

**2013-  
2014**

**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

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IASW

## Board & Council Members 2013 - 2014

### List of Board Members:

Chair - Ineke Durville	Vice Chair - Frank Browne
Treasurer - Donal O Malley	James Myers
Secretary – Billie Anne Johnston	Ita Long
Kerry Cuskelly	Terry Bradshaw
Joe McCarthy	

### Special Interest, Affiliate & Associate Group Representatives:

Adoption (CIAA)	Helena Boyd
Ageing (SIGA)	John Brennan
Children & Families	Barry Higgins
Child/Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS)	Declan Coogan
IASW Journal Editor	Monica Egan & Patricia Walsh
Social Workers in Disability (SWID)	Lorraine Phillips
Head Medical Social Workers	Sheila McCrory
Adult Mental Health (SWAMH)	Frank Browne
Primary Care	Patrice Reilly
Retired Members	Pat Waldron
Foster Care	James Myers
New Social Workers	Conor Boksberger
Social Workers in Probation	David Williamson
International Committee	John Brennan
Southern Region	Carol Buckley-Lyons/Terry Bradshaw

# **Board Reports**

## **Chair Report**

Ineke Durville

I am pleased to present the annual report of the Irish Association of Social Workers, which outlines the various activities of the Board of the IASW and the special interest groups during the year. This last year has been an eventful year. Danielle, our office manager went on a year's career break in February and handed over to Adrienne, who had joined us to manage the office for the year during the time of her break. Adrienne was a very pleasant person to work with and she dealt very well with the various issues that come to the attention of the IASW on a daily basis and had good relationships with the social work members. Unfortunately, she wasn't able to stay till the end of her contract and we were fortunate to find Betty Creedon, who continued to manage the administration very well until the time that Danielle returned at the beginning of 2014.

### **Organisational Structure**

The AGM of 2013 was the first annual general meeting of the IASW that was held under the new legal status of the Association as a limited company by Guarantee. There had been a delay with the closure of the original accounts by the Bank and so, on the advice of the Board's auditors, the accounts were audited over a fourteen month period, i.e. from January 2012 to the end of February 2013. This means that the accounts that are audited for this year's account cover the period from 1<sup>st</sup> March till 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

### **Registration**

May 31<sup>st</sup> 2014 will officially end the two year grandfathering period that has allowed existing social workers to apply for registration to the Health and Social Care Professionals Council (CORU). The new registration year will start from June 1<sup>st</sup> 2014. This process has now have started the registration year for all registered social workers, even though some social workers unfortunately may only have received their recognition very recently, but as the registration year runs till the 31<sup>st</sup> May each year, there will be an ongoing requirement to register each year by that date.

CORU will need to enact the outstanding bye-law that outlines the social work Continuous Development Policy (CPD) schedule and introduce a schedule in relation to the fitness to practice regulations.

The generic CPD Framework for all professional Bodies that are due to registered was finalised during 2013 and a draft social work CPD framework should be available for review and comment in the next few month and CORU aims to have the fitness to practice details available at the end of 2014.

### **Professional Bodies Alliance**

Over the last few years, the IASW has had regular meetings with the other professional bodies that are due to be registered by CORU and as it was regarded by all professional bodies that having a joint voice was a very valuable support and following lengthy discussion with all the Professional Bodies, the Professional Bodies Alliance of Ireland (PBAI) was formed in April 2013. The PBAI will only deal with issues that are common to all professions and with prior agreement of all membership bodies. Each professional organisation is free to continue to pursue their issues as before.

### **Special Interest Groups**

Membership numbers remained at the same high level this year, which continuous to create a demand on all aspects of the Association. The special interest groups (SIGs) are continuing to be a very valuable link with the wider membership and provide a forum for social workers practicing in that area of specialism to share experiences and raise issues. A number of SIGs have held very successful conferences and seminars and the feedback from these events has been very positive. The contribution of the SIGs has been very valuable for the workings of the Association and the executive would like to thank them for their contribution and their hard work.

### **Social work journal**

Monica Egan continued in her role as editor for the first half of 2013 and ensured that the journal continued to be of a very standard. Unfortunately, during the year, Monica resigned from her role as editor of the journal, which she held

from 2006 till 2013. The journal was invariable of a very high standard and we will all miss her input and her different and very valued contributions are recognised by all. See also the appreciation on Page 6 of this report.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I would like to thank all the members of our Board. Frank Browne; vice Chair, Billie Anne Johnston; Honorary Secretary; Donal O'Malley, Treasurer and the other Board members: Kerry Cuskelly, Terry Bradshaw, Joe McCarthy as well as the three members that resigned from the Board during the year due to other commitments: Ita Long; Declan Carey and James Myers, for their hard work and support during the year.

In addition to the above, I would like to thank Cliona Murphy, CPD Officer, for all her contributions to the organisation. She organised a large number of training events, both in Dublin as well as in different locations around the country and coordinated the response to proposed legal changes of which there were many this year. Eoin Barry continued in his role as our Facebook and Twitter moderator. The Facebook page provides a useful forum for discussion and sharing of information. Eoin is providing a very important service and I would like to thank him for that very valuable contribution; the executive greatly appreciates his role.

