



**An Chartlann Náisiúnta**  
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SDLP ANNUAL CONFERENCE 6 - 8 NOVEMBER

FOOD ARRANGEMENTS

**FRIDAY 6TH NOVEMBER 1992**

Coffee, Biscuits and Selection of Sandwiches available in the Gallery from 6.00 pm - 10.00 pm.

High Tea	- Hotel Dining Room from 6.00 pm.
Table d'hote Dinner	- Hotel Dining Room from 7.00 pm.
Percy French High Tea	- from 5.30 pm - 7.00 pm.
Percy French A La Carte	- 7.00 pm - 9.00 pm.

**SATURDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 1992**

Coffee and Biscuits available all day 9.00 am - 5.00 pm.

Chaplins Bar and Shimna Annex.

Soup and Sandwiches, Tea/Coffee - Chaplins Bar - 12.00 - 3.00 pm.

Percy French Bar Snacks and Chefs Special - 12.30 - 2.30 pm.

**SUNDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 1992**

Tea/Coffee and Biscuits - Shimna Annex from 10.00 am - 3.00 pm.

Soup, Chefs Special, Sandwiches, Tea/Coffee - 12.00 - 3.00 pm  
Chandelier Lounge.

**NOTE**

Those wishing to have the Conference High Tea on Friday and/or the Saturday and Sunday Lunches, should book through Party Headquarters up to Thursday 5 November, after this date, arrangements for these meals should be made directly with the Slieve Donard Hotel.

The Party will hold it's Conference Dinner/Dance on Saturday, 7 November, 1992 in the Shimna Suite. Tickets £14 each may be obtained from SDLP Headquarters or from the SDLP Information Desk at Conference.

Furthermore it would appear that this amendment would permit NIHE to refuse to "entertain" an application for accommodation until such identity is produced. Given the increasing level of homelessness in NI, particularly amongst young single people and the inadequacy of current resources and responses we feel this is a retrograde step and we would oppose it. This amendment is particularly offensive given the failure of the 1968 Order to place upon NIHE a comprehensive statutory obligation to provide accommodation for the homeless. We reiterate our call for such an obligation to be enacted into law.

**PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR:** We regret that the opportunity was not taken to comprehensively review the situation in relation to the private rented sector, the majority of which remains outside the scope of the Rent (NI) Order 1978.

We welcome the powers given to District Councils to pursue those landlords who harass or illegally evict tenants. However the protections for tenants should be extended to licensees, as is the case in England and Wales under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977.

SDLP  
SUBMISSION ON DRAFT HOUSING ORDER (MI) 1992  
PRESENTED TO THE 22ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
(MOTION 42 REFERS)

**GRANTS:** We welcome the introduction of a disabled facilities grant, as a necessary and long overdue recognition of the needs of disabled people. In general we welcome the introduction of the new grants scheme, although we have doubts about the level of the means test which has been introduced and we would be concerned that the new grants scheme should be targeted upon areas of most need - ie houses either in a state of unfitness or disrepair.

We welcome the introduction of the replacement grant which, we hope, will be used to tackle the chronic and serious problem of rural unfitness.

**MULTIPLE OCCUPATION REGULATION:** Generally speaking we welcome this move. We have long been concerned about the state of many houses, particularly in urban areas, which are rented by multiple occupants. The problem has been particularly acute in areas which are close to universities and FE colleges and where unscrupulous landlords have exploited students by charging high rents for properties which are often damp, in a poor state of repair and a fire hazard. We particularly welcome the introduction of standards on fire safety.

**NEW FITNESS STANDARD:** The introduction of a new standard of fitness in relation to regulated tenancies is to be welcomed. The streamlining of the fitness standards generally is a good thing as it abolishes the old anomaly between the definition of a regulated tenancy and the definition of unfitness. We do have one query and that is in relation to the deletion of "a proper internal arrangement" from the list of fitness requirements. This may result in houses which would currently be regarded as unfit becoming fit under the new definition, a situation to be avoided.

