

## **SECTION 1: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

### **YOUTH WORK BILL UPDATE:** **COMMITTEE STAGE**

The Bill was due to go before the committee for written amendments on Wednesday, 27 June but it was deferred at Government request. No new date has been agreed and it seems unlikely that the Committee will discuss the Bill further before the Dáil rises in July.

## **SECTION 2: POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

### **NATIONAL CHILDRENS** **STRATEGY UPDATE**

#### **National Children's Advisory Council**

Mary Hanafin T.D., Minister for Children launched the new National Children's Advisory Council in Dublin's Shelbourne Hotel on Tuesday 15 May. The Council is being set up as part of the implementation of the National Children's Strategy.

The Council will advise the Minister on children's issues and will undertake extensive research in this area. It is expected to have a major influence on children's policy and services over the 10-year life span of the National Children's Strategy. Children's organisations, parents and children themselves are all represented on the Council. The functions of the Council include:

- Advising Minister on all aspects of children's lives;
- Advising Minister on the better co-ordination and delivery of services to children;
- Contributing to monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy at national and local level;
- Undertaking and advising on research;
- Advising on training in relation to the Strategy;
- Advising on the development of mechanisms to consult with children.

The members of the Council are as follows:

#### **Statutory Sector**

- Mr. John Collins, National Children's Office
- Ms. Catherine Hazlett, Family Affairs Unit, Dept. of Social, Community & Family Affairs
- Mr. John Fanning, Dept. of Education & Science
- Mr. Ger Deering, City/Cnty. Development Boards
- Ms. Mary Lee-Stapleton, National Co-ordination Childcare Committee
- Ms. Breeda Long, Health Boards
- Mr. John Treacy, Irish Sports Council
- Ms. Helen O'Donoghue, The Arts Council

#### **Voluntary Sector**

- Mr. Diarmuid Kearney, NYCI
- Mr. Edward Colfer, NPC – Post Primary
- Ms. Fionnuala Kilfeather, NPC - Primary
- Sr. Teresa McCormack, CORI
- Ms. Margaret Webb, Sugradh
- Mr. Eoin Keenan (temp), Barnardo's
- Mr. Paul Gilligan, ISPC
- Ms. Catherine Lynch, NCCRI
- Mr. Maurice O'Kane, People with Disability in Ireland Ltd.
- Mr. Ray Dooley, Children's Rights Alliance
- Ms. Colette Murray, Pavee Point
- Mr. Mamar Merzouk, Focus Ireland

#### **Research/Training Sector**

- Ms. Noirin Hayes, CSER, DIT Rathmines
- Prof. Robbie Gilligan, CRC, Trinity College
- A.N.Other, To cover training/development issues

#### **Children**

- Mr. David Cawley, Age 17
- Ms. Jeannie Kelly, Age 13
- Ms. Leonie O'Connell, Age 16

#### **National Play and Recreation Plan**

On 4 May the Minister highlighted the Government's innovative Play and Recreation Plan for young people, which forms a central part of the Strategy. In developing this Plan, the National Children's Office is determining:

- What play facilities are currently available for children;
- What the needs are, as determined by young people; and
- How issues such as planning and insurance can be addressed.

***"The play and Recreation policy will involve developing plans at a local level to ensure that every child can have access to decent playgrounds, sports fields and other facilities.***

## **NYF Member Youth Services Current Awareness Update**

*The vast majority of the adults who contributed... focused on providing for children's future, which of course is crucial. However, having consulted with thousands of children from around the country, the feedback I've received is that they just want to enjoy being children as much as possible. The Play and Recreation Plan will directly address this,"* Minister Hanafin said.

### **National Children's Strategy Research Fellowships**

On 22 May the Minister announced that five National Children's Strategy Research fellowships would be awarded to commence next October, amounting to over £200,000.

The second national goal of the Strategy is **"Children's lives will be better understood; their lives will benefit from evaluation, research and information on their needs, rights and the effectiveness of services."** The aim of this goal is to achieve a better understanding of how children grow up in Ireland in order to ensure that their needs are met.

