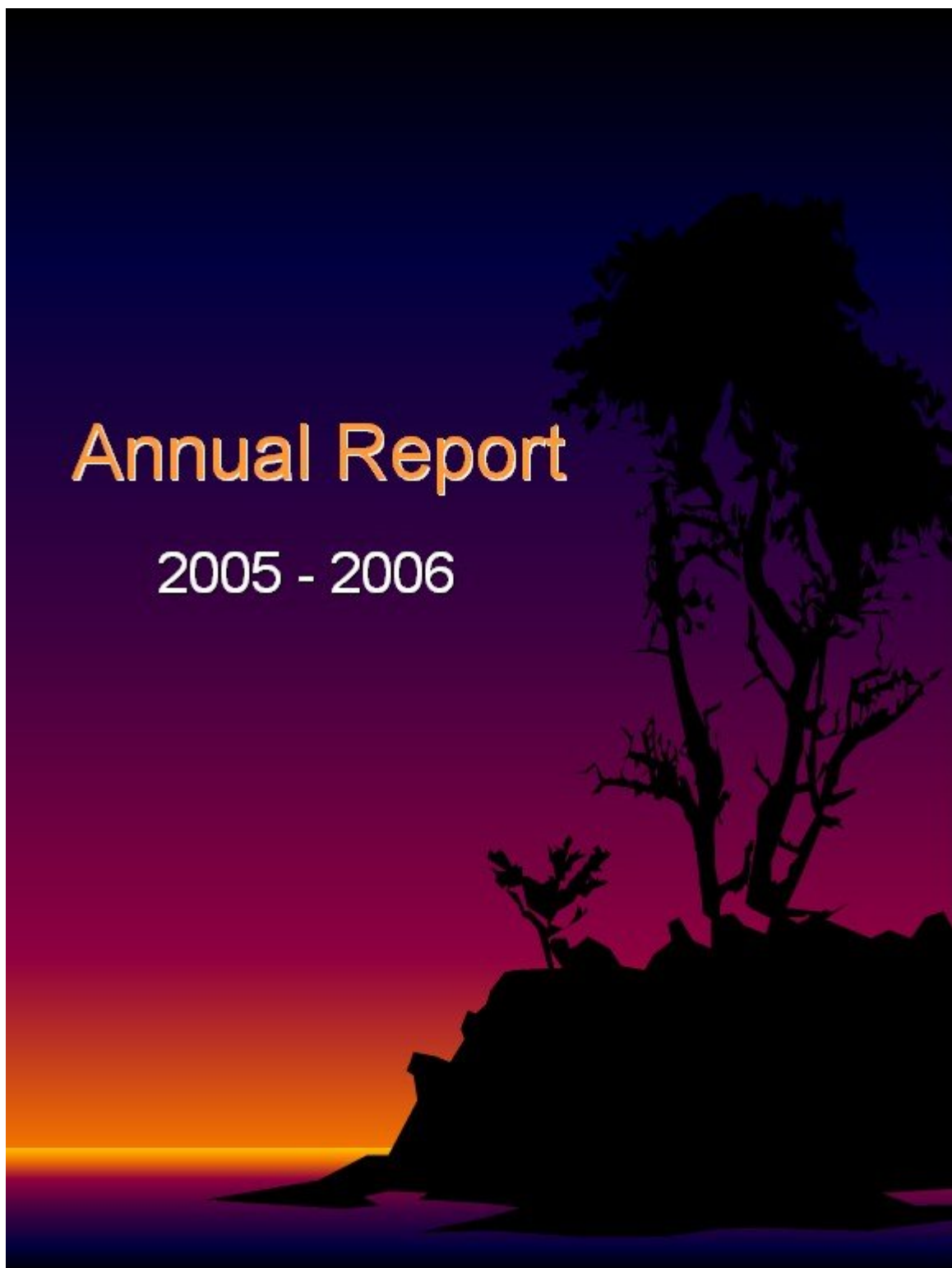


Annual Report

2005 - 2006





Annual Report 2005-06



Chair's Report

The Scottish Association of Children's Panels was formed following a national consultation in 1977, because it was felt that panel members needed to share in the ongoing developments in the Hearings System and be able to communicate with one another through a recognised national body.

Change and uncertainties – continuing themes in an SACP Annual report – make our objectives even more relevant today than they were 29 years ago. Since its inception 35 years ago, the Children's Hearings system has continued to evolve to reflect the needs of children in a changing society.

Starting in 2007, the whole system of children's services of which the Children's Hearings System is only a part, will begin a more structured and far reaching period of change.

Volunteer Panel Members have many demands on their time, new legislation and the increased complexity of cases we deal with, necessitate an increase in training and a need for more consistent support.