**HOMELESSNESS:** The amendment to Art 22 of the 1981 Order is regrettable, not least because we believe that the requirement to produce evidence of identity may be difficult for homeless people to satisfy. There is no guidance as to the nature of the evidence of identity required nor is there any condition of reasonableness.

## REFERENCES

- 01 [RIGHTS AND WRONGS - SDLP Discussion Paper on a Bill of Rights, presented to the 20th Annual Conference 1980]
- 02 The motion was proposed by Jane O'Donnell (Queen's University) and seconded by Alban Maginness (Executive). Speakers to the motion included P Rowan (Lisburn) [who asked for rejection of the motion in favour of a full investigation], B Caraher (Ormeau/Stranmillis) and A Curran (Rostrevor). Jane O'Donnell summed up, and the motion was carried by a large majority with some abstentions. [SDLP 8th Annual Conference Agenda p 21]
- 03 The motion was proposed by Peter Gibson (for East Belfast), formally seconded by A C Taylor, and carried by a substantial majority. [SDLP 10th Annual Conference Agenda p 15]

S D L P  
DISCUSSION DOCUMENT  
ON GAY RIGHTS  
PRESENTED TO THE 22ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
(MOTION 46 REFERS)

BACKGROUND

- 01 In the twenty years since its formation the SDLP has frequently been involved in debates and arguments at the centre of which lay the concept of human rights and freedom.<sup>01</sup> As early as our 5th annual conference (in 1975), we adopted a document WOMEN IN THE SOCIETY, and we have used our power and influence on local district councils to provide housing for travelling people. In fact, SDLP members have a record second to none in using whatever power and influence we have had to improve the lot of groups suffering discrimination.
- 02 At our 7th annual conference (in 1977) we passed a motion proposed by Queen's Branch, calling for the British Government to extend to Northern Ireland the Sexual Offences Act (1967).<sup>02</sup> We repeated this call at our 9th annual conference (in 1979).<sup>02</sup>
- 03 Despite this, it took the Dudgeon case to bring the British government to act. In October 1981, following an appeal by Jeffrey Dudgeon, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the total ban on consenting homosexual relationships in Northern Ireland was a violation of a person's privacy and therefore contrary to Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. As a result, the British government was finally forced to extend the Sexual Offences Act (1967) to Northern Ireland, as the Sexual Offences Order (1982).
- 04 This measure, however, merely decriminalised homosexuality: it did not legalise it. It allowed a grudging measure of freedom from criminal charges: it did not allow anything approaching equal civil rights or legal protection. Homosexuals still legally suffer discrimination which is illegal if applied to any other group in society.
- 05 The United Kingdom is one of the last countries in western Europe to maintain such legal distinctions between homosexual and heterosexual citizens. The burgeoning body of scientific studies show clearly how unjustifiable this discrimination is.
- 06 Consequently, we call upon the British Government to legislate against all or any discrimination against people on grounds of their sexual orientation, and to ensure equal civil and legal rights for all citizens.



FUTURE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

MOTION 50 REFERS

22ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
6 - 8 NOVEMBER, 1982  
SLIEVE DONARD HOTEL, NEWCASTLE



## SDLP and the Future of Further Education Colleges.

The SDLP welcomes the present review by government of Further Education in Northern Ireland. However, in doing so, we hope that the government will not attempt to simply replicate changes introduced into England and Wales, indeed we would hope that the government will in fact ignore those changes and deal with the Northern Ireland situation on its own merits and needs.

Fundamental to any reform of Further Education is our commitment to the three principle aims:

- 1 That Further Education be regarded as a Community resource for the greater and fuller development of the individual from 16+ to old age and for the development of the Community itself.
- 2 That Further Education will provide Vocational Training for the individual and contribute to the greater development of the local economy.
- 3 That Development and Training should aspire to European standards of participation in Further Education and provide training and development for the individual within the context of the European Community.

The SDLP will therefore measure the governments ultimate proposals in the light of these three principles. It is our understanding of the review body's work that it is concentrating on three areas:

- (A) The rationalisation of present F E Colleges and the courses they offer.
- (B) The future funding of the said Colleges and F E in general, especially capital development and student funding.
- (C) Higher Education in general.

