

## **THE FAMILY JUSTICE COUNCIL**

**Meeting held on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2006**

### **Parents and Carers as Service Users**

The Chair had received a copy of the draft report by Lord Justice Wall, concerning deaths of children during contact. There was at least one issue for the FJC to consider.

### **Jonathan Spencer – Review**

Jonathan Spencer had carried out a review of the Council. He thanked the members for their help and contributions to assist him in preparing his report. The Council discussed the report and agreed to take forward the recommendations.

It was agreed that the structure of the committees needed reviewing, perhaps using the over-arching themes of Private and Public Law.

### **Local Family Justice Councils**

The Chair introduced Julian Owen who would be to working with the LFJCs. In the short term he would be looking at the role of the local councils and would put forward any recommendations to the April LFJCs' Conference. A matter highlighted in Jonathan Spencer's review was the need to improve communications between LFJCs and the FJC. As a first step, it was suggested that each Council member should sponsor one or two LFJCs. This would help to provide a link between the national Council and local Councils. A paper on the role of the sponsor would be circulated to members.

### **Transparency Working Group**

Thorpe LJ said the issue of Transparency had been identified in a number of Court of Appeal decisions. He drew the members' attention to the consultation paper which was expected to be published shortly.

It was agreed that the FJC would be a partner with the Royal College of Paediatricians in a project to produce a training DVD on Expert Witnesses. The FJC would consider making a contribution in the region of £5-£10k.

### **Domestic Violence Working Group update**

The first meeting of the group took place on 18 January and it had set out its Aims and Objectives for the year.

The Council approved the distribution of the summary of the HMICA Report to the LFJCs. A training day on Domestic Violence was suggested for the summer of this year.

The Council asked DJ Mornington to provide further details together with a cost estimate for producing a DVD in partnership with the Law Society & other agencies for the victims of DV. This would be based on the DVD produced in Northern Ireland 'The Law on your Side'.

### **CAFCASS consultation paper**

Anthony Douglas gave a presentation to the Council. He highlighted the importance of improving the pre and post-court services currently provided by CAFCASS. It was agreed that Corinne May-Chahal would collate responses to the consultation and send a collective response to CAFCASS on behalf of the Council.