



Social Services Research Group

... The network for research information planning &
evaluation in social care & health services

www.ssrp.org.uk

ANNUAL REPORT

January – December 2004

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SSRG Chair's Annual Report **April 2005**

The last twelve months have been very eventful times for SSRG. We have continued to organise regional and national events that have been well attended and generously endorsed by participants. We have continued to cultivate our partnerships with key organisations in the social care world. We have promoted and influenced policy developments in social care research, and have produced timely publications and newsletters to inform our members and the wider social care community.

This report briefly highlights some of our achievements and activities that are more fully documented elsewhere in other sections of the annual report, and finally outlines what we have planned for the next twelve months.

Achievements and Key Activities

We have been working within the framework of the SSRG Action Plan 2004/05 agreed at last year's AGM at Durham University. The Action Plan had the following three objectives:

- We continue to **promote the place of research**, information, planning and evaluation activities in the social care & health worlds.
- We **expand the community** of interest in research, information, planning and evaluation.
- We increase and **improve the profile** of the SSRG network nationally, regionally and locally.

Each of these objectives has connected actions and activities, and the progress made over the last twelve months is reported in the following sections of the annual report. I would like to take the opportunity of highlighting some key areas of activity.

The Work of SSRG's Executive Committee

The Executive Committee has met on six occasions to oversee and progress the actions of SSRG. All meetings have been well attended, and I would like to thank EC members for their commitment, dedication and enthusiasm in getting through the work and making it another successful year for SSRG. Can I say a particular thanks to Faye McNiven, EC Secretary, who has overseen agenda planning, kept on top of the documentation and has planned our meetings well in advance with efficiency and an important eye for detail.

The Executive Committee also had an away day at Reading University in September 2004. This event served two purposes. Firstly, we were able to dedicate time to reflecting on the progress we were making with our partner organisations, and considering where we should be putting our collective energies over the next two to three years. Secondly, we took the opportunity of checking out the facilities at Reading University in advance of the next annual workshop.

Finances

The Executive Committee are constantly preoccupied with our financial position, and Alan Bunting, our Treasurer, has given regular reports to the EC on the state of our

accounts. I am happy to report that SSRG's finances are in a healthy state with a satisfactory reserve and some surplus available to take forward developments in our action plan. This position is mainly as a result of our success in organising well attended events. Many thanks to Alan Bunting for his careful stewardship of SSRG's accounts.

Programme of Events

One of the issues that came up at the AGM in April 2004 was that we should try to extend our programme of events to include practitioner research interests as well as some of the more technical aspects of research and performance management prominent in the national arena. We have tried to do this through the design of the programmes of our joint REU conference on 17th May 2004, our national conference on 1st October in Birmingham and more recently the day workshop on 18th February 2005 at Chichester. All members of the EC have contributed to bring this programme to life, but can I again thank David Henderson for his extensive contribution here, modestly working behind the scenes to make things happen.

Equal Opportunities Policy

We have concentrated our efforts over the last eighteen months on research issues associated with black and minority ethnic communities, both research practitioners and communities who are party to research work. We have been concerned that the membership of SSRG does not reflect the growing number of black research practitioners, nor their practices and work interests. We were very pleased therefore to jointly organise a day conference on 17th May 2004 with the REU (formerly the Race Equality Unit) and SCIE that produced excellent attendance and first rate contributions. This event generated many contacts for us, and helped SSRG in its thinking about how to reflect more fully this growing area of interest. We are already planning for another event later in the year on the theme of challenges for black researchers.

Publications

In the early summer of 2004 we produced two publications, adults and children's service indicators, which were critiques of the performance management regimes operating in social services departments. These were widely publicised and distributed across the country. While our newsletter has continued to be published regularly we have had a delay in getting our RPP journal out to members because of changes in our printing arrangements. Hopefully this will be rectified over the next few months.

Partnerships and Alliances

We have to give particular attention to our alliances and partnerships with key organisations in the social and health care worlds. As I write I discovered that CSCI is to come to an end and be absorbed into OFSTED and the Healthcare Commission following the budget announcement to streamline the regulatory arm of government.

We are continuing to work closely with ADSS, SCIE, REU, The Assembly and the Academy, and have developed joint approaches with the UK Federation of Primary Care Research Organisations and the Social Work Research Association.

Following our national conference in October 2004 we have continued to cultivate our relationship with staff at DfES and DoH, keeping an eye on the change agenda.

Maintaining these contacts and alliances is proving time consuming but necessary work, and we anticipate in a continually changing environment we will need to invest more time here to ensure SSRG remains in an influential and informed position.

Future Activities

We are already planning for the coming eighteen months ahead with provisional proposals for the venue and dates for our next annual workshop in Spring 2006, making approaches to SSRG members to help with our activities and a programme of events covering our broad objectives working jointly with the UK Federation, REU and SCIE.