It is the view of our Party that any provision along these lines must take into consideration two factors, that is the totality of present provision available and accessibility. In considering the former it is necessary to assess the degree to which some Colleges already specialise in particular areas, such as catering or caring provision. Geographical considerations must also be taken into account to ensure accessibility for all. In particular the siting in the greater Belfast area of yet another major third level institution should be resisted. Reform of Further Education should not be a Belfast oriented process.



The rationalisation of Colleges, as well as courses, is necessary, but it should not be an excuse for wholesale closures. Undoubtedly there will be some benefit from some degree of amalgamation. However, we are conscious of a bureaucratic tendency to centralise with a consequent weakening of links between the Further Education College and the Community that it serves which tends to push some sites to the periphery effectively running them down. As a result there is a reduction in feeling of community identity between the F E College and the local population. Efficiency may be achieved at the cost of both effectiveness and access.

The key to many issues involved in the process of reform is future funding of the service. It is our firm view that as an educational provision, F E should be largely, though not exclusively, financed out of the public funds. This bedrock principle and its fellow principle of free or low cost education must not be undermined or abandoned. We would reject any proposal to "formula" fund as under LMS in the primary or secondary sectors, on a pupil - weighted basis. A numbers based approach would not be acceptable and would undoubtedly disadvantage certain areas particularly the rural areas.

Additional, as opposed to supplementary, funding from industry or commerce or charitable sources is to be encouraged, for it would also create a beneficial partnership between the Colleges and the business community. However, we recognise that one of the problems in Northern Ireland is the small size of our indigenous firms and their limited resources. (95% of firms employ less than 50 people). Nonetheless this partnership must be further developed.

F E Colleges should not be put into an intentional or unintentional competition with local secondary or grammar schools or vice versa. A real and beneficial partnership should be developed, where F E Colleges provide a ready made resource for vocational and training programmes for 16 - 19 year olds in all schools.

The development of a curriculum that will serve to satisfy the needs of the user and the needs of the community is the real challenge for F E Colleges in the future and this must be given careful thought and study. It is of vital importance that we produce, not just a better and a more skilled worker, but also a better citizen, happier, more fulfilled and confident to meet the challenges of the future, particularly in the context of the European Community.

### Recommendations

- 1 A single integrated policy for post 16 year provision.
- 2 Education and training should be accessible to communities right across Northern Ireland.
- 3 The system of educational awards and benefits should be reformed to recognise an entitlement regardless of age.
- 4 A large expenditure programme should be initiated to upgrade Colleges for the 21st century.
- 5 The private sector should be encouraged to support training via suitable tax incentives for day release.
- 6 Funding for Colleges should not be restricted to a per capita basis, but reflect the need to meet differences in geographical location and in the type of courses offered.
- 7 Funding must reflect the primary duty to support those, who are of compulsory school age.
- 8 A new funding methodology should set targets for provision for minorities, such as the disabled.
- 9 The 10 to 18 curriculum should be broadened to encourage a balance and relevance to the contemporary world and include elements of both academic and vocational education.
- 10 The Department of Education should retain responsibility for ensuring that any institution offering education and training for post 16, meets set criteria for both quality and quantity.
- 11 There is a clear need for greater provision for Higher Education outside the Greater Belfast area.
- 12 In the case of full time Higher Education, this is only viable in a limited number of Colleges, which must be geographically spread. Such provision must be funded separately from existing Further Education provision.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY

### RESPONSE TO 1992 APPLICATIONS FOR TRUST STATUS

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The SDLP has stated its opposition to the concept and implications of Trust status for hospitals in its 1989 response to "Working for Patients", its 1991 response to the Royal Group's application and in its 1992 manifesto for the Westminster election. The latter document also indicated our concern at the possibility of community units acquiring trust status. This response is therefore confined to discussion of the Department's main criteria for judging applications i.e. benefits for patients and clients.