The HSE has been going through major changes during the last year. The Children and Families Services have moved into a separate Government Department and the management structures in the other parts of the HSE are in a process of change. It is still difficult to gauge what effect the changes in structures for all service users will have on our client groups and whether this will affect the working conditions and whether the newly registered social work practitioners will be able to practice within the code of conduct and ethics as required by CORU. It will be important that we as the IASW are informed of problems so that we are able to respond to these changes with the appropriate information and with a strong and cohesive voice.

## **Company Secretary & Membership Officer Report**

Billie Anne Johnston

### **Company Hon Secretary**

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 Secretary works closely along with the Office Manager and Company Chair to register and communicate with Shareholders, to ensure that dividends are paid and to maintain company records, such as lists of directors and shareholders, and annual accounts.

### **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
- Update membership records
- Act as Company Secretary

A number of routine tasks have also been completed with the assistance of the Office Manager including dealing with routine queries, and updating membership

At present we have 855 members, 345 members did not renew their membership in 2014, however, we recruited 95 new members have joined association so far in 2014.

The role of honorary secretary within the IASW work load is easily manageable due to the hard work of the IASW staff, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all IASW staff for their support in the last year.

### **Treasurer**

Dónal O'Malley

The End of Year for 2013 will be presented and adopted at the AGM on May 16, 2014.

### **Office Report**

Danielle McGoldrick

January'13 – November' 13 saw Adrienne Ward take over the role as Office Manager, in November, Adrienne resigned. Adrienne was replaced by Betty Creedon. Adrienne and Betty did a wonderful job in holding the fort here in IASW during my absence. 2013 was an extremely busy year for the association, and some of the tasks undertaken by the Office Managers included:

- Moving Membership Payments to an online web based payment system
- Moving Event Bookings to an online web based payment system
- Preparing the Financial Reports in accordance with the CRO and Revenue
- Assisting the CPD Officer in rolling out CPD Events
- Providing Support to the Chair and the Board

It has been an eventful but enjoyable few months for me since I have returned from sabbatical, and I would like to thank Adrienne, Betty and all of the Board, particularly Ineke for her patience and time over the last few months.

### **The Irish Social Worker Journal**

#### **An Appreciation of Monica Egan, Retiring Editor of the Irish Social Worker**

Frank Browne

On behalf of all IASW members, the IASW Board would like to express our appreciation to Monica Egan for her most valuable role as Editor of The Irish Social Worker since 2006. For those of us who have submitted an article for the Journal, we can testify to the sensitive and judicious advice we have received from Monica, which has added to the quality of our article. While it may have taken us hours and days to get our article right, the reality is that Monica has taken even longer to review all articles and prepare the Journal for its eventual printing. Monica has welcomed articles from the wise and experienced to the young and enthusiastic and this has culminated in a Journal that has something for all members. While the Journal is not a peer reviewed Journal, it has become a launch pad for many an aspiring academic. Feedback from members to date is that the Journal is one of the most tangible benefits of being a member and it is welcomed both as a Journal specifically for social workers and as an Irish Journal.

We are all too aware that as President of the IASW and later Editor of the Irish Social Worker, Monica is a hard act to follow. On your behalf we thank Monica, and we wish her well as she relaxes now, primarily as a reader of the Journal and we will take her advice on board in terms ensuring the future legacy of the Journal.

### **The Irish Social Worker Journal**

Monica Egan

I have edited The Irish Social Worker since 2006 and the time has come for me to hand over to others. The profession is now a registered profession and I think it is only right that registered social workers now take up the baton. A registered profession is quite different to an unregistered one. Different issues, different challenges will arise. The Irish Social Worker going forward should and will reflect that changing world. It should therefore be edited by those who are involved with and fully understand that changing world. As I am no longer working in that world and indeed have been lucky enough to get the opportunity to change to another sphere of work, it is only fair that those who are and will be working as registered social workers take over from here. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the

contributors for their articles and book reviews. I have enjoyed reading people's contributions and have enjoyed the email correspondence I have had with so many of you. I would like to thank the staff in the office and the printers who bore with last minute deadlines and indeed broken deadlines.

I would like to thank the Executive of IASW for all their support over the years not only as Editor of The Irish Social Worker but also during my time as President of the Association. It is my hope for both The Irish Social Worker and the IASW that they both grow in strength as the profession moves into new and exciting times.

## CPD Officer Report

Cliona Murphy

Since the last AGM

- A total of 1,292 CPD places have been provided through a range of conferences, training and workshops
- Of the places provided, 994 places were availed of by social workers as well as by a number of other disciplines including psychiatry and social care
- 29 events were delivered nationwide with the majority in Dublin (more than half of the membership is Dublin-based)
  - Dublin (18 events)
  - Sligo (4)
  - Galway (3)
  - Waterford (2)
  - Cork (2)

In addition to the **events** outlined above, **support** was provided to members to run CPD events themselves. This support took the form of financial and administrative support including promotion of events through e-mail, Facebook and [www.iasw.ie](http://www.iasw.ie).

**Promotion of the work and profile of the Association** was progressed by populating the website 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. Supports for social workers were developed through the expansion of the *reports* and *policy and legislation* sections of the website. In addition, social work is currently the featured profession on the Health and Social Care Professionals Hub of HSEland.

**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. These were:

- Framework for the Continuing Professional Development: Standard and Requirements (CORU);
- Draft Return to Practice Bye-Law 2013 (CORU);
- CORU's draft Corporate Strategy 2013 – 2016;
- Assisted (Decision-Making) Capacity Bill 2013.