We anticipate some continuing work emerging from the establishment of the Research Governance Framework post April 2005, and the need to promote research standards and provide support to those organisations that take research governance seriously. Another emerging theme is the use and development of user surveys following DfES's current response to the Children in Need survey. There are lessons to be learned that we will want to capture and inform what comes next.

And Finally.....

Those of you who have read the March 2005 edition of the SSRG Newsletter will know that there is an intention for me to finally step down as Chair of SSRG, after four years of helping to keep the show on the road. Can I say I've enjoyed every moment, and I look forward to helping the new Chair take SSRG in new directions, building on what has already been achieved. Can I say many thanks to everyone who has supported and constructively challenged me over the last four years and made my term of office so stimulating and enjoyable.

David Allan
Chair SSRG
March 2005

Treasurer's Report - 2005

Summary of Accounts at 31st December 2004

At 31st December 2004 the financial position of SSRG was £29,463.87 (the accumulated funds), as compared with £15,873.61 in 2003.

Total income during the year was £75,311.46 as compared with £51,329.46 in 2003.

The total expenditure during the year was £61,721.20 as compared with £51,312.63 in 2003.

The accounts show an overall surplus of £13,590.26 as compared to the previous year's figure of £16.83.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 2003 AND 2004

	£	<u>2004</u> £	£	<u>2003</u> £
<u>INCOME</u>				
Subscriptions	18,429.00		15,158.00	
Journal	760.44		750.00	
Conferences, Courses etc.	55,524.20		33,469.00	
Bank Interest	213.89		87.74	
Miscellaneous	<u>383.93</u>		<u>1,864.72</u>	
		75,311.46		51,329.46
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>				
Administration	16,591.32		7,171.38	
Subscriptions	238.50		302.44	
Working Parties	2,757.51		2,486.66	
NEC	7,080.63		7,272.40	
Newsletter	6,208.65		6,030.00	
Journal	684.80		6,220.11	
Conferences, Courses etc.	27,682.29		21,116.58	
Audit Fee	200.00		150.00	
Miscellaneous	<u>277.50</u>		563.06	
		<u>61,721.20</u>		<u>51,312.63</u>
Surplus/(Loss) for Year		<u>13,590.26</u>		<u>16.83</u>

Commentary

The actions pursued in 2004 including the increase in fees charged for events and in particular the very successful event on Improving Services for Children: Developments in Information and Performance Assessment held in Birmingham in October 2004 have boosted SSRG balances by a significant amount.

However, a proportion of these monies have already been identified and allocated to specific matters, for example:

- £2,500 for outstanding cost of seminar in Oct. 2004 (accommodation, refreshments etc);
- £4,500 for outstanding printing costs for the Journal
- £3,000 specific budget for publicity/marketing materials;
- £2,500 to purchase a Laptop and Projector for use at SSRG events

£11,500 Total

SSRG are currently in the process of actively securing a formal response from H M Customs and Excise regarding SSRG's VAT situation.

Action

1. The EC will be seeking authorisation from the AGM to **maintain:**

- **Membership fees at the current levels –**

(i.e. 1st corporate membership £59.00;
 2nd/subsequent corporate membership £44.00;
 personal £54.00; plus
 student/unwaged no change £35.00)

- **Existing Subscription rate** for Research, Policy and Planning only (i.e. £45.00)
- Current charging strategy for SSRG events for 2005/2006

Note

Any members wishing to view a full statement of accounts should contact the Treasurer directly:

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 Crompton House, 100 Chorley Road,
 Swinton, Salford M27 6BP
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Secretary's Report

There are currently 16 people who make up the Executive Committee of SSRG. During 2004 EC members met every two months at the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) in London. The actual number of attendees at each meeting was as follows:

	Number of Attendees
EC meeting, January 2004	12
EC meeting, March 2004	9
EC meeting, May 2004	14
EC meeting, July 2004	13
EC meeting, September 2004	12
EC meeting, November 2004	11

During 2004 there were several changes to the membership of the Executive Committee with several people stepping down due to work commitments. David Allan was elected to be Chair for the next 12 months with a view to Martin Stevens taking on the role in March 2005 (subject to the election process). There is currently a vacancy on the EC for a member to lead on marketing and communications.

During 2004 the EC continued to contribute to important national priorities such as Research Governance and performance management . The EC regularly discusses the planning for SSRG events, the membership strategy, the Newsletter, Research Policy and Practice and issues concerning equal opportunities and diversity. In addition to this the EC continues to be involved in collaborative working with key organisations such as the Department of Health and ADSS, etc.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Executive Committee for making me feel welcome and I look forward to continuing my work with SSRG.

Faye McNiven
Secretary
March 2005

SSRG Membership update Jan – Dec 2004

At the end of December 2004, there were 371 members, 25 more than at the end of 2003.

