

**SWIA/CCPS Event: REVIEWING GOVERNANCE IN THE
VOLUNTARY SOCIAL CARE SECTOR IN SCOTLAND
Wednesday 27 February 2008**

SPEAKING NOTE

Minister for Children & Early Years, Adam Ingram

Good morning, and my thanks to Alexis and Annie for inviting me along to speak to you today. It is particularly pleasing to have an event for the Third Sector jointly organised by the Social Work Inspection Agency, Community Care Providers Scotland and the Scottish Government through *Changing Lives*.

Some might suggest this is a rather disparate set of collaborators – but not so.

The voluntary sector is the largest and fastest growing provider of registered social care services in Scotland. The sector provides around 38% of all care and support services registered with the Care Commission to people across Scotland. It is estimated that that at least 25% of the social services workforce is employed in the voluntary sector. And that one-third of all social care and support services are provided by the voluntary sector on behalf of public bodies, mainly local authorities.

Your significant contribution to the support for some of the most vulnerable in our society is crucial to the delivery of a substantial number of the National Outcomes identified in the Concordat published last November. I know Shane Rankin will be here this afternoon to say more on this but it might be helpful if I take this opportunity to say something about the context that we now operate in.

We are working in a fast moving environment, in a period of extensive and fundamental change. Our intentions as Government have been clear from the outset. We intend to transform the public sector landscape and want quality public services that continuously improve, are efficient and respond to local people's needs.

Our overall purpose is to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

Underpinning this are the 5 strategic objectives we articulated early in our tenure, where we want:

- a Scotland that is **Wealthier & Fairer** – enabling businesses and people to increase their wealth and more people to share fairly in that wealth;

- A Scotland that is **Smarter** – expanding opportunities for Scots to succeed from nurture through to lifelong learning, ensuring higher and more widely shared achievements;
- A Scotland that is **Healthier** – helping people sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local and faster access to health care;
- A Scotland that is **Safer & Stronger** – helping local communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and an better quality of life; and
- A Scotland that is **Greener** – improving our natural and built environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it.

I think it is self evident that to successfully achieve most of these objectives, there is an significant role for social work and social care services – whether delivered by the statutory, voluntary or private sectors.

We have now taken a further step to reinforce government’s role in setting the direction of policy and over-arching outcomes, standing back from micro-managing service delivery while freeing up local authorities and their partners to better meet the varying local needs and circumstances across Scotland.

This new relationship between national and local government is signalled in the Concordat signed with COSLA in November of last year. There are 15 national outcomes and 45 indicators.

These are dependent on, as well as contributing to our overall purpose and the 5 strategic objectives and set the national context.

The development of Outcome Agreements in each local authority area will provide the local context. And how you, through engagement with your local social work services, contribute to the delivery of our national outcomes and our strategic objectives will be for local discussion and action. And I should emphasise that successful delivery of these commitments and outcomes will require coordinated planning and delivery by local authorities **and** their partners – whether in the statutory or voluntary sector.

No individual, profession, organisation or sector should feel ignored or diminished if they are not mentioned specifically in the Concordat. The outcomes we are all striving for are clear - and to achieve these we all need to work together.

Government has set the direction and priorities. We need to maximise the resources at our disposal to achieve the desired outcomes – whether at national or local level.

The Concordat describes how we will remove the often artificial ring fences around funding streams for local government. We have swept away these barriers and consolidated that vast majority of funding streams into the core local government settlement. Not only does this reduce bureaucracy, it will improve local flexibility.

Resources can be targeted on areas of priority and most need. Local authorities and their partners, including those from the voluntary sector, are in the best position to make these decisions.

I know that there are concerns about these fundamental changes to our funding regimes amongst yourselves and colleagues in this sector. There are worries that local services for vulnerable groups could be at risk due to budgetary constraints. However, we need to be clear, decisions on specific commissioning and funding of local services have always been taken at local level – and the changes we are making to funding regimes don't change that position.

Let me also make clear, previously ring fenced resources which have been used to support the voluntary sector have **not disappeared** – they have been included in the local government settlement. So funding for local government will increase by 12.6% to over £34 billion over the Spending Review period – this should enable councils to sustain and improve services in line with local priorities.

While COSLA, SOLACE and the Scottish Government will do what we can to ease these transitions, it isn't our role in government to intervene in local negotiations between service funders and providers. Where you are part of service delivery, you need to ensure the local authority recognises the contribution you make, and what further improvements might be feasible, to help ensure that they meet their commitments under this new relationship.

This is an evolving environment but we are sure that this approach, along with other strands of public service reform such as changes in scrutiny following the Crerar review and simplifying the public landscape, will help support the achievement of the improvements we want to see for Scotland and her people.

Moving back to the theme for today, SWIA, in its role of providing independent review of services – mainly in the statutory sector – responded positively to a request from Turning Point Scotland to review their governance arrangements. In its role of sharing learning and providing support for those who may be addressing similar issues, SWIA also saw the opportunity to develop a generic tool for others in the sector - and you'll hear more on this later in the day.

CCPS, in its role to identify, represent, promote and safeguard the interests of the voluntary sector, quickly saw the potential in the work

SWIA had undertaken for Turning Point Scotland on its governance arrangements, as something that could benefit this wider community. And so they agreed to come together to help promulgate this.

And why should this be considered relevant for *Changing Lives*? *Changing Lives* gives us a platform, direction and some mechanisms to help move forward and improve social work and social care services in Scotland.

I'm very keen that our work at the centre has a focus on developing a workforce and support systems which are able to deliver good quality help and services for Scotland's people. Building a confident and competent workforce which is valued and well led and managed seems key to me.

Personalisation, engaging with citizen's and putting people at the heart of services must be the basis of service design and delivery. Something the voluntary sector have often led the way in developing. We, and by that I mean all of us in our different roles, must to listen to what people tell us they need to give them the best opportunities and outcomes, and seek to do our best to action that – after all we are impacting on people's lives. And you clearly have a key role in this.

While a focus for a lot of *Changing Lives* work is the statutory sector, the contribution made by the voluntary sector is recognised. It is important that we ensure that whatever is produced has relevance for you also. This work done by SWIA on governance, provides a tool which can help your particular organisations strengthen such arrangements so as to help ensure you can continue to make an important contribution to the delivery and improvement of services and support and meet the aspirations of *Changing Lives*.

So what is this work about – and why are we here today?

The Board of directors have responsibility for directing the affairs of an organisation - ensuring it is solvent, well run and that it delivers good outcomes to the people for whom it was set up. Board members set the direction for how things are done, managers are charged with doing it and demonstrating its impact. To do this effectively, good governance arrangements are essential.

This conference brings together managers, senior officers and board members along with other important stakeholders and is a tremendous opportunity to discuss this very important topic. As well as hear about SWIA's work and consider its applicability.

I applaud Turning Point Scotland for putting their head above the parapet and asking for this review in the first place. It was a positive

review and highlighted many strengths in their governance arrangements as well as some areas for improvement. And very importantly, their openness has resulted in the development of draft self evaluation framework for voluntary social care sector organisations to carry out reviews of their own governance arrangements.

I hope that you find the rest of the conference informative and useful and that some lasting benefits can flow from this work.

Thank you

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