



# Annual Report 2008-09

[www.sacp.org.uk](http://www.sacp.org.uk)

# Chairman's Report

How quickly another year has passed since I sat down to write last year's report but change and uncertainty remain an ever present theme due to the ongoing review of the Children's Hearings System.

We began this year still awaiting the next stage of the consultation which finally ran from July to October 2008 but responses received were so diverse and often, we are told, presented conflicting views as to how to move to the next stage – the Draft Bill. This illustrates the existing variations in practice, some of which have evolved over the years in response to local issues. The SACP has continued to discuss, encourage and promote greater consistency of practice across the country, in response to issues brought to us by panel members for discussion and clarification. We have continued to engage with other stakeholders eg SCRA and the Training Units, on your behalf, to clarify and inform best practice.

Communication with panel members has long been an issue for the SACP. The SACP is financed by a grant from the Scottish Government but at present representative's expenses to attend our meetings are claimed from their local authorities. This has, - in some cases - been a negative deciding factor with some authorities deciding not to pay for SACP representatives to attend council meetings or the AGM due to budgetary constraints. The Scottish Government has previously stated that no panel member should be out of pocket due to being a volunteer in our unique system. If the plan, as we progress, is for panel members expenses to be paid centrally then we hope this may also include expenses to attend SACP meetings!

We have continued to work hard to raise awareness of the Children's Hearings System - as well as the SACP- at national conferences and training events including the National School. This year we have been pleased to welcome new representatives at our meetings but unfortunately there are still areas without representation.

**DO YOU HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE FROM YOUR AREA?**

If not, you can contact us on our website [www.sacp.org.uk](http://www.sacp.org.uk). Think about volunteering to represent your area and let your voice be heard.

SACP continues to meet at SCRA Headquarters in Stirling which is a central location, accessible from all areas and we continue to be grateful to the Reporter's administration for allowing us to use their premises. This year we welcomed Denise Swanson, Head of the Children's Hearings team, to our December meeting and we were able to raise concerns and explore issues in relation to the planned reforms as well as support for panel members. We appreciated Denise giving up her time to attend the meeting (on a Saturday) and we hope this will become a regular feature of our council meetings and we greatly value her input.

**We have continued our efforts to make contact with panel members in all areas. With agreement and support from the 4 Training Unit Organisers, all newly trained panel members have received an SACP new member's information pack this year containing a useful pen and keyring giving the website address.**

**We are delighted that panel members as well as outside agencies have also accessed our website [www.sacp.org.uk](http://www.sacp.org.uk) to make contact with us or pass on issues requiring debate. On the website you will also find details of your local representative and reports of our meetings and conferences attended.**

**SACP representatives have continued to attend conferences on topics relevant to the work of panel members including GIRFEC, Looked after Children and Young People, Restorative justice Forum, Drugs and Alcohol in Children and Young People and Supporting Resilience in Children. Representatives also attended "You Cannot Choose Your Parents" which looked at the effects of parental drug and/or alcohol abuse on the lives and development of children, as well as four meetings and the AGM of SASO (Scottish Association on the Study of Offending) and the CHS National School in Dunblane.**

**This year there was a wealth of conferences/workshops relevant to our challenging task of trying to make a difference in the lives of the children before us. Through the feedback at council meetings and reports published on our website [www.sacp.org.uk](http://www.sacp.org.uk) we continue to update information on topical issues and to contribute to informed debates on problems relevant to children and families in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Many of you have accessed these reports on the website and told us how valuable you find the updates/information and we hope you will continue to find the website a valuable source of information by which to extend your knowledge base.**

**We are delighted that so many panel members, as well as outside agencies, continue to make contact with us via the website. Slightly more concerning is the fact that we have been contacted by panel members who are experiencing difficulties or are feeling unsupported in their own areas. We cannot take up cases for individual panel members – we are not a trade union – but we will continue to address general issues with the appropriate parties.**

**Our continued attendance at Children Law UK/TACT continues to provide a forum to promote and raise the profile of our unique Children's Hearing System. I have attended four meetings on your behalf as well as the inaugural TACT Ball in Edinburgh which celebrated the launch of TACT in Scotland and provided an opportunity for information exchange for participants both north and south of the border.**

**I attended the Long Service Awards Night where 11 panel members who had served for more than 20 years were presented with a Quaich by the Minister for Children and Families – Mr Adam Ingram. He congratulated the recipients and thanked them for their caring, commitment and time given to try and make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable children in Scotland –the success of our unique system is down to you!**

**The SACP has contributed to all relevant consultations including:**

- **The reform of the CHS**
- **Retention of fingerprinting and DNA**
- **Regulations for Looked After and Accommodated Children.**

**When the SACP was formed in 1977, it was felt that panel members throughout Scotland needed to share in the development of the Children's Hearing System and to be able to communicate with each other through a nationally recognised body. As we now move forward in the next steps of the reform agenda, this is still as relevant today as it was 30 years ago. Even in these days of information overload, panel members still need to be informed of how proposed changes will affect practice for themselves and other stakeholders and how they will substantially improve the outcomes for the children and young people who attend Children's Hearings.**

**Change is inevitable and the forthcoming proposed changes will present many challenges to us all. We have a unique and much admired system in Scotland for dealing with youth justice and child welfare as one. By maintaining the principles of Kilbrandon and focusing on the needs and best interests of the child we will develop a service to address the needs of children – wherever in Scotland they live.**

**Finally, I would like to thank my SACP colleagues for their much valued help and support, hard work and patience over the past year. The learning curve has been steep and at times challenging but I feel there is a continuing role for the SACP to give grassroots panel members another voice, and to give support as they face the challenge of making a difference in the lives of some of the most disadvantaged youngsters in Scotland.**

**Ann lee, Chair, May 2009**

## Receipts and payments account - Year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009

	2009	2008
	£	£
Receipts:		
Grant Funding Scottish Executive	6,475	9200
Contribution towards meals	<u>168</u>	<u>511</u>
<b>Total receipts for Year</b>	<b><u>6,643</u></b>	<b><u>9,711</u></b>
Payments:		
Secretarial	4,228	1,739
General	732	1,569
Travel and Conference Fees	3,585	3,849
Subscriptions	80	-
Independent Examiner's Fee	<u>317</u>	<u>294</u>
<b>Total Payments for Year</b>	<b><u>8,942</u></b>	<b><u>7,451</u></b>
<b>Net (Payments) for Year</b>	<b>(2,299)</b>	<b>2,260</b>
<b>Cash and Bank balances at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008</b>	<b><u>2,992</u></b>	<b><u>732</u></b>
<b>Cash and Bank balances at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009</b>	<b><u>693</u></b>	<b><u>2,992</u></b>

## Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009

### Monetary Assets:

Bank Current Account 693

### Other Assets:

Held for use by the Association:

Inspiron S160 laptop (cost £711 November 2004)  
HP All in 1 printer (cost £147 August 2006)  
Inspiron 1525 Laptop (cost £446 February 2008)

## **Independent Examiner's Statement.**

In the course of our examination, no matter has come to our attention

1. which gives us reasonable cause to believe that in any material aspect the requirement :

- To keep accounting records in accordance with the Association's constitution
- To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the Association's constitution

have not been met, or

2. to which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

JohnJohnston, Johnston & Co, Chartered Accountants, Independent  
Examiners,  
New Custom House, Register Street, Bo'ness, West Lothian, EH51 9AE

A full copy of the accounts can be obtained from the Association's  
Treasurer, Margaret Gaughan.