Members by region

Region	2004
London	60
West Midlands	60
Scotland	47
South East	40
South West	37
North West	36
Yorkshire	32
East Midlands	22
Eastern Region	18
Wales	12
North East	7

Types of memberships

The multiple membership option is the most popular option with 155 main contacts and 177 additional contacts. The number of personal memberships is 37 and there are 2 unwaged or student memberships.

The type of work undertaken by members

More members work in Performance than in research, although there is often a cross over between the two and job titles are not necessarily a reliable indicator of the type of work a person undertakes.

Type of jobs members work in

N	2004
Performance	178
Research	105
Planning	32
Information	22
Consultants non specified	19
Assistant Dir/Dir of SSD/Health	8
SSD Trainers	3
Social worker	2
Complaints officer	1
Inspector	1

Actions during 2004

A rise in subscriptions for members was not agreed for 2004.

During 2004, it was agreed that new members could join at any time during the year. Although the majority of members are on the January to December membership, anyone joining after 31st August 2004 will be on an annual membership that will be renewed on their date of joining in the following year.

Due to a lack of clarity, Corporate Membership was changed to multiple membership with a main contact.

The membership database and all details of members are available in the members only section on the website and is password access only.

Members may use this members only list to contact other members, however SSRG have registered with the Data Protection Commission that they will not use members details for any other reason than for networking.

Members can now update their own information on the website.

There is an annual fee of £54 for RPP journal only membership. At present there are no RPP only members. There has been interest expressed from one authority and another has assumed they had 'Journal Only' subscription before it was instigated this year.

SSRG is preparing for all membership information to be electronic, where possible, by the end of 2005.

The part-time membership co-ordinator is available to assist members with booking and invoices for agreed SSRG events if given no less than 6 weeks notice.

There was no satisfaction questionnaire to members during 2004, however one is being planned for early 2005.

There remains a need to focus on diversity in the membership. It is under representative of BME members and has 4 members from the NHS. Student membership needs to be promoted.

Thank you to the part time co-ordinator Jackie Watson, and Jez MacDonald at SCIE for their time in maintaining and redeveloping the database and the website.

Margaret Cooney
March 2005

Equal Opportunities

With regards to implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy Action Plan 2003-4 the following activities were undertaken or are currently being planned:

- A one-day conference was jointly organised with the REU (formerly the Race Equality Unit) in May 2004. This conference focussed on Racism and Ethnicity in Research, Policy and Practice and took place at the London Voluntary Sector Resource Centre, Holloway Road, London. Just over 90 delegates attended the conference; delegates came from a number of organisations including the public and voluntary sector and some community groups.
- It had been hoped that the joint conference with REU would also stimulate interest in SSRG from colleagues in the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community and help to widen the membership of SSRG. However this event did not yield a significant increase in the membership of colleagues from the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community. By continuing to stage these events it is anticipated wider interest amongst the BME community in SSRG will develop.
- By continuing to organise these events SSRG makes a positive contribution to the dissemination of research findings around race equality and promotion of policies that are guided by sound research.
- SSRG is currently in the process of jointly organising a second conference with REU, which will take place later in 2005 and again will focus on issues related to research and race equality.
- SSRG Annual Workshop 2005 features a workshop that will be presented by the REU - Promoting Quality: Developing Monitoring and Evaluation in Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary Organisations Supporting Black and Minority Ethnic Older People.
- A limited number of subsidised places for the workshop are offered to users and carers assisted by Social Services.
- Personal assistants of delegates who attend the Annual Workshop may attend free of charge.
- Childcare facilities can be made available where sufficient notice is given.
- The newsletter continues to include articles related to various equal opportunities issues.

Elijah Collins, Patricia Walker and Jenny Wilding
March 2005

SSRG Newsletter

Newsletter Editor

The Newsletter is the main vehicle through which SSRG disseminates information about issues relating to research, policy and planning in health and social care.

Six copies of the Newsletter were published during the year ending 31st December 2004 and regular contributions were received from EC and other colleagues who represent SSRG on groups such as the ADSS IMG, ADSS Research group and the DH Technical Working Group

It is felt that the appearance has been improved through the inclusion of more illustrations, most notably the regular appearance of 'Zen' for which thanks are due to Faye McNiven.

Contributions and ideas for improvement are always welcome.

I would like to thank Jenny Edwards in Shropshire for her work in setting up the Newsletter, and to Dataplus in Belfast for printing and distribution.

David Henderson
Newsletter Editor
March 2005

Annual Workshop and other Events

SSRG Annual Workshop 2004: "Improving Practice and Performance in Social Care and Health: The Effective Use and Dissemination of Knowledge"

This event took place on Monday 29th, Tuesday 30th and Wednesday 31st March and was held at Collingwood College, University of Durham.