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 [www.iasw.ie](http://www.iasw.ie)

During the past year social work has become a protected title with registration a statutory requirement for those using the title of social worker. In response to this, 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 in Cork, Limerick, Galway and Dublin. 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 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. In consideration of the imminent launch of the consultation on the Social Work

Registration Board's *Framework for the Continuing Professional Development: Standard and Requirements* document for social work and the start of the CPD cycle later this year, it is envisaged that seeking and representing the views of the membership on this issue and the provision of information, advice and support will be key tasks over the next year. **Building co-operation and alliances** with CPD officers in other Health and Social Care Professions led to the co-ordination and delivery of a multi-disciplinary conference on CPD attended by 90 participants in March 2014. The network has since submitted two joint funding proposals to run a second conference and a full-day training event. The network meets regularly to address joint learning needs.

## Special Interest, Affiliate & Associate Group Reports

### Social Workers in Foster Care

Cahal McHale

Chairperson: Cahal McHale (Donegal)  
Secretary: Colette Toland (Dublin)  
Treasurer: Marie Morris (Mayo)

Committee Membership: Valerie O'Brien, Dublin; Nora Weafer, Dublin; Triona Fitzpatrick, Laois; James Myers, Dublin; Anna Gill, Mayo; Treasa Loftus, Dublin; Karen Hope, Mayo; Agnes Feely, Limerick; Mary Flanagan, Roscommon; Helen Gogarty, Donegal; Maris McCormack, Dublin; Michelle McKernan, Sligo; Aileen Vail, Donegal; Sharon Doherty, Sligo; Joan Boland, Athlone.

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

**SWIFC held its AGM on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2013 following a very successful and informative Conference on "The Irish Care System and Adoption". This Conference looked at the Implications for Social Work Practice in the light of the Children's Rights Referendum and featured presentations from Dr Valerie O'Brien, Mr Cahal McHale and Dr Simone McCaughren. These presentations are available under the SWIFC tab on the IASW website**

The AGM provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on some of the many challenges facing social work in general and foster care in particular. The meeting acknowledged the support of the IASW staff in facilitating the arrangements for the conference / AGM and the work of SWIFC.

In view of the continued restrictions on support from HSE for training and travel it had not been possible to hold any face-to-face committee meetings for SWIFC during the last year. This has severely limited the amount of activity the group would otherwise have wished to pursue. However, Teleconferences have continued on a two monthly basis and during the year we have had participation from around half of the committee members in this forum.

The areas explored within the teleconferences are outlined below and included the **implication of the new agency (TUSLA)** on the delivery of Foster Care. There was a concern that given the potential focus of the new agency on investigative child protection and welfare procedures, the resourcing of foster care support services may suffer. It was feared that the loss of direct managerial links to the former HSE services (e.g. psychology – medical) could damage the progress which had been made in some areas where priority to HSE service was being given to children in care and changes in organisational structures could have a detrimental impact on services availability to foster children.

During the year valuable feedback was received on how the implementation of a **new national format for the review of foster carers** is being rolled out. While the benefits of this development were acknowledged and welcomed by many social workers, the resource demands for the review format have placed additional burdens on staff and these subsequently impact on other areas of the services including ability to recruit urgently needed additional carers. It was also of interest to observe the variation in the implementation of these reviews across different areas of the country.

The committee has discussed the importance of **social workers' participation in the Irish Foster Care Association**, given the valuable role which this organisation plays in the promotion and development of foster care in Ireland. The proportion of social workers who are members of the association has declined in recent years and concerns have been flagged about the diminished mutual benefits and lost opportunity for partnership which will result if this trend continues. It is hoped that the hosting of the 2014 European Foster Care Conference in Waterford (from 26<sup>th</sup> to 29th August) will encourage renewed involvement from social workers and SWIFC is seeking support to enable as many social workers as possible to attend the event.

Within recent years a significant number of SWIFC members have retired from the HSE, though some of these have remained involved in SWIFC and continue to contribute. A number of new members have joined the group but with the limited activities and open meetings, it has been difficult to generate the enthusiasm necessary to adequately address the challenges that deserve our attention.

There was a proposal considered by the group to carry out a "Monkey Survey" among social workers (which would have been supported by IASW) in order to generate detailed information and statistics capable of highlighting the challenges facing social workers involved with foster families and children in foster care generally. However in view of concerns about the level of support for this initiative it was believed to be unlikely to achieve its objectives. Instead it was agreed to canvass the membership on views for conference topics and also in respect of ideas about wider issues of social work practice and service delivery in the area of child care. While a small number of replies were received some useful ideas emerged which will provide the committee with further material for consideration.

The Group has been unable to send a substitute representative from SWIFC to IASW Council meetings in the past year since our current representative has been unavailable, but we have been looking at alternative ways to address this deficit, including a request to Council to facilitate teleconference for those at a distance from Dublin. It is hoped to resolve this situation in the near future.

As in many other areas of extra-curricular activity, the available energy levels of social workers for involvement in SWIFC have remained low. It is our hope however, that this is a temporary feature and that with the arrival of the long awaited easing of austerity measures, additional support will be forthcoming to promote professional developments through special interest groups such as SWIFC.

## Head Medical Social Workers Group

Sheila McCrory

**Chairperson:** Kieran Buckley, St Vincent's University Hospital and Anne Marie Jones, Temple Street Children's University Hospital, continue as co-chairs of the group.