A number of measures will be undertaken to implement this goal, including the development of a Children's Research Programme, which will fund research directly related to the Strategy. The first step in the development of the Children's Research Programme is the award of these research fellowships.

Three doctoral fellowships and two post-doctoral fellowships will be awarded to commence in the academic year 2001/2002. The research must be carried out in a recognised third-level institute in the State and must be directly related to the Strategy. The doctoral fellowships will be awarded initially for one year but are renewable for up to two additional years. The post-doctoral fellowships are valued at £25,000 per annum and may be awarded for one or two years. The closing date for receipt of applications by the National Children's Office is **Friday, 13 July 2001**. Application forms, terms and conditions of the fellowships and copies of the Strategy are available from:

**The National Children's Office**  
94 St. Stephen's Green  
Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 4180582 Fax: (01) 4180819  
E-mail: [child\\_strategy@health.irlgov.ie](mailto:child_strategy@health.irlgov.ie)

### **EDUCATIONAL WELFARE BOARD ESTABLISHED**

The Minister for Education and Science, Dr. Michael Woods T.D., announced the establishment of the new **National Educational Welfare Board**. The Board, established on an interim basis pending full implementation of the Education (Welfare) Act, will be chaired by Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan. Dr. Gilligan is a lecturer in St. Patrick's College, Department of Education, Drumcondra where she is also Co-ordinator of the Support Unit on Educational Disadvantage.

There will now be a single national authority with the remit to monitor school attendance, assist children at risk and those who experience difficulties in or out of school, and, in co-operation with schools provide a range of supports/strategies to discourage absenteeism & early school leaving.

Membership of the Board will represent all the main groups which have an active interest and involvement in the education and welfare of young people, including teachers, parents, school management, school attendance officers, community/voluntary bodies and relevant Government Departments and agencies. The members of the Board are:

- Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan, Chairperson
- Ms. Fionnuala Kilfeather, NPC - Primary
- Sr. Eileen Randles, Catholic Primary School Managers Association
- Mr. Don McCluskey, ASTI
- Mr. John Flanagan, School Attendance Service
- Mr. Gearóid Ó' Maoilmhichíl, NYF
- Ms. Catherine Hazlett, Dept. of Social, Community & Family Affairs
- Dr. Tony Crooks, ADM Ltd.
- Ms. Michelle Shannon, Dept. of Justice, Equality & Law Reform
- Mr. Gus O'Connell, FAS
- Ms. Cate Hartigan, Dept. of Health & Children
- Mr. Eddie Ward, Dept. of Education & Science

The Board will also appoint Education Welfare Officers around the country to work in close co-operation with schools, teachers, parents, community & voluntary bodies and relevant statutory authorities with a view to encouraging regular school attendance and developing strategies to reduce absenteeism and early school leaving. These officers will focus in particular on

children at risk and those who are experiencing difficulties in school attendance to resolve any impediments to their regular attendance at school

**SECTION 3: ROUND UP**

**NCCA TO BE ESTABLISHED ON STATUTORY BASIS**

On 18 June, The Minister for Education and Science, Dr. Michael Woods T.D., announced the signing of orders establishing the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on a statutory basis effective from 12 July, 2001 and providing for the appointment of members to the Council. He also announced that a review of the structure of the Council would be undertaken to ensure that it continues to carry out its important functions in relation to curricular development effectively.

**NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICE TO BE EXPANDED**

On 20 May, the Minister for Education and Science, Dr. Michael Woods, T.D., announced a new initiative to improve access to educational psychological assessment services for children with special educational needs. £1.25 million is being made available this year to purchase assessment services from suitably qualified private practitioners pending the recruitment of the full complement of psychologists to the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

When launched last year NEPS employed 48 psychologists. By June of this year, there will be some 100 psychologists in the service. A further 28 psychologists will be recruited before the end of the calendar year and recruitment will continue until the target of 200 psychologists is reached.

