

President's speech to Conference

18th May 2011

What Is To Be Done?

Good afternoon Conference! It is a great honour to stand before you as President of ADSW: the 35th in 42 years and the third to come forward from the Scottish Borders.

First, Donald McDonald in 1979 (the year that I qualified), then Sandy Cameron, who served as vice President while in the Borders but moved to South Lanarkshire before becoming President in 1996 and now me. This is a great, personal honour and continues the Association's link with the Borders that began in October 1969 when, as part of the preparations for the implementation of the Social Work (Scotland) Act, the newly appointed directors of social work gathered in Peebles. At that meeting, the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW) was formed.

Before I go further I must say a huge thank you to outgoing President Michelle Miller for her clarity and leadership over the past 12 months – 12 challenging months in which the association has had to face very big issues and has met them with robust responses.

Throughout it all she has led the association with clarity and determination and I will now look for her wise counsel as immediate past President.

In taking on the role of President, one looks around to see what support is available to make the best job possible. I am indeed fortunate to have such a strong team - the officers of ADSW, Sophie, Yvonne, Wendy and Jane offer excellent, professional support - not just to the Presidential Team but the membership of our organisation. At COSLA, Linda Bruce leads a team who bring this complex event together each year and ensures that every speaker

and guest feels welcome and back at base Lorna McDermott helps keep my two work roles on track.

My thanks also go to Scottish Borders Council, members and officers, for the support they have given me in leading social work, reviewing and rebuilding all our major service areas. We have renewed our compact with Borderers through consultation and communication and refreshed the idea of social work and what it can be.

When casting around for advice in the face of adversity earlier in this century, my Chief Executive, David Hume, called on one of our great past Presidents, the late Peter Bates, who told him “Scrap this ‘Lifelong Care Dept; with its diverse collection of responsibilities from emergency planning to swimming pools – and get yourself a Social Work Dept and a Director of Social Work”. So he did, and I’m here and I want to now share something with you.

In March I went back to the place where I began my social work career, what was then known as Leven Adult Training Centre in Fife. I had taken a two year break from a career in London as a trainee solicitor and responded to an advert in New Society calling for young graduates to come and work with ‘mentally handicapped people’. Recently, I noticed that what is now the Robert Gough Centre has a website and in the photographs there, I saw many faces I remembered so I wrote to Director Stephen Moore and asked if I could visit and meet them again.

- **so bear with me for four minutes** and reflect on these shared and parallel lives that span in many cases the entirety of the social work age.

Where once institutional care hung like a spectre behind an ageing parent, now men and women live independently, alone or with others. They may have their own transport as does Roberta, live with a sibling like Robert or with a co-tenant like Aileen.

So far so good, but they aspire to more, to independence, to employment, inclusion and citizenship and it is our duty to keep pace. Personalisation continues to be a priority and in the coming parliamentary session, the Self

Directed Care bill will become law and we will work to support it. We will be taking the work across the country supported by OLM who identified 6 pilot sites for personalisation

In the coming year we will seek an agreement across the sectors on what 'personalisation' looks like for children and families work aiming and ensure that the principles and values apply across the services.

Back to Leven, I am delighted to say that Robert, Roberta and Aileen have made the journey to Crieff to share this moment with us and I suggest you offer them a warm welcome.

So what is to be done?

Just two weeks beyond the Holyrood election we stand on the brink of a new era, a majority government in Edinburgh, a coalition in London and the biggest hole in public finances that anyone alive can remember.

What is to be done about public sector reform?

We know that the election saw a raised profile for the future of public sector bodies – and in particular, the future of social work. In their manifesto, the SNP state: *“we will deliver a single integrated system of health and social care across Scotland. This will ensure that the older person is at the centre of service delivery”*. This is a structural solution, not focused on outcomes and does not articulate the problem that is to be solved.

The Association has been very active on this issue in the past 12 months as you would expect us to be - both in public and private ways and I thought I should share with you my take on some of that.

This headline was splashed across The Herald on 2nd February:

“38,000 council workers facing a switch to NHS”

It referred to a speech given by Minister of Public Health, Shona Robison, on 1st February 2011 when she launched the Change Fund in Edinburgh. The article began: *“The Scottish Government is planning to shift responsibility for delivering adult community care from local authorities to health boards within two years.*

Our President wrote to the Minister and a meeting was arranged which I attended in support of Michelle.

Two things were striking about the exchange which it is reasonable to report without breaching confidentiality:

- First the Minister stood firmly by the article
- Second, **there was a pervasive air of disappointment attaching to adult social care** that seemed to be largely founded on a view that people were not leaving hospital quickly enough despite many initiatives and much public expenditure over the past decade.

We were told that there is now a consensus across politics that something has to change.