**Secretary:** Anne O'Loughlin, National Rehabilitation Hospital.

**Rep on IASW Council:** Sheila McCrory, Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin.

This group meets on a bi-monthly basis in St. James's Hospital and is attended by Head Medical Social Workers/Principal Social Workers from Hospitals and Hospices nationwide. The group's purpose is to provide a forum for the development and implementation of best standards among medical social workers in Ireland. It also functions as an information exchange, to lobby on issues relating to our client group and as a peer support group.

In addition to continued representation on a number of National Clinical Programmes, we are now also represented on the Rare Diseases Programme, by Michelle Strahan, Children's University Hospital.

One major focus of the work of the group in the past year has been to produce two documents- Competencies Framework for Medical Social Work (Update) and a paper on Caseload Management.

Other topics discussed during the year include:

- Implications of new developments for Medical Social Work-e.g. the restructuring of hospitals- with the advent of Hospital Groups nationally, and TUSLA the new Child and Family Agency.
- Supervision –including for managers

- Single Assessment Tool which is being piloted in some Adult hospitals with regard to Long Term Care.
- Haddington Road.
- CORU, Registration and CPD.
- Recruitment Issues
- Dr. Catherine Conlon TCD presented to one of our meetings on her research "Attitudes to Fertility, Sexual Health, and Motherhood

- amongst a sample of Non-Irish National Minority Ethnic Women living in Ireland".
- We had input into a chapter on Medical Social Work in an upcoming book: "Social Work in Ireland: Changes and Continuities - Social Work across the Health Care Spectrum" by Erna O'Connor TCD and Elaine Wilson, UCD.

In the last year there have been a number of changes within the group, John Brennan, Mater Hospital took early retirement, and we wish him well. The following have joined our group: Amanda Casey, Mater Hospital, Dearbhla Ni Riordain, Cork University Hospital and Sinead Devitt, Rotunda Hospital.

## Southern Region

Carol Buckley-Lyons

Two meetings were held in the Southern Region this year, with a view to strengthening participation in the southern Branch of the IASW. In attendance there were 11 members representing: Child Protection, Disability Services, UCC, Board and Council members and student representatives.

Consensus:

- The Southern Branch will meet four times a year
- Input will be focussed and manageable to include one training day/ conference per year, open to all social workers in the region
- C.P.D.
- Supervision
- Registration, CORU and matters relating to professional best practice
- Rotating Chair and Secretary

## New Social Workers

Conor Boksberger

### Committee Members

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Conor Boksberger (Chair)                 | • Aoife Breatnach (General Committee Member) |
| • Monica McColl (Secretary)                | • Claire McNamara (General Committee Member) |
| • Paul Nugent (Treasurer)                  | • Jessica Purcell (General Committee Member) |
| • Roisin Meaney (General Committee Member) | • Elisa Cosgrave (General Committee Member)  |
| • Peter Duncan (General Committee Member)  |  |

This year marked the third year of the New Social Workers' Special Interest Group, and we were delighted to note a further uptake in membership and participation in the group. Our active membership has highlighted a passion among new social workers for maintaining the knowledge base and values of social work in an increasingly challenging work environment. Our membership consists of social work students and newly qualified social workers (up to 3 years post qualified)

The activities that the group continues to engage in are:

### Committee Meetings

The dedicated committee of the New Social Workers SIG has been meeting on a regular basis (6-8 weeks) to discuss issues relevant to the SIG and concerns raised by its membership. One of the key areas of concern that has been consistently highlighted by our membership is that of employment for new social workers. The past number of years has proven to be difficult for new social workers in accessing social work posts, and this has been an ongoing issue for our members. In response to this, the committee has begun gathering soft data from its members about their

experiences of seeking employment. We are hoping to continue this work, and ultimately gain some valuable insight into useful strategies for new social workers seeking employment.

### **Peer Consultation**

We are coming towards the end of another successful round of peer consultation. This year saw two groups meet monthly since September 2013 to discuss issues relevant to new social workers whilst also exploring current research and practice. Both groups continued to function well, as was evidenced by the continued attendance of their members, with neither group seeing much of a drop off in numbers. The peer consultation process is something that we hope will continue to be a key feature of the group, and we hope to continue expanding next year.

### **Website**

The website continues to be a cornerstone of the SIG and it provides a good forum for new social workers to present and discuss topics relevant to the profession. We currently have 140 members registered on the website. A key development has been the embedding of the IASW Twitter feed onto the website, which provides even more live updated information relevant to the members. We are continuing efforts to make the website even more interactive and valuable to its members. We encourage any new social workers to register on the website on [newsocialworkers.com](http://newsocialworkers.com).

### **Conference:**

Last May, the New Social Workers SIG held another successful conference in Wynn's Hotel. The topic discussed was Self-Care and we were very lucky to secure Noel O'Driscoll (Principal Mental Health Social Worker) as our key speaker. Noel provided the audience with a thought provoking talk on nourishing ourselves through the work we do, and maintaining our self-care in a potentially challenging career. In addition to this we held workshops conducted by New Social Workers, including dissemination of recently completed research on mindfulness by one of our members. We are currently in the planning phase of our upcoming conference and are hoping to explore the area of social media and social work, identified and discussing the benefits, drawbacks and potential ethical dimensions that will be presented for social workers in an increasingly digital age.

We are excited to venture into a further year of the New Social Workers SIG and we hope that it will continue to expand, and more importantly that it will continue to be a support to new social workers.

