across the country, including in Cork, Dublin, Galway and Waterford. All SIGs were invited to get involved. In Dublin, Kerry Cuskelly and Maria Swan led the IASW and the Schools of Social Work in TCD and UCD in a joint 'café' style event in the Children's Research Centre, TCD.

USA Student Visit

John Brennan met 20 social work students from Arizona in February 2016 while they are on a trip to Ireland.

IFSW Meetings

IFSW-European Delegate Meeting 2015: Kerry Cuskelly, Maria Swan and John Brennan attended this meeting and conference held in Edinburgh in September. Kerry and John presented papers at the conference.

Of particular concern to delegates in Edinburgh was the plight of refugees from Syria and other strife torn countries. Some delegates are working directly with those arriving in Germany and Austria and they reported on the awful situation these people find themselves in. The IFSW-E issued a statement calling on the EU to show leadership and compassion.

IFSW-Europe Delegate Meeting 2016: Anna Deneher and John Brennan attended this two-day meeting in Zagreb, Croatia, in May. A comprehensive work programme for 2016-17 was agreed. More anon.

IFSW Global Meeting: John Brennan will attend this bi-annual meeting to be held in Seoul, South Korea in late June this year.

IFSW-Europe Delegate Meeting 2017: The next meeting will be held in Reykjavik, Iceland in May 2017.

Also, the IFSW European Regional Conference will be held after this meeting. We have a number of abstracts submitted from IASW members.

EU Social Platform (SP):

The SP continues to pursue a variety of social policy issues at EU level. This activity generates a good deal of documentation on issues of interest to social work – human rights, inclusion, equality, poverty, amongst others. IFSW-Europe participates in the preparation of position papers, attends meetings in Brussels, etc. There is a lot of work in this effort, so if anyone would be interested in being involved, please let me know.

The IAC contributed to work on developing IFSW strategies/policy on the TTIP negotiations. During the year, the IFSW issued a statement calling on national governments to protect public services by excluding them completely from these treaties. The situation is complicated by the complexity of public services across Europe today where the likes of the HSE pays private-for-profit agencies to provide services as well as directly providing them.

ENS4Care Project: The initial phase of this EU funded ICT project undertaken jointly by the European Federation of Nurses and the IFSW-E was completed in December 2015. It is hoped to develop a further project, as part of the Horizon 2020, in the area of integrated health and social care.

IAC Webpage on the IASW Website

Follow events and updates on our work on our webpage.

Finally, many thanks to Danielle and Clíona in the IASW office for all of their support to the committee during the year.

Affiliated Group; Head Medical Social Workers Group

Amanda Casey

Chairperson: Amanda Casey, HMSW Mater Hospital

Vice Chairperson: Carol de Wilde, HMSW St Colmcilles Hospital

Secretary: Anne O'Loughlin, HMSW, National Rehabilitation Hospital

The HMSW forum is an affiliated group of the IASW made up of HMSWs from hospitals across Ireland. Acute, post-acute, maternity, children's and rehabilitation hospitals are represented as well as hospices and private hospitals. A formal decision was made by the group to extend membership to senior MSWs either in stand-alone posts or who have management responsibilities in the absence of a head/principal post. The group has membership from over 34

healthcare institutions and meets on a bi monthly basis to discuss both operational and strategic issues of relevance to our practice as medical social workers.

September 2015 saw a rotation of the chair and vice chairperson roles for a period of 2 years.

Summary of Activity 2015-2016

- Ongoing engagement with Teresa Crawford re supervision training using Morrison model. Course currently running with a second scheduled for later this year with the aim that all staff engaged in professional supervision should have access to the training where possible.
- Ongoing engagement with HSE and Tusla re roll out of Children First. Attendance by majority HMSWs at DLP foundation and follow up training. Concerns re roll out of SOP for reporting child protection concerns communicated with Children First Lead and Tusla Children First Information and Advice section highlighting issues where no social work service available and inconsistency with access to training. The HMSW group is also represented at the Children First Acute Hospital Division Committee and has been actively influencing the development of policy in this area.
- Engagement with National Safeguarding Office regarding implementation of Vulnerable Adults legislation. Highlighted lack of consistency between healthcare providers in acute, social care and HSE hospitals in accessing training and implementation of the policy. We have formally requested representation at each of the CHO local implementation committees to ensure standardised approaches across all health providers.
- Engagement with other SIGs relating to common issues of concern and participation in groups relating to the challenges for social workers in maintaining their role in a variety of settings.
- Ongoing engagement with the universities providing social work training regarding placements, healthcare related teaching modules, preparation for interview and professional life. The HMSW group is keen to support and deliver practitioner training where needed for social work undergraduate and post graduate students.
- We have been actively seeking participation on national working and steering groups via the PBAI and will continue to make strategic plans for the identification of appropriate representatives for these groups.
- The HMSW group has made submissions to a number of working groups on the National Cancer Strategy Group, Neuro Rehabilitation strategy, Bereavement standards following pregnancy loss and perinatal death, Better Safer Maternity Standards, Development Framework for Palliative care and feedback re Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy. We have also been involved with reviewing for the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee on Clinical Handover standards of care
- We had a presentation from CORUs CPD manager Orla Barry in November 2015 regarding CPD requirements and the responsibilities of managers to support staff in this regard.

Plan for 2016-2017

- Presentation by representative from Department of Social Protection at July HMSW meeting re financial abuse and older persons and how the Department can support us in our work with vulnerable older persons in the hospitals
- Ongoing engagement with Acute Hospitals Division at hospital group level re roll out of children first to ensure MSW representation on all local implementation committees
- Liaison with colleges re: training and research opportunities.
- Bi annual conference in Sept 2016 – themes to include strategic and workforce planning, risk assessments and self-care
- We plan to develop submissions on issues of importance such as Long Term Care, Home Care Packages, Services for people under 65, Children's services and health issues for patients experiencing homelessness. These can then be directed via the IASW to the new government ministers and the Chairs of the Oireachtas Committees seeking engagement and opportunities to contribute to policy development.

Affiliated Group; Council of Irish Adoption Agencies (CIAA)

Cathal Clifford & Eileen Conway

No report for 2015/2016 term.