SSRG is grateful to Care Knowledge, Dataplus and the Guardian for supporting the Annual Workshop for a second year.

Main Organiser: David Henderson

Improving Standards in Information Sharing across Children's Services:

1st March 2004 Old Viewforth, Stirling

This event looked at key issues in sharing information across agencies such as social care and health in order to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.

Main Organiser: David Henderson

Racism and Ethnicity in Research, Policy and Practice: 17 May 2004

London Voluntary Sector Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road

London N7 6PA

SSRG and the REU held this one-day conference that highlighted the importance of Black and Minority Ethnic Issues in Research.

Main Organisers: Elijah Collins, Patricia Walker, Jenny Wilding and Jabeer Butt

SSRG Scotland Event: Getting Evidence into Practice: Improving Standards in Research and Evaluation across Social Care and Health: 28th June 2004

Old Viewforth Stirling

This event considered codes of good practice and ethical frameworks;

barriers to getting evidence into practice and a conceptual framework that has been developed by colleagues in nursing

Main Organiser: David Henderson

Improving Services for Children: Developments in Information and Performance Assessment - Friday 1st October 2004

The Banqueting Suite, Council House, Birmingham

This event looked at developments in Information Collection, Performance Indicators and Performance Assessment in Children's Services.

Main Organiser: David Henderson

Assessing the Needs of Vulnerable Children: Information Sharing, Systems...and Solutions? Monday 15th November 2004, Old Viewforth, Stirling

This event followed the successful SSRG seminar on information sharing that was held earlier this year. Issues addressed included: the kind of information that should be collected; the 'systems'/frameworks that are in place and being used to collect (and report on) this information; the constraints (for example practical and ethical) of sharing information; and potential solutions

Main Organiser: David Henderson

Research Policy and Planning

This year has seen the publication of 2 of the 3 issues of RPP (one is currently in press). The delay has been unfortunate and was due to production difficulties. The journal is now set back on course in its production schedule. The journal has attracted a range of submissions and SSRG is grateful to referees for their assistance, to Istyn Edwards for co-ordinating book reviews and to Jon Glasby for co-ordinating the Research into Policy section. We are also grateful to Dennis South for his production skills and work in contacting authors.

The journal was pleased to welcome the proposal for a special issue in 2004 on the subject of user involvement in research. SSRG extends its thanks to the guest editors: Shula Ramon, Peter Beresford and Julie Warriner and to those authors who contributed to this well-received and topical issue.

The journal continues to welcome ideas for possible future special issues and other contributions. It is grateful to SCIE for promoting valuable and valued electronic access

Jill Manthorpe & Jo Moriarty
March 2005

Partnerships

1. Department of Health

- **Department of Health and Department for Education and Skills – Technical Working Group.**

In my report last year, I conveyed the sense that much was going to change in the coming months. I reported on the proposed creation of an independent data

collection and processing agency outside of DH – there is still no news of this! However there have been some significant developments and I summarise these below.

- The two review groups – Adult’s Review Group (ARG) and Children’s Working Group (CWG) have continued their work and the output reported to TWG for consideration. Given that many more local authorities are now involved in these two groups, their output is both more detailed and proposals coming to TWG much more grounded in the realities of local authority business.
- The Commission for Social Care Inspection has now assumed responsibility for the review and development of the PAF indicators and Nick Miller from Norfolk (and an SSRG pensioner like me) has been seconded to CSCI to assist with this crucial work.
- The ADSS has now taken a much firmer grip on the annual returns/PAF agenda and it is beginning to feel that a sounder structure and associated processes are being put in place. Hitherto, TWG has often felt to be a group of dedicated individuals without any formal reporting arrangements.
- A video conference was held recently, chaired by CSCI and involving ADSS, DH and DfES. The primary purpose of the meeting was to look at the bandings for PAF indicators for 2004/05. On the agenda were indicators introduced for the first time in 2004/05, indicators whose definitions had changed since the previous year and indicators where the definitions had been sharpened or “re-stated”. The outcome of these deliberations will be reported elsewhere but, for me, the key parts of the meeting were:
 - CSCI acknowledged that it was not good practice to be discussing bandings for PI’s that had been operational since April 2004! In future they intend banding discussions to be held much earlier.
 - CSCI also signed up to a set of principles that should govern the banding process. In particular, they accepted that for new PI’s there should be no banding in the first year until the actual distribution of scores was known. Consequently, for several PI’s the reporting will be based on quintiles rather than bands for 2004/05. This principle is, however, subject to ministerial pressure!
 - CSCI indicated that they were very keen to see two new groups established – one for the development of children’s PI’s and the other for adults. As suggested above, these groups will have representatives put forward by ADSS rather than “self-selected” which has been the norm.
- Despite these largely welcome developments, it still feels that whilst we can see the emerging picture of the jigsaw, there are still some important pieces missing and we still await a completely transparent and integrated approach to statutory returns and the performance indicators that derive from them.

