

ADSW President's Conference Speech

The ADSW conference took place at the Crieff Hydro on 17th May. In her presidential address, Bernadette Docherty outlined the ADSW priorities for the year, and these are summarised below. The full presidential address and presentations by other speakers are available on the ADSW website www.adsw.org.uk/index.cfm



*Bernadette Docherty,
President of ADSW*

The objectives of the Association are the promotion of social welfare, social care & social inclusion; the promotion of the interests of service users, carers and vulnerable people and the promotion of employment practices that will support and develop staff.

In furtherance of these objectives we produced a "manifesto" to seek to influence political parties in the run up to the election. So within this context what do I see as the priorities for ADSW?

1. There needs to be a comprehensive review of social work funding for all client groups.
2. The Association supports the reinvigorating of

community disposals as an alternative to prison where appropriate.

3. The significant rise in the number of children with substance misusing parents - ADSW has called for a Royal Commission, and notes the manifesto commitment of the SNP to: "establish a national Drugs Commission to develop and agree a long term national strategy backed up by a more robust evidence base"
4. Support for robust and effective mechanisms for regulation and inspection is also firmly on our agenda. Regulation and Inspection must add value to the service user's experience if it is to be worth this effort. It must not divert management and staff attention away from service users needs.
5. We are subject to huge demands in relation to performance measurement and struggle to focus on "outcomes" and allowing innovative practice to flourish. We are subjected to a torrent of

targets and monitoring arrangements (JPIAF; Outcome measures for community care; CLAS returns, SPI returns etc)

We want to have an outcomes focus to our performance management but the evidence is, nationally, we're finding this very difficult to reach.

ADSW will actively contribute to current efforts to ensure that we end up with a rationalised inspection & regulation regime, which acknowledges the opportunity costs which arise from our current arrangements, within the context of hard pressed services.

6. Changing Lives - progress is being made on each of the 5 groups but, predictably with such an ambitious program, there will be concerns that milestones will begin to slip.

ADSW must, and will, play a full part in helping progress this agenda and we welcome the Executive's contribution to creating capacity within the Association to deliver on this.