Shona Robison has been a good friend to social work in many respects and many will know of her previous career in the field of adult social care so it would be a foolish person indeed who did not listen carefully to the problem as she experienced it.

Around the same time I gave evidence to Sir John Arbuthnott’s ‘Expert Panel’ as they sought views on the Labour Party in Scotland’s proposal for a National Care Service. Before I gave evidence for ADSW, Sir John set out the issues:

- **an anxiety** about the growing older population – the population over 65 receiving care is predicted to increase to 126,000 in 2016

- **a concern** about the cost of care currently estimated to be £4.5bn of which £1.5bn estimated as the cost of unscheduled hospital care

As with the Minister so with Sir John, I would have to say that, that there was I could only describe as **a pervasive air of disappointment** attaching to adult social care.

It was hard to hear – and puzzling as so much of the past Parliament has seen great forward strides in the perception of and support for social work and social care.

So where does this disappointment stem from? Is it fair to judge adult social care on this single index?

And if it is, can it be said to be failing?

and if it can is it social work's responsibility alone?

Perhaps all the answers are in the affirmative – but somehow I doubt it. Perhaps we represent an easy shot, a soft target? For example;

Last May I was asked to represent ADSW at a televised election debate on BBC1 – '**Scotland Decides**'. I asked a panel that included the First Minister: '*Why is it that public sector workers, often modestly paid and driven by public service values should be punished for the failings of bankers and hedge fund managers*'. Politicians from all party's fell over themselves to tell me that it wasn't the fault of public service, of the social worker 'who's often villified' or home carer ('who does a job others wouldn't do') and that there was no logic behind the problems that we face.

But it seems that was then...

So we have to listen and decide how we, as a professional association, can be a **friend of good government**, how we can better define the problems to be solved and then work with government towards a well evidenced solution that can build upon all that is best in social work practice and point the way forward.

In this regard, under the leadership of our new Vice President, Peter MacLeod, ADSW has been developing a position paper on social work and health integration which argues for a focus on outcomes for people, not structural change and you will hear more of that tomorrow.

The problems ARE immense and the solutions have to be found. Our newly formed majority government will be energetic and we must stay close to advise and to warn.

Highland Council and Highland Health Board have been (in part) the inspiration for the lead commissioning proposals last February. A joint meeting of the Council and Board last week agreed to do further work on a proposal *“to integrate health, education and social care services in the Highlands by April 2012, using a lead agency model that will see NHS Highland provide services for adult community care and the Council providing services for children”*.

They will make their final decision on 23rd June and may have found a positive local solution. Personally, I celebrate their imaginative response to **their** local circumstance and **their** preparedness to take such an ambitious move. However, let us offer encouragement and support without rushing to emulate them. We know the recent past is littered with ambitious moves that Councils and Boards have later been only too willing to withdraw from. One only has to think of the cross cutting directorates of Aberdeen or the CHCPs in Glasgow to realize that today’s big idea can become tomorrow’s big headache.

We have to explore ways of unlocking the potential in our communities - just as Greenock’s son, James Watt discovered the awesome power that can be derived from boiling water under pressure, we have to find the elemental strength within our communities and start to warm it up.

We must do more to exploit our partnerships and sharing. Like the distiller we must learn to blend and integrate different flavours and colours.

Again, in the Highlands, in Sutherland remote communities have transferred services from Highland Council and since 2010 they are running them and meeting local need at a lower cost and with a more immediate, localised response.

In **South Ayrshire** the council has commenced a programme of redesign with regards to Community Care Services. An innovative redesign of services has resulted in a re-ablement service jointly provided by South Ayrshire Council and N.H.S. Ayrshire and Arran.

This approach provides people with a range of services and supports to enable them to live as independent a life as possible. **Figures from 2009 demonstrate that 70% of service users dealt with via a re-ablement model required no further intervention**

Orcadians have developed Scotland's first All Age Disabilities Service which became operational in November 2009. This innovative model of service provision blending together for the first time, children and adult health and social care and social work services under a single structure.

Clackmannanshire have developed a single referral pathway for mental health care. Supported by what they claim to be Scotland's first operational pooled budget it has reduced need for clinical psychiatric services by a whacking 40 percent!

Down in **Galloway** The Cree Studio has emerged in Newton Stewart to help people with Autistic Spectrum conditions to take part in all aspects of music and short film production.

In this way people are learning a variety of new skills, experiencing improved concentration levels, developing confidence and competence and producing work for themselves and the wider community.

We need to rebuild local public services on the basis of the needs of people and places.

