



# **SSRG**

**The network for research information  
planning & evaluation in social,  
housing & health services**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2001/2**

### SSRG CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

The last twelve months in the research, health and social care worlds has been a time of continued and fundamental changes. The health community has been reconfigured with new organisations forming. The social care world has been subjected to further adaptations to ways of measuring performance, and research has seen the setting up of SCIE and the development of research governance frameworks. SSRG has been trying to hold a steady course in these turbulent waters.

We set an ambitious yet straightforward action plan to strengthen our position as an independent network organisation, seeking to maintain our principles of promoting the place of research in the public sector, while expanding our influence and profile. After the disappointment of not having our annual workshop in Belfast last Easter, because of the foot and mouth outbreak, we regrouped and held our AGM at a Brighton event in June. We then embarked on a well attended and successful series of national conferences on information for social care and research governance frameworks.

We allied ourselves more closely with ADSS to deliver joint responses to a number of DoH initiatives concerned with the performance agenda. We remain concerned that a number of research and performance proposals coming from DoH are not embracing the principles on which we stand. We therefore continue to campaign to have in place approaches that make sense to the research, social care and policy making communities. We continue to be involved in the PAF development group and technical working groups that are grappling with these changes.

We have actively sought alliances with our academic colleagues and have joined "The Academy" and newly formed "Assembly" to build the bridges between the academic world, the social care policy world and research practitioners. We have also been looking to work more closely with research colleagues in the health sector, with presentations at the UK Federation of primary care networks annual conference, and future joint events with primary care groups in the pipeline.

We have given particular attention to our internal organisation, proposing significant changes to our constitution to enable us to be a more flexible organisation, and strengthen our administrative arrangements to provide a better service to our members. Our publications have continued to be well received with both the RPP and our regular newsletter being given facelifts. We also continue to maintain a healthy financial position following our successful events. While all Executive Committee members have worked hard at making the last twelve months successful for SSRG, particular thanks needs to be extended to David Henderson, our events organiser, for his sterling work.

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In addition, can I take the opportunity of thanking Brian McClay, who is stepping down as Membership Secretary after fourteen years of admirable work in this position.

We look to have new members joining SSRG this year, and pulling some old members who have had career changes back into the fold. We continue to have ambitions for SSRG next year with a programme of activities and improvements to take us forward. Let's hope the coming twelve months will be as exciting and progressive as the previous twelve months.

David Allan  
Chair SSRG  
March 2002

## TREASURER'S REPORT

### Summary of Accounts at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001.

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001 the financial position of SSRG was £13,151.95 (the accumulated funds), as compared with £16,643.91 in 2000.

Total income during the year was £23,064.03 as compared with £41,270.06 in 2000.

The total expenditure during the year was £26,555.99 as compared with £44,591.46 in 2000.

The accounts show an overall deficit of £3,491.96 as compared to a deficit of £3,321.40 in 2000.

### Commentary

It must be taken into consideration that SSRG did not hold its Annual Workshop in 2000 (which is the key event for the organisation during the year).

### Action

The Executive Committee will be seeking authorisation from the AGM to increase membership fees by £10 in 2003.

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

Mr. A Bunting (SSRG), City of Salford,  
Community & Social Services,  
Crompton House, 100 Chorley Road,  
Swinton, Salford M27 6BP  
Tel: 0161 793 2868 Fax: 0161 794 019  
e-mail: [alan.bunting@salford.gov.uk](mailto:alan.bunting@salford.gov.uk)

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Having taken over this position from Joyce Phillips last year, I can say that her warnings that piles of paperwork would be generated have proved all too correct! Storage space for the historical papers passed over by Joyce has now been found, which should hopefully stop my spare room becoming repository for SSRG papers.

The last twelve months have seen an average of 13 EC members attending the meetings, in London, Leicester, Norfolk and Birmingham.

### **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT 2001.**

By the end of 2001, membership stood at 357 consisting of 312 corporate members and 45 personal members. While the numbers of personal members has remained substantially unchanged there has been a drop in corporate membership compared to 2000. However, in the stringent financial climate within which agencies operate it is encouraging that many of them have still retained their membership of SSRG.

Membership dropped in all regions except Yorkshire and Humberside. The main reason for the overall drop of just over thirty is accounted for by the reduction in the numbers in Northern Ireland where the majority of members who joined as a result of attendance at the Day Workshop in Antrim in February 2000 and did not renew their membership. It is possible that some of these members would have renewed membership if the Annual Workshop in Northern Ireland earlier in the year had not been cancelled due the Foot and Mouth restrictions. Again, other potential new members in Northern Ireland may well have joined SSRG attracted by the proposed programme of events at that Workshop.

Our experience is that the policy of offering discount rates to attenders at SSRG seminars and workshops has attracted new members and this policy will be maintained during the coming year. Whilst over two thirds of the membership work within social services/social work departments and other council based departments, there has been an increase in the numbers of independent/freelance members, who see SSRG as a network where they can contribute and also obtain support.

