

SOCIAL SERVICES RESEARCH GROUP

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2000 to March 2001

AGM

HOVE, 15th June 2001

Report OF SSRG Chair to 2001 AGM

This report concludes my 3-year term of office as SSRG chair.

As with life in general, there are always more things that I would like to have seen the SSRG achieve in this period and more that I would like to have contributed.

On reflection, however, the SSRG has made some significant advances in a period of continuous change for the world of social care.

In the last year, the NEC have overseen the following significant developments:

- A major conference held in Northern Ireland
- A substantial review of SSRG direction and organisation
- Development of links with other professional networks in the field of social care research
- Participation in the development of PAF, the Social Care Quality Strategy and SCIE
- Provision of support to the ADSS small research grants scheme
- Presentation of RP&P and further developments on the SSRG website

As chair of the NEC, I have been fortunate to have the support of its other members in my own work and been observant of how other members carry out their own tasks and responsibilities to a high standard.

On this NEC, there have been no passengers!

SSRG members owe a considerable debt to the ways in which NEC members give up their own time to NEC and SSRG business

Although some of the NEC will be stepping down from roles which they have maintained for some time and will, hopefully, be able to continue as members in new capacities, others will have departed the scene altogether.

This includes Anne McGlade who has taken up a new post which prevents her from continuing as our newsletter editor, in which position, she was responsible for developing the quality product that we now enjoy.

Carol Lupton and Lesley Saunders, joint editors of RP&P will also be standing down at the AGM after a period in which the quality of this journal has gone ever upwards.

Fortunately, we have some new enthusiasts to take SSRG forwards but, as ever, the NEC will continue to need new blood to help share out the workload. Members who do volunteer for NEC membership or who can help in other ways will witness, first-hand what can be achieved for the entire social care research, information and planning community by the collective effort of a few.

Paul Kiff
June 2001

Secretary's Report for SSRG Annual Workshop 2001

The NEC has spent the last year in deliberations about the future direction of the SSRG, and how to refocus the organisation towards the research agenda, after several years of having performance management as one of the major priorities.

Another important area of discussion has been how to attract new members, both to the national organisation and to the National Executive Committee, and how the regional networks can be revived where they have lapsed. We need new ideas, innovations and initiatives as a new stimulus to the organisation, and to do this we need to ensure we actively recruit.

The Journal is due to have a change of Editor in 2001 after five years of able leadership by Lesley Saunders and Carol Lupton, an efficient team who produced three editions of RPP per year to an enviable standard. Their work has set a high standard for the new editorial team. Lesley and Carol have also taken forward plans to have RPP produced and distributed through a partnership with a commercial publisher, with electronic publication part of the package. This will need to be continued by the new editor.

Our Newsletter Editor will also be changing; Anne McGlade has recently been appointed to a new post in the Northern Ireland Equalities Commission, we wish her every success in this new and exciting role. Meanwhile, David Henderson has been ably covering, with some staunch support from colleagues in Shropshire.

All these changes lead me to my own resignation. April 2000 to March 2001 has been my last year as Secretary of the NEC, after serving my three years. It is time to move on, giving someone new the chance to gain experience of this post, and bring new ideas and strengths to the Committee.

In October I spent some hours clearing out old Agendas and Minutes, going back to the 1980's. This was an interesting but quite sad job, because many past secretaries have put so much effort into recording the progress of SSRG over the years. It was also necessary, to make it easier to concentrate on future work, and not overburden the next Secretary with too many papers. He or she will have copies of policy documents, Annual Reports and Treasurer's Reports and more recent Agendas and Minutes.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work for you for the last three years, it has been a most enjoyable and stimulating experience.

Joyce Phillips, Secretary of the SSRG April 1998 to March 2001

Report of Publicity/Events Officer

Introduction

This report covers activity relating to publicity and publications, the SSRG website and events held during the calendar year ending 31 December 2000. It also considers proposals for developments during 2001 consistent with the aims and objectives of SSRG

Publicity Sub-Group

Personal and work commitments meant that the publicity sub-group met on only three occasions during 2000, and not all members were able to attend these meetings. Therefore we were not able to discuss some issues in the depth that was warranted.

Thanks to Alan Bunting, Colin Kelsey and Brian McClay for their help.

Publicity and Publications

The following were achieved or maintained during 2000:

- Made sure that documents were available in the appropriate quantity, design and format:
 - Stationery (headed paper, compliment slips, etc)
 - Policy Documents (user involvement; code of good practice, performance indicators; etc)
 - SSRG membership/application forms
- Arranged for printing of two editions of 'Research Policy and Planning' following receipt of camera-ready copies from the Journal Editorial Board. Unfortunately, the final line or two at the bottom of each page of Vol 18(2) was missing. This was an error on behalf of the printers, and this edition was reprinted.
- Regular contributions to the SSRG newsletter (the infamous 'what's on' page, and various summaries of government policy documents).

At the November NEC, I agreed to take on the role of Newsletter editor on a temporary basis. This was because Anne McGlade had stood down (earlier than anticipated) because of professional commitments. Therefore there was some preparatory work toward the end of the year in order to produce the January edition

- Production of materials (labels, programmes etc) for national events

SSRG Website

The SSRG website is maintained and developed in partnership with NISW. Thanks to Mark Watson and Karen Winchester for their continued support, advice and technical expertise.

During 2000, SSRG members were encouraged to participate in the e-groups facility, the advantages of which were discussed on the website and in the newsletter. The response was slow to begin with, but latterly Mark Watson agreed to act on behalf of members, with their permission, to add addresses and details onto the e-groups.