## **Social Workers Adult Mental Health (SWAMH)**

Frank Browne

### **Chair Report from Social Workers in Adult Mental Health (SWAMH) 2013/2014**

On behalf of SWAMH, I would like to thank all the members of the committee for their commitment during the past year and in particular Claire and Aideen who like me step down from an executive position after 3 years. I would like to thank Damien for his role in chairing the later life psychiatry sub group, Damien steps down from the committee this year and finally to thank the IASW office for their support in terms of our CPD events and in circulating key information. One of SWAMH committee's key strengths is that it includes social workers of all grades and aims to have national representation from each region of the county. SWAMH will endeavor to continue this in the coming years.

### **SWAMH COMMITTEE for 2013/14**

(3 EXECUTIVE and 13 Committee Officers)

1. Frank Browne **Chair:** *HSE Dublin Mid Leinster*
2. Claire O'Regan **Hon Sec:** *HSE Dublin Mid Leinster (Dublin South Central)*
3. Aideen McDonnell **Treasurer:** *HSE Dublin North*
4. Donal O'Malley *HSE Dublin Mid Leinster (East Coast)*
5. Damien Nolan *St Patrick's Hospital Dublin (later life psychiatry lead)*
6. Jeanette Cummins *HSE Dublin North*
7. Anne Duffin *HSE Dublin Mid Leinster*
8. John Matthews *HSE Dublin Mid Leinster*
9. Rebekkah Woolfson *HSE Dublin North*
10. Roisin Higgins *HSE Dublin North*
11. Gloria Kirwan *Trinity College*
12. Laura Thompson *HSE West*
13. Paul Guckian *HSE West*
14. Kathy Nolan *HSE Dublin Mid Leinster*
15. Sinead Lawless *HSE South*

**The SWAMH committee aims to;** keep an updated list of all social workers working within adult mental health services, e/ mailing the contact list so as to keep colleagues up to date with relevant policy and service developments, and via IASW ensuring representation is made available regarding submissions to government departments, national bodies or working groups, and also in promoting the continuous professional development of all our members, by regular e/ mails of relevant reports, presentations, useful websites and organising CPD events during the year as a means so as to assist members in offering a quality service to our service users.

**Some Key Developments include;**

**1. HSE Mental Health Act Implementation Group**

- a. SWAMH have representation on this group, and have encouraged members to consider taking on Authorised Officer (AO) applicant role under Sec (9) of the Mental Health Act 2001. We are delighted that social workers make up over 40% of all the AOs nationally. The AO applicant is a key person in taking the onerous role from a family member and in actively considering alternatives to involuntary admission to hospital, considering the social risks and the environmental stressors to a person's mental ill health
- b. SWAMH have made a submission to the Expert Group reviewing the Mental Health Act and we await the final report.
- c. SWAMH have highlighted to all members the excellent mental health e/learning hub on the HSEland website.

**2. Links with the IASW Child and Adolescent Mental Health Special Interest Group.**

Both SWAMH and CAMHS will be under the remit of the new National Mental Health Directorate and one social work manager will represent all mental health social workers in CAMHS, Adult and ID mental health services at each service Area Mental Health Management Team. Most areas have an agreed rotated nomination, where there is more than 1 Principal and local meetings between Principals are becoming the norm.

**3. National Mental Health Directorate**

The new Directorate is now in place and takes on the full management for mental health services across the country. A group from IASW had a positive meeting in October with the new director Stephen Mulvaney. The meeting was arranged to address motions passed at the last IASW AGM, such as the need for line management supervision for the recently appointed new social workers (from the national mental health clinical programme funding) and suitable office/IT facilities. The director took on board our points and progress has been on all issues. In addition the director has ensured that all the Area Mental Health Management Teams (AMHMT) include representation for all the core disciplines (as required by the national mental health policy "A Vision for Change"). This has facilitated enhanced communication from his office to all disciplines and clearer transparency in decision making.

The director has stated that he sees the appropriate channel for communication being facilitated via social work managers, particularly those on the AMHMT and to date a meeting has taken place between the Principals in Adult Mental Health Social Work and Anne O'Connor Head of Operations and Service Improvement; future meeting will include CAMHS Principals. Those Principals on the AMHMT will continue to ensure effective communication between all social workers working in the area of mental health and IASW.

**Social Workers in CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)**

Nicola Byrne

**Meetings**

Over the course of the year this group aims to meet nationally 3 times. We hold one of these meeting outside of the Greater Dublin area in order to facilitate attendance nationally.

Alongside theses national meetings, there is constant communication and liaison between the elected members of the committee. The committee responds to regular queries and opportunities for input on behalf of the wider group.

Topics covered in our meetings include:

- Supporting New developments: This includes issues such as the recent increases in amount of staff recruited into CAMHS. This includes the fact that there are implications in the influx of staff at PQSW level and related gaps in appropriate governance for social workers in CAMHS. This is particularly an issue since the additional requirements due to registration with CORU,
- Communication with and support from IASW,
- Inputting into areas such as the National Clinical Programmes,
- CORU: Supporting staff through their interaction and experiences of CORU and registration,
- Audit (Including the annual November national CAMHS Audit),
- Interface and communication with the new Child & Family Agency,

### **Representation on Committees/Groups:**

**CAMHS Advisory Group:** Sarah Houston continues to represent our group and advocate on issues relevant to service users and social work. Many thanks to Sarah for her ongoing commitment and hard work in this area.