This past year has provided a period of stability in SACP and numbers of Panel Member representatives attending our meetings have increased. We still however have some areas without a representative.

Difficulties communicating with panel members have been highlighted on many occasions, and we continue our efforts to improve communication using Email, Intranet and the Extranet. When did YOU last access the Children's Hearings website? Do you have a password and know how to access the site? You can access the website at <http://www.childrenshearingsscotland.gov.uk>

Creating our Business Plan has been difficult this year, and we have been in regular contact with SEED to seek clarity in the present situation and define how we can move forward.

As a result of these conversations, it was suggested that SACP should set up our own database of panel members, in order to facilitate direct communication. We are therefore delighted that so many of you visited our stand at the National School in Dunblane in November 2005. This not only gave us a good start to our database, as many of you completed forms giving us your contact details, but also gave us the platform to raise

the profile of SACP, as some panel members were unaware of our continued presence as a representative body. As agreed with the 4 Training unit organisers, all new panel members have received our information sheet and database forms with their training pack.

Since our last AGM in June 2005 – we have met on 6 occasions and must thank the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration for allowing us the continued use of offices in their headquarters in Stirling. We have maintained contacts with national organisations, and Chair and Vice Chair have continued to attend meetings of the Children's Hearings Representative Group and Children's Hearings Forum on your behalf.

Representatives have attended fewer conferences/seminars than normal this year, due partly to the uncertainty of our funding and there not being so many relevant conferences on offer. Through formalized feedback in written reports, we continue to update panel members on current issues relating to children and families.

Our continued membership of Children's Law UK enables us to promote the work of our unique Children's Hearings System, nationally and internationally, and gain knowledge by sharing experiences of other Juvenile Justice, Child Welfare Systems across the UK. I have attended 3 meetings and the AGM on your behalf and appreciate the continued financial support from SEED which enables me to attend these meetings.

We have responded to all appropriate consultations including phase 2 of the Review "Getting it right for every Child".

Can I finally express my appreciation to my SACP colleagues for their help and enthusiastic support during a very demanding year.

The Children's Hearing System is at yet another crossroads; change and many challenges lie ahead, but I am confident that by retaining the principals of Kilbrandon, and a child centred focus we can move forward to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children, wherever in Scotland they live.

Ann Lee, Chair, April 2006

Conference Report

The SACP conference diary is set up on computer and is updated regularly so that area reps can plan ahead for conferences that have local and national relevance. Conferences are organised by the Scottish Executive often in conjunction with local authorities and charities working in child welfare such as Children in Scotland, Children 1st, Barnardos, Child Law UK, the Association for Child and Adolescent Health and Father's First. The conferences cover a wide

spectrum of areas relevant to those working in child welfare. Reports on the conferences attended are presented at Council meetings and are also posted on the Children's Panel extranet website for Panel Members to access. A list of recently attended conferences will also be available so that members can obtain the relevant conference reports by asking their reps for hard copies. This enables members to enhance their knowledge and understanding nationwide.

Gill Bayfield (Conference co-ordinator)

Receipts and payments account

Year to 31st March 2006

	2006	2005
	£	£
Receipts:		
Grant Funding Scottish Executive	4,700	6,336
Contribution towards meals	<u>48</u>	<u>204</u>
Total receipts for Year	<u>4,748</u>	<u>6,540</u>
Payments:		
Secretarial	2,571	2,423
General	482	617
Travel and Conference Fees	2,801	3,899
Subscriptions	-	75
Independent Examiner's Fee	282	282
Equipment	<u>-</u>	<u>791</u>
Total Payments for Year	<u>6,136</u>	<u>8,087</u>
Net (Payments) for Year	(1,388)	(1,547)
Cash and Bank balances at 31 st March 2005	<u>2,130</u>	<u>3,677</u>
Cash and Bank balances at 31 st March 2006	<u>742</u>	<u>2,130</u>

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31st March 2006

Monetary Assets:

Bank Current Account	<u>£742</u>
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Other Assets:

Held for use by the Association:

Toshiba 1800-712 laptop	(cost £1,199 July 2002)
HP D135 printer	(cost £399 July 2002)
Inspiron s160 laptop	(cost £711 November 2004)
Epson CX3200 printer	(cost £80 August 2004)

Opinion

In our opinion, according to the best of our knowledge and belief and in accordance with the information and explanations given to us:

- (a) the Association satisfied the conditions for exemption from an audit of the accounts for the year specified;
- (b) the receipts and payments and statement of balances and notes thereon have been properly prepared from the records of the Association, and are in agreement therewith; and
- (c) the accounts comply with the terms of the Association's constitution.

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, Linda Benton.