Back to more mundane subjects, the detailed work of TWG has continued. David Singer from Manchester stepped down as chair of the local authority side, which is now chaired by Tish Gailey from Kent. As in previous years we have held 4 meetings in the year and full details of both agendas and outcomes can be found at: www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/twgpss/index.htm

I will not hazard any predictions about the coming months but, instead, point out:

- DH and DfES have both agreed that all statutory returns should be formally reviewed over a 5-year period. This is good news, which we have been requesting for some time.
- There are positive signs that the issue of measuring how well we support people in their own homes will be examined – current measures (C28, C29 to C32) are acknowledged to be weak but finding better solutions will be difficult, but not impossible.
- The equally tricky issue of reporting on partnership working also needs close attention. This has been on the agenda for many years but progress is painfully slow. At some stage the regulators are going to have to bite the bullet and decide to measure what is important rather than slavishly hold local authorities to book for their part of an increasingly joint agenda. No one said that joined up thinking would happen overnight – quite right but 8 years on..??

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➤ **SSRG involvement in Research Governance**

Introduction

SSRG has continued to play an important role in the consultation about the implementation of Research Governance in Social Care, and have a strong voice on the Department of Health (DH) advisory group for the implementation of Research Governance in Social Care, alongside many of the key organisations in the field. We have continued to support the aims of and need for the Research Governance Framework (RGF), although we have consistently raised a number of issues.

Over the past year, the advisory group has:

- revised the Baseline Assessment form in preparation for the new Baseline Assessment exercise, which will take place later this year;
- developed the Resource Pack
- advised on the running of the training workshops in conjunction with the provider.

Further meetings of the group are planned, in order to finalise the Resource Pack and there will be some work to do in terms of implementing the new social care ethics committee.

Achievements and areas for continued effort

The Implementation Plan for Research Governance in Social Care was finally published in May last year, and SSRG's role was acknowledged. Our place on the consultation group has been valuable and several developments have reflected issues we have raised, although there are some areas where we have had less influence. All of these areas are detailed below, under the headings of the main issues we have raised throughout.

- **Types of work covered by Research Governance:** SSRG has argued for the need to include a wide range of research activities, including 'In-house' studies. In the published version of the implementation plan, it was made clear that research and related activities undertaken by CSSR staff should be covered by Research Governance after December 2005, when the full implementation has been completed. However, there are signs that this may be reduced to a

recommendation rather than a requirement, mainly because of the difficulties of ensuring compliance.

- **Organisational boundaries:** As we reported last year, the change of central government responsibility for children's services made the implementation of Research Governance more complex. In effect there is no mandate to implement Research Governance with children's services, although there are some signs that the Department for Education and Skills will introduce similar procedures. However, the DH and the advisory group has recommended that research investigating children's services should be subject to research governance at this point.
- **The need for resources:** we have consistently made the point that implementing research governance will require extra resources for creating an infrastructure for ethical and methods review as well as for more robust information systems for tracking research work. In 2004-5, the Department of health has funded, or agreed to fund three initiatives.
 - A series of training workshops across the country, which have received about £30k. The workshops have been undertaken by an independent researcher/trainer (who is an SSRG member) and SSRG supported and advocated for the idea of running the workshops.
 - £500k has been earmarked for supporting Local Authorities to implement Research Governance. This has been directed at supporting alliances of two or more CSSRs to develop common systems and work together in operating Research Governance. This is a positive move and SSRG has played a role in advocating for the need for such an initiative.
 - A resource pack has been developed by the advisory group (which several SSRG members are members of), the DH has provided £5k for the production of the pack, which SSRG is administering.

Overall, however, this is still insufficient: SSRG will continue to advocate for the continuing need to support, not only Research Governance, but also research training and support for research in social care. Furthermore, we have argued (and this is supported in the RGF) that it is only by developing good research cultures, with well-trained staff undertaking well-funded studies, that the aims of the RGF can be met.

- **Ethical and methodological review:** There have been two developments in terms of ethical and methodological review, although their outcome is still unclear. At the end of 2004, the DH ran a consultation about four options for ethical review, to which SSRG did not respond, unfortunately; there is also an ongoing review of ethics review in the NHS. This will examine a number of issues that may affect the implementation of research governance in social care. Most importantly, it will review the relationship between NHS RECs and other research approval requirements and make recommendations about whether the existing operational boundaries within which NHS RECs work are suitable. The outcome of these initiatives will be influential in the final shape of the system. However, it looks likely that there will be some form of separate social care ethics committee, rather than a unified research governance approval system. SSRG has argued that ethical and methodological reviewing need to be complementary processes, to avoid the situation where researchers have to meet contradictory demands. Furthermore, we will continue to argue for the

need to find a way to avoid the need to submit proposals before more than one kind of committee.