Following the NEC away day, important aspects of the strategy for the year ahead, are to increase membership and to make information about members and their work interests available on the SSRG website. In order to facilitate this a new membership form is being designed which will capture this information with more precision than we have been able to do in the past.

Finally, as I stand down after more than a decade in office, I would like to thank colleagues on the NEC and in the wider membership, who have supported and assisted me to maintain the membership records as accurately possible.

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### SSRG Membership 1991 – 2001

REGION	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Chiltern	28	26	25	23	17	16	11	10	7	9	9
Eastern	14	12	16	18	14	14	17	15	13	11	11
London	107	108	85	88	70	62	64	73	61	59	58
Midlands	71	69	71	79	67	63	68	77	73	69	68
N.Ireland	6	8	6	9	9	8	10	6	8	30	8
Nth West	27	28	31	39	35	33	30	25	28	26	26
Scotland	81	78	69	65	71	79	91	71	73	51	50
Sth East	54	55	66	76	74	64	58	61	55	49	48
Sth West	35	42	30	27	27	22	25	25	25	31	28
Wales	10	8	7	7	5	8	17	23	21	22	19
Yorks/Hum	31	35	33	37	35	40	41	35	38	31	32
Overseas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
TOTAL	464	469	439	468	424	409	433	422	402	388	357

Brian McClay  
Membership Secretary.

### REPORT OF PUBLICITY/EVENTS OFFICER

This report covers activity relating to publicity and publications, the SSRG website and events held during the calendar year ending 31 December 2001.

#### Publicity and Publications

The following documents were produced and distributed during the year:

- Stationery (headed paper and compliment slips)
- Policy Documents (user involvement; code of good practice, collaborative research, equal opportunities and SSRG objectives)
- SSRG membership/application forms

I also made regular contributions to the SSRG newsletter (the infamous 'what's on' page, and various summaries of government policy documents).

At the November 2000 NEC, I agreed to take on the role of Newsletter editor on a temporary basis and produced four editions in 2001.

#### SSRG Website

The SSRG website is maintained and developed in partnership with NISW. Thanks to Tracy Stiles, Mark Watson and Karen Winchester for continued support, advice and technical expertise. During 2001, we worked together to reconfigure the site and develop new pages for SSRG members.

#### Events

**January 2001** As part of the SSRG objective to 're-focus on research', a meeting was held between members of the Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee (JUC/SWEC), the Association of Professors of Social Work (APSW), the Social Work Research Association and SSRG. The purpose was to explore the role and function of these organisations and to look at possibilities of sharing future agendas. Thanks to Robin Lovelock for organising this event.

**April 2001** The Annual Workshop, due to be held for the first time in Northern Ireland at Greenmount College, was regrettably cancelled due to restrictions imposed during the 'foot and mouth' epidemic. The organisers, David Bickerstaff, Anne McGlade and myself were bitterly disappointed because of all the hard work that was carried out in putting together a formidable programme.

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**June 2001** *'Promoting Research - Friendly Organisations'* was held in Hove Town Hall near Brighton and proved to be enormously successful. It was organised by Margaret Cooney from SSRG with support from Martin Stevens and the Toronto Group, and assistance from myself. The SSRG AGM was held at his event.

**June 2001** Work commenced on organising the SSRG Annual Workshop for 2002, and Leicester University was confirmed as the venue.

**November 2001** I organised the SSRG NEC away day that was held in Cromer, Norfolk.

**November 2001** Another successful event, *'Information for Social Care'* was held at the Council House in Birmingham, and was organised jointly by Paul Kiff and myself.

Finally, I would like to thank the SSRG part-time co-ordinator, Jackie Watson for her hard work.

David Henderson  
April 2002

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

I am currently acting as the Newsletter Editor, having taken over from David Henderson, who took up the reins after Anne McGlade moved on to a new job at the Equalities Commission in Northern Ireland.

Last year we managed to produce the regular five copies a year, hopefully to the same standard as set by Anne over the years of her editorship. I recently went through some of the SSRG Archives and found an August edition dating back to 1988. In those days it was a mere four pages long, and did not have the range of articles it has today.

It was interesting to see the different names of the Executive Committee back then. Terrie Alafat, one of Kensington and Chelsea's Directors was one of them, she is currently off on a secondment, but spoke highly of SSRG when I first came to work here.

The main focus of the Newsletter then was on regional activities, with short reports, letters and feedback from members. Two interesting reports were on ethnic monitoring, then in its infancy, and on black representation within SSRG, both important issues today. Colin Kelsey, who is still on the NEC wrote the item on ethnic monitoring, which was about a three year collaborative project between the National Institute of Social Work, SSRG, and the REU.

It is good to think that the SSRG policy of collaborative working was strong back then, and has continued to be one of its strengths. What is fun about editing the Newsletter is the way we work – I get a lot of support from David in Shropshire, it is set on a Mac by Jenny Edwards also in Shropshire, printed in Northern Ireland by Data Plus, the labels come from Brian McClay in Bradford, and the articles come from anyone across the nation who is willing to have their arm twisted.

