

# WORKING TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN'S WELFARE

A RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE AT  
CUMBERLAND LODGE, THE  
GREAT PARK, WINDSOR,  
BERKSHIRE 12th-14th OCTOBER  
1987

Report by Edna Llewellyn, Health Journalist

*Recent cases of physical and sexual abuse of children have highlighted the need for the training of all professionals involved in this area of work, and this year's conference focussed on this issue. It is hoped that the programme, which was planned by Mrs Elizabeth Sieff and a small working party, will help to strengthen the links of understanding between the professionals involved in working together with abused children and their families.*

## Conclusions of the Working Groups

The working groups discussed a wide range of issues concerned with strategies for training professionals to work in the child abuse field, as well as strategies for training professionals to work together with other professionals in the child abuse field. Each group presented a resume of their deliberations to the conference, and following this session it was decided to combine the reports into a set of recommendations to be sent to the DHSS. The following points set out below were agreed by the majority of participants:-

- **Consultancy Teams**

We propose that consideration should be given by all Area Review Committees to the establishment of consultancy teams for child abuse to be available to all disciplines on a regular basis.

- **Guidance for Trainers**

We consider there to be a need for guidance to be published for personnel responsible for the training of individual disciplines, to work together in the preparation of interdisciplinary training courses. Consideration should also be given to the appointment of jointly-funded posts with the responsibility for the training of all disciplines concerned with child abuse.

- **Resources**

We ask that the National Children's Bureau or the NSPCC be asked to consider setting up a clearing house for material related to child abuse, similar to the service being provided through TAGOSAC in relation to child sexual abuse.

- **Core Curriculum**

There should be a core curriculum for all relevant professions, which should include the ability to recognise at-risk situations, awareness of their own professional responsibilities, the implications of a multi-cultural society and the understanding of the responsibilities of other practitioners.

- **Guidance on Roles**

Guidance should be published on the proper roles of all disciplines concerned with child abuse, for circulation to each other.

- **Teacher Training**

The training of teachers should contain material on the normal and abnormal development of children, and a guideline for action should be available in schools in the event of suspected abuse.

- **National Curriculum for Schools**

The proposed national curriculum for schools must recognize the importance of education in health and in personal relationships.

- **Research Projects**

Government departments should give support to research and to projects (like the Bexley experiment) which promote ways in which different disciplines work together effectively.

- **Inter-Disciplinary Training**

We emphasise the importance of interdisciplinary training, but there are two preconditions:

- Each of the disciplines needs to be secure in its own knowledge, and good single-discipline training is therefore essential. At present basic training is deficient.
- Funding for training should include additional costs such as finance for secondment of staff.

- **Child Abuse Offenders**

We would wish that further consideration be given to the possibility of a register of child abuse offenders.

- **Treatment of Offenders**

We must consider carefully our response to offenders and their treatment. Failure to provide adequate treatment can often result in the break-up of families unnecessarily, and in reoffending against the same or other children.

- **Training the Trainers**

The conference endorsed the suggestion that consideration should be given to the establishment of a 'Forum' to promote the training of trainers and to provide opportunity for debate on complex issues such as 'confidentiality'. It was agreed that The Michael Sieff Foundation should be approached to consider funding such an initiative.

## **Speakers**

The conference was chaired by The Baroness Cox, and was addressed by the following speakers: Maurice Phillips, Deputy Chief Inspector, DHSS; Roger Mortimore, Director of Social Services, West Sussex; Anthony Kenny, Barrister and Recorder at Law; The Baroness Faithfull, President of the National Children's Bureau; Helen Kenwood, of the Training and Advisory Group On Sexual Abuse of Children (TAGOSAC); Tony Hall, Director of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work; Graham Smith, Chief Probation Officer; Sheila Jack, Chairman of the English National Board for Nursing, Health Visiting and Midwifery; Derek Driver, Community Relations Officer of the Metropolitan Police; Kate Torkington, Assistant Director of the Community Education Development Centre; Dr P Barbor, Paediatrician; Lord Hailsham, former Lord Chancellor; Murray Davies, of the NSPCC; The Rt Hon Mr J Moore, Secretary of State for Social Services, and Lord Skelmersdale, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Lords), DHSS.