Martin Stevens – Vice-Chair SSRG EC
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2. ADSS

➤ Information Management Group (IMG)

The ADSS Information Management Group (IMG) covers the social care information management and technology agenda. It aims to keep people working in or with social care informed about information management and technology and to promote the profile and influence of social care in any developments.

This has been a challenging year for IMG. Simon Lowes, the IMG Support Officer who had done so much for the group, stood down in the autumn. There have also been changes at the national level, which mean that the social care information management agenda no longer has a single focus but is spread much wider. The leadership provided by the DH Information Policy Unit for Social Care has gone and children's social care has moved to the DfES. Meanwhile the flow of work from the social care information management and IT agenda seems to increase all the time.

IMG has been concerned to ensure that existing developments were not lost in these changes, that social care would continue to be part of information management developments such as the NHS National Programme for IT (NPfIT) while contact was made with new areas of social care. The growth in the number of developments and work in information is making this agenda increasingly complicated and there has also been a recognition of the need to enable and encourage consistency of standards across local government information management.

In response to these challenges IMG has been building new partnerships and encouraging more people to get involved with the social care information management agenda. Work is progressing with the Local e-government Standards Body on further development of the electronic social care record (ESCR) and the information governance toolkit. The DfES is now represented at the IMG meetings. Regional IMGs have been getting more actively involved, for example with the development of regional forums for the children's Integrated Care Record (ICS).

IMG reports to the ADSS Standards and Performance Committee. National IMG meetings are held four times a year and are hosted by the Department of Health. IMG has its own dedicated website www.adss-img.org.uk. Here you will find minutes of all the IMG meetings, copies of papers, reports from regional groups and other items and information related to the social care information management and IT agenda.

Patricia Walker
March 2005

➤ Standards and Performance Committee

Introduction

The Committee's areas of interest are:

- Quality and standards
- Regulation and inspection
- Performance assessment framework
- National Information Policy for Social Care and its integration with NHS Information Policy with a particular focus on SAP, ICS, ISA.

In addition to the main committee, two sub groups do detailed work on relevant areas:

- Information Management Group and
- Research Group.

Working Arrangements

Main Committee meets 3 times a year. A summary brief of the Committee's current 2004/5 work programme is:

POLICY THEME	WORK PROGRAMME	MAIN LINKS
1. Quality and Standards	1.1 Contribute to development of evidence based standards of quality and performance. 1.2 Identify and promote examples of good practice. 1.3 Promote the development of learning networks and learning organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government Departments ▪ LGA ▪ CSCI ▪ SCIE ▪ Centre for Evidence Based Social Services ▪ ADSS Research Group ▪ Research in Practice ▪ Making Research Count ▪ Consumer Groups ▪ Voluntary Organisations
2. Regulation and Inspection	2.1 Contribute to the development of policies and strategies in respect of: - Performance Assessment - Regulation and Inspection. 2.2 Promote good practice in the development and use of management information. 2.3 To give policy support to Technical Working Group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government Departments ▪ LGA ▪ CSCI ▪ SCIE ▪ ADSS Information Management Group ▪ SSRG
3. Implementation of Social Care Information Strategy	3.1 Provide policy lead for DH Strategic Plan, Information for Social Care. 3.2 Provide policy lead for Electronic Social Care Record. 3.3 Joint policy lead with Older People's Committee on implementation of Single Assessment Process. 3.4 Joint policy lead with Children and Families Committee on implementation of Information Sharing and Assessment and Integrated Children's System. 3.5 Providing policy lead for social care link with NHS National Programme for IT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government Departments ▪ NHS ▪ LGA ▪ Social Care Systems Suppliers ▪ ADSS Policy Committees ▪ ADSS IMG ▪ NHS Regional Implementation Directors ▪ Local Service Providers (NPfIT)

Key representatives from the Standards and Performance Committee have also been asked and agreed to sit on a Performance Co-ordinating Group, comprising of: CSCI; DH; DfES and LGA (it is estimated that this group will also meet 3 times per year).

Commentary

Much work has been done this year to maintain and improve the links with CSCI on inspection and performance issues (e.g. annual performance assessment mechanisms, performance indicators and key thresholds, performance indicator bandings and the associated input to technical working groups etc) and continuing to maintain and encourage links with the DH and DfES in respect of data collections, performance indicator development and associated performance measurement.

Alan Bunting
March 2005

➤ Research sub-committee

The ADSS research sub-committee has been heavily involved in furthering discussion of the promotion of ethical practice in social care research. This has included attention to the problem of experimental practice and policy innovations not defined as research that do not involve the participation by service users on an informed consent basis, as well as the inevitable preoccupation of some researchers with the process of ethical review.

