News from the Parenting Network (PN)

It’s been a while since you heard from us – December 2016, in fact. At that time a conference was due to be held on “Commissioning for change in child and family services” – however, due to unforseen circumstances, this had to be cancelled.

In the meantime the network has reviewed its structure and purpose, with the result that significant change has occurred (however a lot of the network’s central tenets remain unchanged), which I will summarise:

1. Most importantly, the network has recommitted to stating its central aim of building a support base to facilitate change in the type of support available to all parents in their parenting role. Central to achieving this is the role of its supporters in informing the voice the network brings to policy makers and commissioners.
2. The administrative support for the network’s functioning, provided by the Centre for Effective Services (CES), came to an end in 2017. CES had provided support since the group’s inception (2010), without which the network would not have existed. The network has expressed its thanks to the CES.
3. The network underwent a widespread review in summer 2017, with the help of a facilitator, to reconsider its structure and purpose.
4. As a result, administrative support for the group is now provided by the Katharine Howard foundation (KHF). Again, without this, it would be impossible to function.
5. Stella Owens (CES) stepped down from the position of chairperson of the network in 2017. She had been in the chair since the beginning – an enormous debt of gratitude is due to her.
6. Roddy Quinn from the Irish College of General Practitioners (a GP in Sligo) was asked to take over the role of chairperson and agreed to do so from October 2017. An executive of the Steering Group came into existence around the same time to support Roddy. The membership of the Steering Group is also being strengthened, to make our work as effective as possible.
7. The webpage of the network has been transferred to [www.khf.ie](http://www.khf.ie) - there is a link to the network at the bottom of the KHF homepage. There is access to important papers generated by the network through this link.
8. An all-island meeting of policy makers, including commissioners, north and south, and the network Steering Group members, took place in Belfast in October 2017. This was very useful in bringing parenting support to a prominent place in the thinking of decision makers, and in providing Steering Group members with an update on the current thinking of people in decision-making positions in our area of interest.
9. One of the central planks of the network’s priorities is to maintain a link with supporters of our work. This link can be expressed in a number of ways, e.g. regular communication (such as this message), national meetings, etc. It is the group’s intention to renew and maintain these links.

So, even though it is a while since you have heard from us, it does not indicate a lack of activity – quite the contrary. We look forward to interacting with you in various ways over the coming time and using our combined efforts to raising these issues to the place on the agenda of decision-makers that they deserve.

Thank you.

Roddy Quinn (Chairperson).