

indeed has achieved, membership from a wide range of professional bodies; individuals also may join. A Bulletin will be published approximately every two months and the group will maintain all-party links with both chambers of Parliament.

The annual general meeting was enlivened by talks from Lord McGregor and Jane Hern, vice-chairman. The task was to educate politicians and lawyers about anomalies in the current Criminal Justice Bill. The Children Act, when replacing the relevant sections of the Children and Young Persons Act, England and Wales (1969), for the first time in 20 years separated welfare and justice issues with regard to young offenders.

Many regard this as a forward step, given that children in need of protection and substitute family care may have been "criminalised", in their own eyes and those of others, by the close association of justice and welfare issues in legal proceedings and because on occasion "welfare" responses to juvenile offending have been seen as intrusive. Statements such as "the child's right to justice" have become current.

However, the Criminal Justice Bill, concentrating as it does on legal/punitive responses to juvenile offending, has, in the view of the Consortium, failed to establish an effective pathway between the justice and welfare court systems in respect of young people. The need is for a power, and indeed duty, of the juvenile justice court to ask for appropriate social enquiry reports and referral to the appropriate family proceedings court, where it considers that a young person offending reflects concerns relevant to

the civil court. The Consortium wishes also for more considered critical evaluation of similarities and differences between the English, the Scottish, and European systems of juvenile justice.

In summary, the current aims of the Consortium are to support the principle behind the Children Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount. To achieve this requires critical, persistent evaluation of legislation, monitoring of the court system, the facilitation of communication between the Department of the Lord Chancellor and the Home Office and the establishment of a coherent support service of guardians, reporting officers, divorce court welfare and conciliation services linked with child protection and family placement teams operating within departments of social services. It must be linked also with the jurisdiction concerning domestic violence and family maintenance, the whole of which, in the view of the Consortium, must be retained within the court system rather than, as currently is proposed, partially separated off into an agency managed by the Department of Social Services.

The aims of the Family Courts Campaign were supported by The Royal College of Psychiatrists, the British Medical Association and a wide range of health professionals. The new Consortium deserves comparable support. A timely, accessible, adequately financed civil justice system is requisite to the physical and mental health of many of the most vulnerable children in our community and effective liaison with a family jurisdiction will be a legally required and appropriate duty for health professionals concerned with children and adolescents.

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People and places

Community psychiatry developments in Hong Kong

The logo of the Hong Kong New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association is a budding leaf which signifies a new leaf of life. This particular organisation has certainly flourished, and last year, celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. The association began in the 1950s as a mutual aid club run by a group of former psychiatric patients. In the early years, three small units – a male halfway house, a farm and an industrial sheltered workshop – were founded. With financial assistance from Social Welfare, the Community Chest of Hong Kong and also help from volunteer professionals, the association expanded and since its reorganisation to form New Life in 1965, has become a well established

welfare body. It has built many new halfway houses, hostels and workshops and recently pioneered a long-stay care home too.

Nine years ago, following a violent incident involving a psychiatric patient living in the community, New Life faced widespread opposition to its plans. It has, however, attempted to overcome public 'phobia and prejudice' through a programme of educational activities which aimed to increase the acceptability of community psychiatric rehabilitation. Looking into the future, the association hopes to extend its work beyond Hong Kong and will also be addressing more preventative aspects of mental health care.