ADSS has been particularly concerned to make directors aware of their responsibilities to ensure that all experimental activity and any research defined as such is subject to appropriate ethical review and is also implemented ethically.

On other fronts, the sub-committee has sought to develop plans alongside SCIE, for achieving effective dissemination of best practice at a local and regional level.

Paul Kiff
March 2005

3. The Assembly for Social Care and Social Work Education and Research.

Much has been achieved during the past 12 months. Key events have occurred validating, ratifying and reinforcing the existence of the Assembly as an organisation, thereby underlining its immediate future.

A Forum took place in June with up to a dozen bodies nationally representative of social care, social work education and research being invited to attend. The day was intended to debate and discuss the existence and any subsequent development of the organisation; also its relevance to the current changing environment. Afterwards representatives took the day's messages back to their respective bodies with information on the day, they were also asked for a decision over future support from their executive. Total support and positive feedback was received from the vast majority of participating bodies. This gave the impetus to proceed.

During the course of the year it became clearer to all concerned that with ever increasing changes being proposed and brought in by government, the requirement for a truly independent organisation with the Assembly's aims and objectives was becoming increasingly urgent.

Since the support was confirmed following the Forum, a work programme has been developed.

This programme included securing funding on a 3 year basis initially beginning spring 2005, establishing an infrastructure, and producing documentation. As with any newly formed grouping raising the profile, building alliances, engagement – public relations generally – needs to be geared up. To this end working with constituent member bodies, widening membership, organising conferences, targeting national events, promoting public understanding and linking with service users/providers, other professional bodies and disabled persons organisations have been included as key activities in 2005.

Colin Kelsey
March 2005

NB A table summarising SSRG partnerships and alliances can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Appendix 1

Draft SSRG ACTION PLAN 2005/2006

This Draft Action Plan is to be put to the SSRG AGM on 12th April 2005.

Policy Statement	Activity to progress	Details	Responsibility
We continue to promote the place of research , information, planning and evaluation activities in the social care & health worlds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend Partnerships with targeted universities, independent research organisations, health and social care and civil service communities. 	Active partnerships with The Academy, The Assembly, ADSS, DoH, DfES, Health Networks, REU.	EC members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a programme of workshops and events of interest to the research community. 	Programme agreed, documented and timetabled.	EC Members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence the modernising agenda nationally by being party to new research and management information developments. 	Participation with SCIE, Research Governance & PAF developments.	EC members
We expand the community of interest in research, information, planning and evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase our membership and progress our Membership Strategy. 	Increased total membership and reduce numbers of members who do not renew.	EC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new alliances with social care and health research organisations. 	Establish alliances with e.g. JUC/SWEC, SWRA, SRA.	Chair
We increase and improve the profile of the SSRG network nationally, regionally and locally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress our Marketing and Communications Strategy. 	Detailed action points in the strategy to be achieved.	EC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement our Equal Opportunities Action Plan to increase representation and participation of minority groups in SSRG activities. 	Detailed action points in the Action Plan to be achieved.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the active contributions of members. 	Use initiatives to draw on members' expertise.	EC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve communications with members through expanding the website and e-mail facilities, and increasing the co-ordination of administrative activities. 	Web site improvements in place, "e" mail distribution arrangements working, administrative improvements achieved.	Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Sec.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and promote regional activity. 	Assisting regions to progress their programmes.	EC

David Allan, Chair of SSRG. March 2005

Appendix 2

SSRG PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES

Name of the Organisation or Committee	Date when SSRG became involved	Reason for SSRG involvement: Aims and Objectives or benefits to SSRG	Nature of the alliance	Frequency and type of involvement with the organisation/committee.	Reporting and communication arrangements to SSRG of partnership / alliance activities	Last date SSRG EC reviewed alliance / Other comments
ADSS Standards and Performance Committee SSRG contact person: Alan Bunting, SSRG Treasurer	July 2004	Shared interests in promoting improved performance management agenda, influencing policy, standards, guidance, annual PAF processes and performance monitoring in general for CSSR's	Partnership, SSRG invited representative on the Committee	Main Committee - 3 meetings per year, plus sub-group meetings as required	Via EC and Newsletter reports	2004
The Assembly. SSRG contact person: Colin Kelsey. [pu dkelsey@yahoo.co.uk]	2000/2001.	SSRG as one of the founder members of this virtual organisation and is one of the 10 current bodies signed up to the Assembly's aims after the June 2004 Forum. Benefits from association with the Assembly include access to a wider person and activity base thereby fulfilling some intentions within the Business Plan.	SSRG forms part of the umbrella network which the Assembly seeks to draw together. SSRG holds a strong relationship with SCIE and a developing role with the non-statutory sector independent grouping represented by the Assembly.	The Assembly meets around 3 or 4 times a year inviting a representative from each of its constituent bodies in the network on each occasion.	The Assembly is frequently an agenda item at EC. Otherwise its development will be discussed at the Away Day as an activity in the business plan.	At the June 2004 Forum the need for creating the Assembly was debated, after which constituent bodies were asked to decide within their own groupings as to its existence. The decision was for overwhelming support including from SSRG. The need appears to have increased since.