**REVIEW OF UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE ON ADMISSIONS**

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) has begun a review of the performance of the seven universities in relation to poorer students, women, disabled, mature students and minority groups. The reviews will comprise of five stages:

- The college will prepare a self-evaluation report
- The HEA will then appoint a review team
- This team will get a briefing before the visit
- After the visit the team reports back to the HEA
- In consultation with the college the HEA prepares a report with follow-up actions included

For further information contact:

**Higher Education Authority  
Marine House  
Clanwilliam Court  
Dublin 2**

Tel: (01) 6612748 Fax: (01) 6610492

Email: [info@hea.ie](mailto:info@hea.ie) Website: [www.hea.ie](http://www.hea.ie)

**MINISTER ANNOUNCES INFORMATION & ADVICE OFFICERS FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE**

On 6 June Minister Hanafin announced the appointment of Information and Advice Officers for Child Protection and Welfare. Speaking at the presentation of certificates to participants of the Keeping Safe Child Protection Training Programme in the Marino Institute, the Minister announced the appointment of the Officers by the health boards to promote good practice and procedures for organisations dealing with children. For further details contact your local health board.

**Copies of all publications and documentation highlighted in this edition are available for reference or loan purposes from the Irish YouthWork Centre**

### **About the Irish YouthWork Centre**

The Irish YouthWork Centre is an initiative of the National Youth Federation (NYF). It acts as a one-stop research and documentation centre which has been developed to respond to the varied information, research and training support needs of youth & community workers, researchers and students, and anyone who works with young people. Its' services include:

#### **Enquiry Services on:**

- ◆ Trainers, consultants and specialists on youth & community work and related topics
- ◆ Venues suitable for hosting youth events and conferences
- ◆ Courses in Youth & Community Work and related fields
- ◆ Where to find youth & community work resources and training materials from other agencies
- ◆ Connecting people to projects doing exciting and innovative work within their field of interest

#### **Sharing Good Practice**

The Irish YouthWork Centre is constantly engaged in researching and documenting innovative approaches to work with young people in areas of special interest. This information is available to youth workers through hard copy resources, database information and ongoing independent research being both undertaken and commissioned by the Centre and published by the ***Irish Youth Work Press***. Publications include quantitative & qualitative research, training manuals, policy documents and issue-based guidelines for youth workers.

#### **Good Practice and Policy Development Seminars**

The Centre regularly organises theme based, seminars and workshops. All the seminars are supported with; up to date analysis of the issue and what's happening on the ground in the form of information and/or research packs; the issues that youth workers are likely to meet; success stories, innovative projects, good practice; and sources of further information.

#### **Library**

- ◆ Lending service for youth & community work related books, videos and training materials.
- ◆ Photocopy and reference services for reports, statistics and hard-to-find articles on youth work.
- ◆ Newspaper cuttings, Dáil Debates, Government Bills/ Acts and youth related Statistical Updates.
- ◆ Profiles on over 200 organisations in the youth, community, social & voluntary sectors.
- ◆ Retention of over 80 youth work and youth work related periodicals/journals.
- ◆ On-line database facilities of all information stocked in the library.
- ◆ On-site study facility.

#### **Publications and Resources**

Low cost resources and training materials for sale (*the IWYC acts as an official sales agent for a number of agencies including the National Youth Council of Ireland, Combat Poverty Agency, Russell House Publishing, Nightshift Publications and the Directory of Social Change*). The Centre also offers an extensive range of research, guidelines, policy documents and programme packs for sale published by Irish Youth Work Press, the publishing arm of the NYF.

A complete Publications For Sale Brochure is available (see address below)

Free quarterly magazine (Irish YouthWork Scene) to members of the Centre.

**For further information on the services of the IRISH YOUTHWORk CENTRE, why not write, call in, telephone, or email us: Fran Bissett/Michelle Drumm, Irish YouthWork Centre, National Youth Federation, 20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1. Tel: +353 1 8729933 Fax: +353 1 8724183  
E-Mail addresses: fbissett@nyf.ie mdrumm@nyf.ie Web site: [www.iol.ie/~nyf](http://www.iol.ie/~nyf)**