

"Linking up with LEARG"

It is a sign of the times that there has been no interaction between the Local Education Authorities Research Group (LEARG) since its inception in the late 1970's and the SSRG. It is a sign of the future that we are now making links.

Traditionally, LEARG is a self-help group which brings together Education Officers, Advisers and others involved in policy, planning, development, administration and research work in Local Education Authorities. There is no formal membership. Invitations for the Annual General Meeting, workshops and seminars promoted by the Group are sent to all LEAs. A General Committee, elected at the AGM takes responsibility for organisation of all matters.

One of the unusual elements of LEARG is it is still very informal. There is no membership fee structure and no paid secretariat. We run three seminars or workshops a year on topics of interest and usually incorporate input from the academic research community to start the session. This format allows us to run very economical sessions, usually at less than £75 per delegate, and we regularly have over 80 attendees. We usually use venues in Coventry and London which we have found accessible.

With the Children Act 2005 the emphasis has moved from education authorities to Children's Services and to reflect this change we have agreed to change our name to 'Children's Services Research Group (formerly LEARG)'. It's a bit of a mouthful, but we need to maintain our brand identity as well as acknowledging the remit that we are now facing.

The committee members are local practitioners and the focus of our work and our organisation structures are changing to become Children's Services and we welcome need to understand a broader agenda. We want to enable social care, education and health managers and professionals to share their experiences through workshops and seminars that are politically neutral and have a research based perspective. The need for this type of event seems to us to be as useful in the future as it has been in the past."

*Nigel Hill, Chair of LEARG and Head of Information and Research, Children's Services Dept, Hampshire County Council
Phone: 01962 846551*

Chair of SCIE will stand down in March 2006

Chair of SCIE Jane Campbell MBE has announced that she will step down as chair in March 2006, a year before her tenure expires.

Prior to being appointed as Chair of SCIE, Jane was Director of the National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) which she co-founded in 1996.

In the same year she co-authored a book called 'Disability Politics' and was recognised for her work in the Queen's 2001 birthday honours.

Jane will pursue her interest in social policy debates about human rights, life and death decision-making and emancipatory access to health and social care services. She feels that she would not be able to



simultaneously pursue these interests and maintain her role at SCIE.