The Youth Justice Service in **Glasgow** has worked hard in partnership with others to develop services for children and young people who offend. The group has had an important influence in developing an evidence-based approach to services for these children. It has enabled them to promote a consistent message *that our **Children's Hearing system and its welfare-orientated approach** is and remains the most appropriate place for young people who offend to be managed.*

In **Scottish Borders** we have developed an Integrated Children's service Our Locality model is developing effective collaboration and partnership with other service providers in the area, giving us genuine improvements to services and outcomes.

Our children are reaping benefits which include better planning, sharing of resources, and consistent messages from service providers. The multi-agency Integrated Assessment Framework removes the burden of multiple assessments. Creative solutions are helping to keep young people in their own communities and schools and avoiding the need for expensive, disruptive residential placements.

In a period where ICS has seen a 50% increase on referrals, significant improvements are being made on some key indicators. To cite just two:

- Young people under 19 receiving aftercare support who have experienced a period of homelessness down from 35% in 08/09 to 10% in 09/10.
- Referrals for non-school attendance more than halved (reflecting closer collaboration with schools)

In adult care, significant work has been taken forward in Borders using the IRF and Total Place concepts to remodel health and social care services for older people in local areas. More recent opportunities offered by the Change Fund have enabled the partnership to drive forward the agenda. Innovative work has included the development of Intermediate Care services, a wider range of housing options and a focus on preventative services whilst also providing a significant 15% return on investment.

We need to support learning and earning.

- In **North Lanarkshire** the Council has an established Supported Employment Service which offers intensive support to help people with disabilities gain and sustain paid employment. It now offers service to all user groups , most recently young care leavers and the service is delivered by a job coach.

Meanwhile in **South Lanarkshire** Social Work has set about harnessing the collective energy, knowledge and practice wisdom of service users, workforce and partners. They have developed a strategy to offer continuous improvement and increased user choice. These values are then embodied in their leadership development and coaching of newly qualified social workers.

I mention these 10 good practice examples to demonstrate the richness, diversity and vibrance of Scottish Social Work that comes forth from our current arrangements - and here's my point -

My point is that the challenges we face are real, they are immense, and they need a commensurate, considered, LOCALISED response and we really cannot afford the prolonged and expensive distraction implied by wholesale structural change.

In looking to the future it is important to see where you have come from. I have been thinking about the modern history of social work, our distinctive Scottish history. It starts with Kilbrandon.

The Kilbrandon report has a special place in our hearts. Why should that be? It took three years, they went to Liverpool and Nottingham to look at local partnership initiatives and when they reported in April 1964, their work was acclaimed as **radical, humane and far-reaching**. – and set the template for all of modern social work. These **radical and humane proposals** were enshrined in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and with appropriate amendments have stood us in good stead to the present day. Furthermore its

clarity and simplicity can help see us forward into the approaching age of austerity and embrace the climate of empowerment and self direction.

So why is this? Well, I believe its all down to **Special K!**

Within the concluding observations of Kilbrandon you may find the formula. To quote:

“...These problems must, in our view be tackled at a local level and must clearly be seen to be a community responsibility...

“The time has come.. when society may reasonably be expected so to organise its affairs as to reduce the arbitrary effects of ...detection and to extend to this minority of children, the measures which their needs dictate, and of which they have hitherto been deprived.”

So there you have it my distillation of the special K formula:

LD+M(-AE)=CR

Where LD =local level decision

M= necessary measures

AE= arbitrary effects and

CR= equals community responsibility

Let me explain further, The Social Work(Scotland)Act determined that a local authority ***shall ...appoint an officer to be known as the director of social work.*** This post was given wide-ranging responsibilities and the post holder was to be offered exceptional protection - they could not be dismissed except by a resolution of two thirds of the authority. Under this regime Scotland developed some remarkable, strong and fearless leaders . Some of you will recall the stands taken over Sct 12 payments during the Miners Strike of 1984/5.

But by 1994 times had changed and the mood in Scotland had changed. Authorities wanted more flexibility in the way they managed their responsibilities. In came the Local Government (Scotland)Act 1994 and out went the statutory director. However, thanks in no small part to the effective

lobbying of this association, a last minute amendment was passed to insert a new role of Chief Social Work Officer.

Cast forward another dozen years to Changing Lives. The review recommended that we take another look at CSWO duties and expectations which need to be set out clearly, enabling change.

FROM THIS strand of the review came the Practice Governance work that over the past four years has led to new guidance:

on the Role of the CSWO,
the Role of the Registered Social Worker and the Practice Governance Framework (a copy of which was recently dispatched to each and every registered social worker in Scotland by the Scottish Government.

You can describe a thread of continuity running through from the original duty to promote social welfare to the *“active promotion of continuous improvement and person centred services”* in the current guidance. It has flexed with changing times but has remained a bulwark of Scottish social policy.