**IASW Council Representation:** Declan Coogan continues to represent our group at Council. His ongoing commitment to advocating and representing us is important to us and we would like to express our appreciation to him.

**Children's Mental Health Coalition:** Paul Longmore represents our SIG at this group. Sarah Houston support's him in maintaining this role. Their dedication and support to this group is valued and greatly appreciated.

This year there has been a new opportunity to participate in the Children's Mental Health Coalition. Sarah Houston has started to represent us in this area. Also, Sheila attended a meeting with Stephen Mulvaney, National Director (Mental Health), in partnership with our colleagues in adult mental health. During this meeting, Sheila McKenna advocated on our behalf and identified some important issues in areas such as communication governance, audit

### **Information/Training:**

At each meeting we allocate time to learning and development in areas of special interest to Social Workers in CAMHS. This year we had some very interesting presentations and we are very grateful for the high standard of training that is delivered to our group. Special thanks this year to Eleanor, Declan and Joan. The areas covered were:

- 27<sup>th</sup> May 2013: **Parents' Experience of Discharge from the In-patient Unit to CAMHS Community Teams**, Eleanor Kelly
- 21<sup>st</sup> October 2013: **Listening to Practice Experience: Encounters with Child to Parent Violence**, Declan Coogan
- 3<sup>rd</sup> February: **Mental Health Needs of Children**, Joan Cronin Senior Social Worker, Cork CAMHS

**AGM:** The AGM was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February in Mater Family Therapy Centre, Dublin.

### **Outgoing Committee (6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2013 to 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014)**

**Chairperson:** Sheila McKenna     **Secretary:** Sharon Galligan

**Committee:** David Hughes, Sarah Houston, Declan Coogan, Paul Longmore, Roberta Mulligan, Bernardine Hanratty, Nicola Byrne and, Fiona Coyle,

### **New Committee elected on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014:**

**Chairperson:** Nicola Byrne     **Secretary:** Sharon Galligan (Secretary),

**Committee:** Declan Coogan, Roberta Mulligan, Lisa Clarke, Sarah Houston  
Bernadine Hanratty, Fiona Coyle, David Hughes, Paul Longmore

**Venues:**             May 2013 held at NUI Galway  
                              October 2013, Mater CAMHS/Family Therapy, Dublin

Many thanks to the staff at the venues for facilitating our meetings

### Dates for the diary:

Planned dates for your diary for the coming year:

- Monday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2014 Venue Tullamore
- Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November Venue Lucena, Rathgar
- Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015, Venue to be confirmed

### Summary

I would like to thank the Committee members, for all their commitment, time and hard work over the past year. I especially would like to thank Sheila for her hard work and commitment as Chairperson for this Committee.

On behalf of the committee I would also like to thank those who gave presentations and the social workers who attended our national 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.

### Child & Family Social Workers

Barry Higgins

The Child and Family Special Interest Group (SIG) of the IASW are involved in child protection and welfare issues regarding children and families in Community Social Work.

The Special Interest Group's role includes:

- Advocating on behalf of service users;
- Representing Social Workers' views;
- Highlighting service needs, such as staff & resource issues;
- Membership of IASW Council – to advise the association of children & family issues;
- Liaising with policy makers (HSE & Government Departments) through the IASW;
- Linking with NGO's such as The Children's Rights Alliance;
- Drafting and promoting policy documents such as 2011: 'A Call for Change';
- Carrying out research;
- Organising training events.

There are currently 75 members of the Child and Family SIG. SIG meetings were held throughout 2013, scheduled on a six-weekly basis, and held in Jury's Hotel in Christchurch in Dublin. New members always welcome. Current core SIG committee meeting members during 2013/14 include Barry Higgins (co-chair), Sharon Sheils (co-chair), Maria McLoughlin, Aoife Bairead, Kirsten Byrne.

### Activities in 2013/14:

- Liaison with the IASW on child protection and welfare issues;
- Regular SIG meetings;
- Attendance at IASW council meetings;
- Participation in an information session provided in *Dail Eireann*;
- Some members partook in liaison with the *Irish Family Planning Association* regarding developing a training course for Social Workers to enable them to work with young people around unplanned pregnancies and general sexual health education and information provision;
- Publication in the *Irish Social Worker*, of an article written by the chair of the SIG, with feedback from members, entitled "The evolution of standards in social work practice: *In search of the missing link*". This article highlighted some of the issues with regard to registration of social workers in the context of working in a child protection and welfare setting, as well as outlining 'missing links' to a more effective child protection service for children and families.
- Preparation for a Child and Family conference and AGM.

We are currently seeking nominations for the position of chairperson of the child and family SIG.

## Social Workers in Primary Care

Patrice Reilly

### **2013/2014 Committee:**

**Chairperson:** Deirdre Jacob

**Vice Chairperson:** Patrice Reilly

**Secretary:** Ray Parkinson

**Training Officer:** Sharon Flood

### **Introduction:**

The Social Work in Primary Care Special Interest Group (SWinPC SIG) provides a forum and leadership in the promotion of Social Work within Primary Care, acknowledging that Primary Care is the appropriate setting for 90-95% of the population's health and social service's needs. Social Workers in primary care across Ireland have to date demonstrated their pivotal role in the development of Primary Care Teams (PCTs), as core team members and through their involvement and support of the joint HSE & Combat Poverty community participation initiative.

