

Launch of ADSW PR Strategy for Social Work Services in Scotland 2009

01 April 2009

Speaking note – Minister Adam Ingram

Good evening. I am delighted to be here today to support the launch of the ADSW Public Relations Strategy and Plan for Social Work Services 2009.

In social work and social care services a fundamental resource in this often complex and difficult area is the workforce. So, along with personalisation of services, a key ambition we have been pursuing through Changing Lives and elsewhere, is to ensure we have a confident, competent and valued workforce.

Social work's role in working with people who are experiencing difficulties in their lives to help them achieve the best possible outcomes means that it has a fundamental role in helping the Government realise its ambitions for Scotland.

Social Workers are the people who day in day out deal with dysfunctional families, substance misusers, offenders, people who are vulnerable and need support, care and protection. And they do this on behalf of all of us.

Many social workers feel that the coverage of their profession in the media is often negative. Portrayals in the wider media, such as storylines in TV shows, can also serve to perpetuate myths about social workers.

Too often I see media coverage of incidents laced with speculation and inaccuracies. Where things are wrong, the facts should be established and learning should be shared to fix it. Clearly, it's not always possible to respond publicly to allegations of why certain things happened or didn't happen when dealing with delicate, complex, personal situations. Morale is dented and the reaction can be one of blame.

There are, of course, many good news stories in social work services today. And I became aware of this right from the outset of my taking responsibility for this portfolio. I attended the presentation of the Scottish Social Services Council Care Accolades. It was very evident to me that there were many examples of excellent work being done – often in difficult or complex circumstances - which was really improving people’s life chances and choices.

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I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank our social services workforce for their tireless efforts to improve outcomes not just for children, but everyone, in need of protection and support.

The Scottish Government welcomes ADSW’s decision to develop a PR strategy to raise a constructive profile of social work services. I commend it to you.