



A New Year's Message from the Chairman

Dear Colleague,

The New Year has begun and we need to be mindful of what is ahead. Not yet out of a recession, we are also facing an election, which brings its own disruption. There will be many exaggerations on purely political agendas.

However as a charity we will need to stay focused on what Action for Sick Children can achieve over this next twelve months, and from where we have come and what we plan for the future.

The celebrations surrounding the 'Platt 50th Anniversary document' were a great triumph. The charity was honoured by a Lord Mayor's Reception in the Manchester Town Hall, a visit from Professor Ann Keen MP, Parliamentary Undersecretary for Health and members of the Platt family last November. Speakers included Dr Mary Lindsay, a paediatrician and psychiatrist, Dr Sheila Shribman from the Department of Health and Professor Terence Stephenson, President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. A new DVD titled '50 Years after Platt-Where are We Now?' was also launched and is available to purchase.

This year we will be faced with many difficulties which will be put down to the recession and 'government cuts'. Money will be tight but that is no excuse to cut back where services for sick children are provided and should continue. It is so easy to cut funding for children as they do not vote. It behoves us all to look at the way in which services for sick children can be delivered without detriment to children and their families, but maintaining quality and high standards.

The Platt celebrations highlight how far we have all come since its publication in 1959, but it also sheds light on aspects that have not been achieved as yet. So there is no room for complacency. A very important issue will be children's community nursing teams which are still very spasmodic across the country.

This year Action for Sick Children will again offer the Norah Rees Award for a master's dissertation from a nurse, and entry forms will soon be available.

The Dental Playbox will be developed to assist in health promotion, as a preventative policy in children's health. There are still depressing health inequalities existing throughout the country. Action for Sick Children needs to play a part in addressing these inequalities by

doing what Action for Sick Children does best, working alongside healthcare professionals and families to achieve the set targets. The Dental Playbox will support the education health promotion programme.

There is also the question of supporting children and young people in their involvement in looking at their needs. The planning tool developed by Action for Sick Children with NHS Involvement in 2009 is ideal to roll out. This will also address the question of moving from child to adult services (high on Action for Sick Children's agenda.) Of course the charity will be moving towards the celebration of 50 years in 2011. The charity began in making sure parents could stay in hospital with their sick child. Now Action for Sick Children is one of the most respected organisations called upon to advise in almost all aspects of the way in which healthcare services for children and young people are provided.

The message for 2010 must be for Action for Sick Children to ensure that despite the recession the charity guards against NHS trusts and others pulling back from innovative and proven approaches for services with the excuse of lack of funding from these authorities. Action for Sick Children needs to be more vigilant now than ever.

I wish everyone a successful year ahead and Good Luck. Please remember that every voice counts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Pamela A. Barnes". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that serves as a separator.

Pamela Barnes

Chairman

Action for Sick Children