### **Objectives of the SWinPC SIG:**

- To provide members with a network to discuss, explore and exchange ideas on matters affecting their practice as well as providing peer support.
- To advocate for structures that support professional standards and objectives in the development of the Social Work profession within Primary Care.
- To identify and organize Continuing Professional Development training and education appropriate to Primary Care.
- To produce position papers, submissions and responses to issues affecting marginalized communities, as identified, both by those communities and by members of the SIG.

### **Origins of the PCSW SIG:**

Commencing in August 2008, a number of Social Workers working in Primary Care in Dublin and Wicklow began meeting to discuss practice issues and to avail of peer support. In September 2009, this group was recognized as a SIG by the IASW. The PCSW SIG held its inaugural meeting on 1st October 2009 and one of the groups key goals was to make links with as many Social Workers working in the area of Primary Care as possible and to raise awareness of the SIG. Currently the SIG is in contact with 78 Social Workers working in Primary Care settings through its email database.

### **Meetings:**

Since the last AGM of the IASW, our special interest group has had two meetings in December 2013 and March 2014. We also held our first AGM and Conference *Interpreting Social Work in Primary Care* We would like to thank those who booked the venues and speakers and those who facilitated the CPD workshops at our meetings.

In September 2013, the SIG held its first national Conference and AGM. This proved to be a very successful event with 59 delegates at the event and positive feedback received from all. Speakers included Rosemary Cunniffe who presented on the UCD research in social work in primary care; Dr. Catherine Darker who considered the role of primary care social work within the context of the social determinants of health; Dr. Philip Crowley who praised the work of primary care social work highlighting the gaps that we fill in complementing the GP service; and John Hennessey, HSE National Director for Primary Care Services who spoke about the future plans for primary care.

### **Current Situation:**

The numbers employed in primary care social work posts continue to be an issue. Our last audit of social workers working in primary care was in September 2013. At this time there were 78 social workers (including Team Leaders) in posts allocated to primary care in the Republic of Ireland who are in regular contact with the SIG. Of these 7 were on maternity/sick leave while others were covering other posts such as Protection of Older Persons Caseworker posts.

As raised in our Annual Report 2013, social workers in primary care are also being asked to cover a number of PCTs establishing them as 'network services' and not as core team members. The Primary Care Strategy (2001) which clearly

indicates the intention of the HSE to place social workers as core team members remains the priority document for the roll-out of that initiative. To this end, the SIG are meeting with the HSE Director of Primary Care Services to ascertain the intention of the HSE with regards social workers on primary care teams.

Governance structures within primary care are still of concern to primary care social workers with a lack of uniformity regarding supervision and management of social workers within primary care. Social workers in primary care nationally are striving to put in place management structures in conjunction with HSE management that will support primary care social work services which coincide with PCT development. However, the lack of a clear and thought out direction nationally for primary care social workers remains a major concern for the SIG. We continue to see the lack of structure result in some social workers not having access to adequate professional supervision and appropriate lines of 'social work' management. We have witnessed this situation forcing some primary care social workers to seek new positions in more 'established and supported' social work roles.

Furthermore, the SIG is of the opinion that the lack of representation for primary care social work at management/Principal Social Work level nationally is a major factor in our discipline not being prioritised. This is despite calls at local level from other disciplines on primary care teams/networks for further PCSWs posts. The SIG will continue to monitor the number of posts nationally and will advocate on behalf of members 'to the highest level' to ensure the development of primary care social work services in tandem with PCT development nationally.

The SIG has a number of primary objectives for 2014, guided by members of the SIG.

#### **Plans for SIG in 2014 include:**

- 1) To continue to provide a forum and place of support for all PCSW's in Ireland.
- 2) To continue to bring to the fore, issues and policies which directly impact on the role of PCSW's as 'generalist social workers' within the context of both PCT's and of community based social work.
- 3) To provide for the diverse education and training needs of PCSW's.
- 4) To continue to help facilitate research on 'The role of primary care social workers in Ireland', conducted by UCD.
- 5) To hold a themed AGM in September 2014.
- 6) To continue to support the role of primary care social workers as uniquely placed to engage in community development aspects of prevention and health promotion within the context of community development principles and with the support of our community work colleagues.
- 7) To organise a meeting with HSE National Director of Primary Care Services John Hennessey to discuss plans for primary care social work going forward.
- 8) To set up a structure for regional group meetings and training events to ensure all SWinPC are availing of SIG supports and opportunities.
- 9) To publish a paper on the Role of Social Work in Primary Care.

#### **Meetings for 2014:**

The next scheduled meeting is on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014 at 10am in Athlone. All social workers and social work students involved in or with an interest in social work in primary care are warmly invited to attend. We will have a CPD workshop following the meeting from 11.30 – 1pm.

This years AGM and Conference is on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014. Venue and Theme to be confirmed. For further details please contact: patrice.reilly@hse.ie

### **Special Interest Group on Ageing (SIGA)**

John Brennan

The Special Interest Group on Ageing (SIGA) is a sub-group of the Irish Association of Social Workers (IASW). It is a group for members of IASW who work with older persons in a variety of settings in community, health and residential care across the country.