However, this facility has not been taken up as much as we would have liked, nor has progress been made on developing a database of members' interests. This will be a priority in 2001.

Events

I was involved as 'sole' organiser of two events in 2000:

- January 25th 'Quality Protects: Policy, Research and Management Information' at the Council House in Birmingham
- July 13th and 14th 'Neighbourhood Statistics and Consumer Surveys: Providing Local Services for Local People?' at the North East Wales Institute in Wrexham

I also assisted in organising:

- 'You and Your Services - First: Rhetoric or Reality?' at the Stakis Park Hotel in Templepatrick, County Antrim on 11 February 2001.
- The SSRG 'away day' at the Royal Hotel in Kingussie, Scotland.
- the 2001 Annual workshop in partnership with colleagues in Northern Ireland

Thanks to Jackie Watson for her help.

Agenda for 2001

In keeping with SSRG aims and objectives, priorities for 2001 will include:

- *Publicity and publications*: ensure that the appropriate quantities of stationery and other documents are available and, where appropriate, accessible via a variety of media. We will review and if necessary revise the existing policy documents.
- *SSRG website*: look at the practicalities of changing the suffix of the address from 'co.com' to org.com'; add information on members' interests; develop e-groups; look at commercial opportunities. Also establish links to websites that provide information on research philosophy and methodology.
- *Events*: ensure that events reflect the 'refocus on research' proposals, as well as keeping in touch with the performance, planning and policy agenda at local and national levels.
- *Encourage SSRG members to become more active on NEC; in sub groups or in SSRG regions, by assisting in organising local or national events; or by submitting articles and papers to the Journal or newsletter; through the website, or by enabling colleagues in their organisation to do so.*

David Henderson
June 2001

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES - REVIEW OF ACTION PLAN 2000-01

At the Away Day of NEC members held at Kingussie in November 2000, equal opportunities was flagged up as an issue, under a more general discussion of regional and national membership.

The question raised was "are we representative?", it was agreed to review the membership and to carry out a telephone survey to find out more about where the bulk of membership came from.

From this, we need to find out the proportions of membership by:

- ◆ gender
- ◆ disability
- ◆ ethnicity

We concluded that we need a thorough analysis of membership records, by age, gender, disability, service responsibility and region - by end of Dec 2001

Profile Mapping would also be good.

Practice and Technical

The SSRG needs to ensure that outputs are within our own equalities framework - e.g. literature, conferences, newsletter, research outputs

Some issues of note:

- ◆ SSRG ethnic monitoring is not in line with 2001 Census categories
- ◆ SSRG does not carry out ethnic monitoring of conference delegates
- ◆ We need to check whether disability monitoring is on the SSRG membership form
- ◆ Venues for events - e.g. Kingussie, may make it impossible for some people to attend, e.g. people with child care responsibilities
- ◆ RPP Journal Editors - not advertised outside the membership
- ◆ Who monitors the NEC???Self policing

Review of Membership Records

We noted that after next year, the membership secretary will be resigning, and we felt that there should be a transition period - for membership records and documents to be gradually transferred to NISW/SCIE (or to the next membership secretary)

Transition / First base task for new membership secretary:

- ◆ thoroughly revise the current equal opportunities policy

drastic surgery - felt we might be able to achieve this by June - may need to offer options to the AGM, with examples of equal opportunities policies from other organisations.

Conclusion - new initiatives which we feel should be pursued

- ◆ new equal opps policy.
- ◆ membership database - analysis of anonymised data for five or so days - (pay someone?).

- ◆ potential for training/event
- ◆ everybody to have a responsibility for equal opportunities
- ◆ someone co-opted for one year to take lead on review of equal opportunities, to be targeted from an organisation specialising in the field of equalities (AM)

The attached action plan includes these.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ACTION PLAN 20001/02

Two members of the NEC, Saheed Ullah and Joyce Phillips reviewed the 2000/01 SSRG Equal Opportunities Action Plan, and looked at the ongoing initiatives, reviewed last year's priorities, and made recommendations for priorities for the coming year.

Ongoing Initiatives

- ◆ Difficult to interpret meaning of this initiative - nothing published in newsletter on equalities practice issues for research.
- ◆ No monitoring of membership from equal opportunities perspective in last year to our knowledge.
- ◆ No redesign of membership form in last year to our knowledge.
- ◆ SSRG did not achieve a co-opted rep for equalities during the last year.
- ◆ SSRG has not monitored the equal opportunities policies and practices of other groups to our knowledge e.g. ADSS, ALSISS.
- ◆ respond to and support - bit vague, difficult to determine whether this has been achieved.

Review of Last Year's Priorities identified in the 2000 Action Plan

- ◆ We have reviewed the lack of equal opportunities activities, and identified a number of areas which need action.
- ◆ The need for a champion for equal opportunities has not been addressed.
- ◆ No real discussion of equal opportunities this year at NEC meetings (supposed to be a standing item on the NEC Agenda according to Equal Opps Policy item 8)

Priorities identified for 2001/02 Equal Opportunities Action Plan

- ◆ draft a new equal opportunities policy (looking at existing best practice models).
- ◆ carry out thorough review of membership database - including analysis of anonymised data - need to explore potential for externalising this work.
- ◆ potential for training/event for equal opportunities to be explored, targeted at regional membership.
- ◆ all NEC members to have a responsibility for equal opportunities.
- ◆ a co-optee to take lead on review of equal opportunities, to be targeted from an organisation specialising in the field of equalities.