April 2006

SACP Secretary Report

Last year my report highlighted that SACP has been in existence since May 1977 and that its inaugural meeting took place in Glasgow following a national consultation. Today it is still funded by the Scottish Executive nearly 30 years on and continues to provide an opportunity for representatives from each local authority area to meet and discuss, usually bi-monthly, various issues concerning the Children's Hearing System.

The majority of our Saturday meetings are held in Stirling, courtesy of SCRA, at their Headquarters and we are indebted to Scottish Children's Reporters Administration for their continued support in providing this facility. Our representatives find Stirling convenient for road, rail and car travel because of its central position but we meet at different locations for the AGM. Aviemore was selected in 2005 and Aberdeen is the choice for 2006.

Having the opportunity to meet and exchange views with panel members from other areas can be interesting and if you would like to know more about S.A.C.P. please complete the form on the back page of this Annual Report. Currently we have 15 out of 32 local authority areas without a representative. The S.A.C.P. database is presently being organised and our appreciation to everyone who has kindly expressed an interest by returning the form.

It has been rewarding and challenging being S.A.C.P. Secretary but now that I have decided to stand down may I extend my sincere thanks to those who have made my job easier by their encouragement, support and friendship. Indeed isn't that being part of the Children's Panel Hearing System - that by listening, encouraging and supporting one another we are able to work together ultimately for the best interests of the children who come before us?

Marilyn Stenhouse, April 2006

Press Secretary Report

In my role as Press Secretary for the SACP I have been asked to write a few words for the Annual Report on newspaper coverage of issues concerning the Children's Hearings System over the last 12 months or so. While coverage of the CHS itself has been fairly low key there has been the usual bout of "teenage bashing" which should be of concern to all panel members. As ever, young people are receiving an appalling press.

There has been much coverage of the imposition of ASBO's (or the lack of them) on young offenders as well as the issue of tagging. A number of newspaper articles express doubts on the apparent effectiveness of the tagging measures eg "15 year old defies curfew by tearing off electronic tag" (Evening News, July '05). A Renfrewshire teenager earned the distinction of being the first child served with an ASBO in Scotland (Glasgow Evening Times, September '05). Justice Minister Cathy Jamieson was reported in various papers as being unhappy that local councils were not implementing the full range of options open to them under the Anti-Social Behaviour Legislation ie councils were refusing to routinely serve ASBO's on young people. To date there have been only 6 served. Probably just as well as according to experts "ASBOS are a status symbol for youths" (Scotsman, March '06). The bad press goes on and on. For example, "City sets up blitz on teenage thugs" (Edinburgh Evening News, January '06), "Move to fast-track ASBOS for teenage yobs in the Capital" (Edinburgh Evening News, February '06), "Kids of 9 carrying knives" (Daily Record, March '06) etc etc. It is as well to remember at this point that the vast majority of children in Scotland are doing fine!

Elsewhere the Children's Panel was (perhaps unusually) receiving a fairly positive press over the impending wide-scale review of the system. The broad consensus was that the ethos of the system must be maintained. In general the system worked but it needed to be updated to reflect modern day concerns and have sufficient resources devoted to it. However, the fast track Children's Hearings pilot scheme has been wound up. In addition, the indication at the moment appears to be that the reforms to the CHS will be delayed (The Herald, March '06). The scourge of drugs raised its head again with the case of the 11 year old Glasgow girl who collapsed in a classroom after taking heroin (Glasgow Evening Times, February '06) and the death of Derek Doran the 2 year old who died after taking his parent's methadone (The Herald, March ,06).

Finally, there were the usual mixed bag of ideas reported including the First Minister's plan to "name and shame" teenagers who have received an ASBO (Edinburgh Evening News, January '06) and a call for a complete ban on smacking children from the Children's Commissioner for Scotland (Daily Record, January '06). Roll on the year ahead.

George Reoch , April 2006

SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S PANELS

If you would like to be contacted from time to time with information of common interest to panel members or be notified regarding the activities of the above group, please supply your contact details.

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

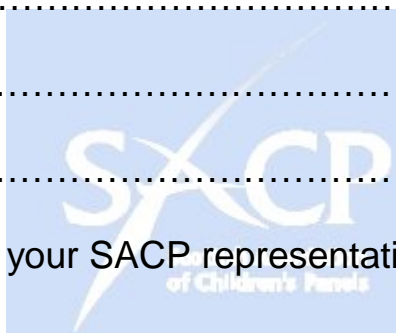
.....

Postcode:.....

e:mail:.....

Panel Area:.....

Signature:.....



Please give completed forms to your SACP representative or send to:

Mrs Angela McGroarty
44 George Reith Avenue
Jordanhill
Glasgow
G12 0AN

Many thanks.

This information will not be shared with any other group.