It aims to

- Provide a forum for social workers to exchange information and views

- Provide a forum for the education and professional development of the SIGA members
- Develop IASW policy in relation to older persons
- Be a lobby group on behalf of older persons, their carers and social work
- Be a conduit for communication between members and the IASW Board/Council and other relevant groups
- Provide the IASW with expertise around issues related to older persons
- Support improvements in the level and standards of social work services to older persons

The SIGA was relatively quiet this year. However, at a well-attended meeting in April 2014, there was a commitment to renew the regular meetings so the SIGA will start to meet every two months from June 2014 onwards. Each of these meetings will have an education component alongside the business part of the meeting.

The Single Assessment Tool (SAT) process continued its implementation phase during the year. A number of sites have been chosen to pilot the document in its IT format. The IASW is represented on two of the HSE's advisory groups - for applicants and carers. The SAT will fundamentally change the way assessments for services are carried out. While for social work, there is a worrying reliance on tick boxes, on the positive side, there is the potential to obtain and use information and knowledge in much more efficient ways.

The National Clinical Programme for Older People (NCPOP) continued its work. The IASW was represented on this group and contributed to the preparation of a draft specialist education framework to be published shortly by the NCPOP for public consultation.

The SIGA held a seminar in December 2013 on the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Bill 2013. Dr Mary Keys, Department of Law, NUI Galway made a very interesting presentation. Subsequent to that, the SIGA contributed to the IASW's response to this Bill.

See the IASW SIGA website [www.iasw.ie](http://www.iasw.ie) for updates.

## **International Affairs Committee**

John Brennan

Members: John Brennan (Chair), Anna Deneher, Ineke Durville, Kerry Cuskelly  
The Committee met monthly during the year.

The IASW is a member of the European region of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and specifically, the IFSW European region (IFSW-E). As such, the International Committee, on behalf of the IASW, actively participates in the work of that region through the formal annual Delegates' meeting and participation in the working groups that are set up to deal with specific projects.

The Chair of the IASW represents the Association at the General Meetings of the IFSW as the formal delegate. The role of the International Committee is to support the chair of the IASW in carrying out the work of the IFSW locally.

### ***IFSW-E Meeting and Conference***

Anna Deneher and John Brennan attended the IFSW-E annual Delegates' meeting and the ENSACT joint European conference held in Istanbul, Turkey, in April 2013. The conference provides an opportunity to network, understand social work from an international perspective and to promote and gain ideas about practice and learning. They are a meeting point for practitioners, policy makers, academics and students.

### ***IFSW-E Project on responses to Austerity***

John Brennan attended an IFSW-E workshop in Lisbon, Portugal, on the effects of austerity in Europe. Many countries across Europe are negatively affected by the austerity measures implemented by their governments. The outcomes from this workshop will inform the IFSW-E's work programme.

### ***IFSW World Social Work Day 2014***

The IFSW World Social Work Day 2014 was celebrated this year with a seminar in Wynn's Hotel on the theme of *Social and Economic Crises – Social Work Solutions*. We were delighted to welcome the Secretary-General of the IFSW, Rory Truell who attended the Seminar again this year.

He gave a thoughtful presentation on international social work responses to human plight while Maeve Foreman and Liz Gregan made equally out-standing presentations on the domestic responses of social workers to the impact of austerity. This was an excellent session thanks to all who participated.

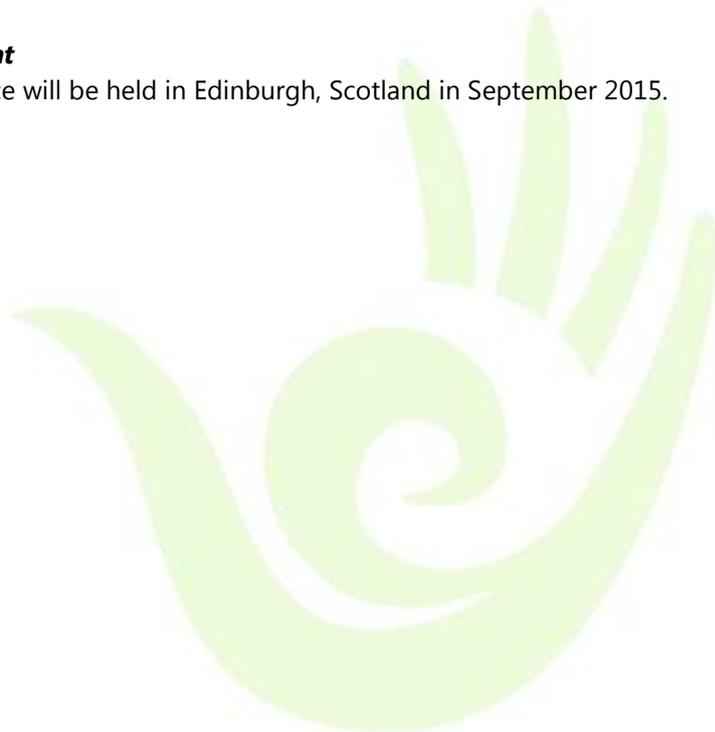
### ***Human Rights Issues***

1. The Committee in conjunction with the IFSW wrote to the King of Bahrain in response to the plight of a Bahraini social worker, a prisoner of conscience in Bahrain where freedom of speech is not respected.
2. Following a recent statement by the IASW about the plight of asylum seekers in 'direct provision' accommodation in Ireland, the Committee recently requested the IFSW to write to the Irish government in support of the IASW position.

The IFSW Human Rights website can be accessed via IFSW at [www.ifsw.org](http://www.ifsw.org)

### ***Conference Announcement***

The 2015 IFSW-E conference will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland in September 2015.



IASW