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BASW. SSRG contact person: Colin Kelsey pudkelsey@yahoo.co.uk	2004/5	BASW has certain common interests with those of SSRG especially in furthering the futures of social Care, education and research in the present change environment. It may be possible to do some joint work, perhaps starting with a conference or workshop. This will be explored during 2005.		No regular contact/meeting envisaged at present. There is informal regular contact at Assembly venues.	Evaluation of alliances occurs at the SSRG autumn Away Day. Any specific issues will be brought to EC.	BASW has only reached a possible position of being in partnership with SSRG in 2004 and this will be examined in 2005.
Race Equality Unit SSRG contact person/s: Jenny Wilding Patricia Walker Elijah Collins	Long standing relationship Autumn 2003 → organising May 2004 conference	Promoting work on equal opportunities issues. Raising SSRG profile re BME issues. Organising joint work on equal opportunities issues, e.g. jointly organised conference on racism and ethnicity in May 2004.	Partnership for joint working / information exchange.	Not on any of their committees. Contact as required.	Report back to SSRG EC meetings.	Not reviewed. Discuss at 2005 EC Awayday.

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<p>UK Federation of Primary Care Research Organisations</p> <p>SSRG contact person: Mick Bond, North Derbyshire Public Health Network 01246-514266 mick.bond@chesterfieldpct.nhs.uk</p>	<p>Summer 2004</p>	<p>Aim to develop closer working links between the two bodies particularly on the research interface between health and social care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Links on websites ▪ Information in newsletters on a regular basis ▪ Representation /presence at annual workshops ▪ Organisation of a joint research event in 2005-6. 		<p>Mick Bond and David Allan will report back on joint meetings held to EC on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Propose the arrangement is reviewed in January 2006 or before the 2006 workshop.</p>
<p>Research Governance implementation in social care External Consultative Group</p> <p>SSRG contact person: Martin Stevens – Vice-Chair SSRG EC</p>	<p>2002</p>	<p>Aim to support and influence the implementation of Research Governance in Social Care.</p> <p>This is an area of particular interest and relevance to SSRG members almost all of whom will be affected, either as those responsible for implementing RG, or through having to negotiate the new procedures.</p>	<p>SSRG has had several members on the group and been involved in several discrete projects: the RG- Resource pack, RG Training workshops and RG Baseline assessment exercise.</p>	<p>Ad-hoc meetings, (between 3 and 6 a year).</p>	<p>Regular updates to EC.</p>	<p>Not reviewed.</p> <p>Comments: This is perhaps a limited alliance as the group itself may not continue indefinitely. However there is probably an ongoing role for SSRG in Research Governance.</p>

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ADSS Research sub-committee SSRG contact person: David Allan from March 2005	Do not know	To provide an official SSRG perspective on issues that concern ADSS research sub-committee.	SSRG has right to nominate an SSRG rep to the committee.	It meets about every 3 months.	Rep provides report to SSRG Exec meetings.	Not reviewed. Comments: A number of SSRG individuals are also involved with ADSS committee. This sometimes clouds official SSRG input.
ADSS Information Management Group (IMG) SSRG contact person: Patricia Walker patricia.walker@haringey.gov.uk	Not sure	ADSS IMG invited SSRG to send a representative to the meetings. The benefit for SSRG is keeping in touch with developments in the information management agenda in the DoH and the NHS national programme for IT (NPfIT), and since children's social care moved to the DfES, with developments in DfES as well. It also gives SSRG a voice at the national level in this area of work and an opportunity to publicise the work of SSRG in relation to the information management agenda.	Representative.	Attendance at the quarterly ADSS IMG meetings.	Report back to Executive Committee meetings, articles for SSRG newsletter.	2004 Comments: Will need to watch future developments in social care following the Children Act 2004 and see how they impact on organisations such as ADSS.

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SCIE SSRG contact person: SSRG Chair David Allan	2002	A mutually beneficial partnership was formed that covered the following points: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SCIE would host and help to further develop SSRG's website. 2. SCIE's Knowledge Management Strategy includes a "research into practice" approach with SSRG assisting in this. 3. SCIE holds the electronic versions of RPP. 4. SSRG and SCIE are collaborating on a number of initiatives to further research into practice e.g. joint sponsors of a national conference concerned with research issues in the BME community. 	Formal partnership agreement.	Regular reviews and updates of partnership agreement and a co-opted member from SCIE on the SSRG Executive Committee.	Regular reports to EC meetings from co-opted member.	Partnership agreement reviewed within last 12 months.