Over the coming year, I or my successor will be working with an Editorial Board (which may be a virtual one over the internet) to produce a further five editions.

I am always pleased to hear what people think of the Newsletter, and to receive articles from you. Once again, thank you to all contributors, both past and present.

Joyce Phillips,

Acting Newsletter Editor

**RESEARCH, POLICY AND PLANNING  
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**Production**

The new editors have moved the base of the journal to the University of Hull and set up new production systems. In consultation with the Executive Committee, it was decided that the Editorial Board should not pursue negotiations with Pavilion Publishing further, primarily because the company did not seem able to guarantee continued free on-line access to the journal. After comparing printing costs, it was agreed that the journal should be printed and distributed from Hull.

In 2001, a shortage of copy meant that the publication of volume 19 was somewhat delayed, but the new editors have been concentrating on building up sufficient contributions to bring the journal in line with publication dates for 2002. The publicity leaflet has been revised and will be widely circulated throughout 2002 to solicit contributions and subscriptions.

**Work of the Editorial Board**

The membership of the editorial board has been extended with the inclusion of Leandra Box, Research Manager at REU; Dr Jon Glasby of the University of Birmingham, who takes over from Nicky Stanley as Book Review Editor, and Karen Winchester of SCIE. Karen will be starting a regular feature in the journal providing an overview of current research.

The editors are grateful to the Board for its support and commitment over the last year and wish to particularly thank Mark Watson who has contributed to strengthening the journal's links with SCIE. They plan to launch a new Advisory Board in 2002 to widen the support base of the journal and to develop its links with key networks. Offers of assistance with reviewing books are welcome and should now be made to the journal's new book review editor. The editors would like to thank the Executive Committee for its support through the period of transition and look forward to continuing the work of the journal in covering national initiatives and debates in the coming year.

Nicky Stanley and Jill Manthorpe  
Joint Editors, RPP

## REGIONAL REPORTS

### (i) Yorkshire , Humberside and North East Regional Report - 2001.

#### Officers.

Treasurer: Chris Melotte  
Editorial Board Representative: Mick Bond  
N.E.C. Representative: Brian McClay

#### Activities

Increasing demands on staff time have meant that it has become more difficult to organise events in the region. However, members in the region have supported the workshops and seminars organised by the N.E.C.

#### Finance.

At the end of the year, the balance of the region's account was:

Deposit Account: £326.53  
Current Account: £ 56.59

#### Membership

The figures for Membership over the last five years were:

Year	Corporate	Personal	Total
1997	35	6	41
1998	28	7	35
1999	31	7	38
2000	24	7	31
2001	24	8	32

#### National Links

**Brian McClay** represents the region at the NEC which he also attends in his capacity as National Membership Secretary.

**Mick Bond** represents the region on the Editorial Board of the SSRG Journal "Research, Policy and Planning".

**Jill Manthorpe and Nicky Stanley** from The Department of Social Work, University of Hull, have now been appointed Joint Editors of the SSRG Journal and their experience of editing other social work periodicals is invaluable to the Editorial Board.

#### Future Plans

It is hoped in the year ahead that networking between members can be developed so that ideas can be shared and views exchanged.

Brian McClay  
Regional Representative

### (ii) South East Region Report - 2001

#### Summary

In keeping with our purpose, we identified the core business of the SE Region through a series of workshops and meetings held 1999/2000. This led us to focus on the most relevant aspect of the SSRG to our membership by deciding:

⇒ ***To investigate the means by which localised forums may be established to assist practising staff in carrying out their own research and in using existing research-based knowledge.***

In further discussions, we decided that this might be done by setting up an electronic network, supported by face to face small scale localised 'research into practice' seminars. We planned a seminar/exhibition (with our next AGM) to test out this idea. The first date of 24 October 2000 slipped over to 15 June 2001, when the event was held in conjunction with the national SSRG Annual Workshop and AGM. This had been postponed from April in Northern Ireland due to an exceptional low booking and the foot and mouth epidemic, which then pushed the SE Region's AGM back to 4 March 2002. Despite the earlier difficulties, the SSRG Annual Workshop turned out to be a very successful event. It was held in association with the South East Authorities Research and Information Group (SEARIG) at Hove Town Hall, and attended by over 100 people.

Rising work pressures and the speed of continual change has distracted members from attending committee meetings and from planning regional events. However, there is no shortage of ideas for, or commitment to, the SSRG in principle. The tensions around the interface between the NHS and social services are supposed to ease with the new statutory framework for partnership and collaboration, but this will not happen without extensive improvements in interdisciplinary working at all levels. This increases an already intense need for collaborative research to support collaborative practice, which in turn enhances and clarifies the need for the SSRG.

Sheila Kesby, Chair  
SSRG SE Region September 1999 – March 2002.

For copies of the full detailed report contact:

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