

THE NSPCC ANNUAL RECEPTION

BMA HEADQUARTERS
Tavistock House
Tavistock Square
Euston

10th November 2004

Notes by Gill Bayfield

This report was written by an attending
representative of SACP and is not an official
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REPORT FROM THE NSPCC ANNUAL RECEPTION 10.11.04 TAVISTOCK HOUSE, BMA HEADQUARTERS

I arrived early at Tavistock House, a very imposing and large building in Tavistock Square near Euston. Wine was handed out to arriving guests and a fine array of nibbles was passed around throughout the reception, I was introduced to a variety of people from Profs of pediatrics, to reps from a very wide selection of NGOs and the secretary of an umbrella organization that coordinates info and liaison between them.

Eventually Margaret Hodge [Minister for young people] arrived and talked about the government's new initiatives that will be published in a White paper coming out in the new year which plans to put the needs of young people as its core! The government also plans to set up committees comprising all agencies working with young people in each Local Authority to collaborate together on deciding the spending priorities in each area. How these committees will be chosen and operate was not clear.

This was followed by a presentation by some young people from all over the country who had taken part in a UNICEF International Initiative to promote international dialogue and co operation contact between different countries. I did manage to speak to Margaret Hodge and ask whether she and her ministers had looked at and considered the Scottish Children's Panel System, at which point she turned to the Chair person of the NSPCC and asked "Public accountability did we think that appropriate?" To which this lady answered "No I don't think so", with little or no understanding of the organization I was talking about

Of the new proposals the Minister outlined very few of those I asked had any understanding of the possible functioning of these arrangements. The way it was presented it seemed a very top, down approach. Only about two of the people I spoke to had any real knowledge of the Scottish System and most none. Whilst I had been waiting to speak to Margaret Hodge I found myself next to Esther Rantzen and explained I wanted to ask the minister. Esther's reply was "Oh that is something you do in Scotland? You do things so much better up there! "

After the Speakers had left guests continued to talk and mingle. I certainly found the experience interesting and spoke to some intriguing people in the course of the evening.

Gill Bayfield