So, I am keen that we stay healthy, with daily diet of Special K and I am committed to engage in a hunt for evidence. To put it in the words of another Borderer, the philosopher David Hume, “A wise man proportions his belief to the evidence

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Conference, as our contribution to the current debate we have commissioned the Institute for Research in Social Services (IRISS) to develop work on an evidence base for what works in Social Work and I am delighted that Professor Alison Petch will be here on Friday morning to share with us her early evidence. Our transformational change manager, Wendy Harrington, has been distilling the ideas from the 32 first round Change Fund programmes

for ADSW and we will of course be pleased to make all this available to government.

In thinking what works, you know so much works. Scotland is bursting with innovation and creative solutions to novel problems.

We have completed 32 Change Fund applications in record time – some 10 weeks – (indeed a leading civil servant was moved to describe himself “gobsmacked” by the speed and quality of the return. So each local authority partnership can now share in the £70m fund **and we need to make this money count.**

Over the next year Vice President Peter MacLeod will work with me to advocate on behalf of the Social Work profession with the new government, to ensure those bodies responsible for public sector reform have full and up to date information in relation to the evidence of our work and to offer them best advice on real change and partnerships that work.

Our Organisational Development Standing Committee has a new Chair, Tim Armstrong who will lead work to focus on strengthening and developing workforce skills, capacity, learning and qualifications.

In these austere times the committee will strive to ensure that research, ICT & new technology are maximised to improve delivery of Services

The Children’s and Families Standing Committee will continue to be led by Fred McBride. They will seek quality, affordable and consistent care for some of our most challenged and challenging young people through the re-commissioning of secure care and the implementation of a revised national contract in this area.

Through the national commissioning strategy they will be extending the approach to the independent fostering sector and also the wider independent residential sector.

ADSW has been heavily involved in the production of the National Child Protection Guidance and we are continuing our support through the delivery of joint training with MARS to ensure commitment to continuing high standards.

ADSW aims to have a key role in early intervention and prevention agendas, as stated within the manifesto. We will progress the findings of the 'Early Years Framework', identify further actions needed and take the lead within our sub group for specific agendas.

Kenny Leinster will lead the Community Care Standing Committee to take forward the good work already developed in relation to Adult Protection and embed the new Adult Protection sub group into the work of the Committee. In relation to adults with learning disabilities they will review practice in the light of the review of The Same as You and will promote the inclusion of adults with learning disabilities in all areas of employment, leisure and recreation and social care.

This year there has been strong representation on the Reshaping Care for Older People process and the Change Fund has been a successful outcome for that group.

The Standing Committee has strong links with the National Community Care benchmarking group and we need to ensure this relationship continues to develop.

Our colleagues in England have developed a new partnership between commissioning local authorities and social care providers - *Think Local, Act Personal*. This is described as a sector-wide statement of intent that will bind councils, health bodies and providers need to work more collaboratively to

personalise and integrate service delivery across health and adult social care; and make vital public funding go further.

I am delighted to be able welcome Peter Hay, President of ADASS and immediate past President of ADCS, Marion Davies to explore changing face of social services in England together with Dr Cate Hartigan, Assistant National Director Disabilities who will explore the challenge in Ireland.

Over the past year the **CJSWS Standing Committee** chair Sandy Riddell has led work towards the introduction of many changes and new initiatives the biggest has been the Criminal Justice & Licensing Act (Scotland) 2010 which introduced the **Community Payback Order** - replacing current court disposals with requirement that community sentences commence quicker and in relation to unpaid work are completed quicker. Working with local communities to ensure that **reparation** through unpaid work is of benefit to them

The **ADSW Standing Committee on Substance Misuse** under Robert Peat's leadership has worked to promote our commitment to the underpinning theories and values of social work which enable us to make an important contribution to helping those with problem drug and/or alcohol use in their recovery journey.

There is now an emerging 'recovery' agenda around substance use in Scotland It places greater emphasis on supporting families and carers, building advocacy capacity, and supporting people into employment or training.

Colleagues, In summary, ADSW believe the task of social work is to work with People not Patients. We need to develop confidence and trust with the incoming government and position ourselves to offer credible leadership. We will argue for imaginative, locally inspired solutions that recognise the diversity of Scotland. We will strive to meet political aspirations whilst protecting the values we hold dear. We will strengthen our position as leaders and improve our ability to protect and promote the people, families and communities we all

serve each day and ensure that social work blossoms in the new Scotland while nourishing its roots in the rich soil of our history and values.

"Unless a tree has borne blossoms in spring...

We are well met here in May, for as this former Borders sheriff, once said: "Unless a tree has borne blossoms in spring, you will vainly look for fruit on it in autumn." Lets go to our work here and look for a rich harvest later in the year (and don't forget your Special K).

Andrew Lowe
President