1.2 Applications for trust status have now been made by the remaining eight units of management and the Ambulance Service in the Eastern Board area and by Craigavon Hospital in the Southern Board area.

1.3 We must say that we have no confidence in the sincerity of these formal consultation procedures. The Department of Health and Social Services has already pre-judged the issues by stating that trust status is the natural organisational model. Furthermore the volume of opposition to, and the paucity of support for the Royal Group's application for trust status was apparently completely ignored in the making of that decision.

#### 2. BENEFITS FOR PATIENTS AND CLIENTS

##### 2.2 Evidence of Benefit

All the applications are eloquent in very similar terms about the freedom to make decisions and the absence of bureaucracy that will arise from trust status. We can find no evidence that these freedoms will necessarily benefit the patients and clients. There is evidence from Great Britain that equity of access for all patients has been sacrificed to the temptation to increase the number of contracts by providing incentives to some purchasers.

The possibility of improvement in care is indicated solely in terms of belief and conviction unaccompanied by any examples.

##### 2.3 Accountability

As long as the NHS is funded mainly by public money it must be held accountable for its performance in a way that is quite distinct from the mere operation of block contracts by the purchasing authority. We are not concerned solely about fiscal regularity but by the more important issue of outcome. We have grave doubts about whether this can be achieved in any realistic way by the relationship between the Trusts and the Management Executive of the DESS. The balance between top down political oversight on the one hand and delegated managerial freedom on the other seems to be heavily tilted away from accountability.



RESPONSE TO 1992 APPLICATIONS FOR TRUST STATUS

NOTION 58 REFERS

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3.3 In general we find it difficult to see what advantages other than ideological consistency are to be obtained from the purchaser/provider split in the personal social services. If, as we understand, the Units themselves are to be the purchasers of independent and voluntary services, there will be no competitive element in the purchasing by the Boards. Units will have the monopoly of supply within their geographic patch regardless of whether they become Trusts. Presumably some services will have to be provided by statute but there will be strong financial incentives to provide by contract only those services that can be tightly controlled by cost. We are not confident that there is any assurance that the services needed by the community will be provided or that the Management Executive will exercise any overall responsibility for this.

#### 4. THE STAMPEDE TOWARDS TRUST STATUS

4.1 The SDLP is very concerned that the concept of planned provision for need has been discarded in favour of a strongly competitive scramble for scarce resources of capital and revenue in the form of contracts. It is clear that all Units believe that Trusts will be favoured in competing for capital to rebuild, upgrade or re-equip. The recent Eastern Board Framework for General (Acute) Hospital Services indicates that most hospitals will only win contracts by undertaking capital improvements. Trusts believe that they will have an advantage in this process by dealing directly with the Department.

4.2 We understand why Units seek Trust status in this highly competitive climate which is already beginning to affect the behaviour of senior management. The SDLP deploras reforms that replace co-operation with competition, openness with secrecy, and totally remove any democratic accountability.

D/September 1992



Some of the applications suggest that the Trust will be "accountable" to the local community because two local people sit on the Board. It is our understanding that these local people are, in practice, chosen by the General Manager and appointed by the Minister. We find it difficult to see how these members of the Board could be described as representing the community in any democratic sense.

#### 2.4 Monitoring of Quality

We looked particularly for arrangements for independent monitoring and reporting on quality of care, both clinical and personal and did not find them. We note the current emphasis on quality assurance, audit and other concepts in the applications but find no suggestion of external and independent investigation apart from the limited role of the Mental Health Commission and the Hospital Advisory Service. Health and Social Services Councils may visit Trust Units but have no right to information about them.

It is understood that the imposition of standards through contracts is proving both ineffective and expensive in Great Britain. In Northern Ireland a number of providers have a complete monopoly of services because of the nature of the service is regional specialities, the Eastern Area Ambulance Service, Community Units. In practice contracts cannot be removed from these providers. The absence of external monitoring and control to ensure quality is very disturbing.

#### 2.5 Complaints Procedures

These receive little or no attention. This is a matter of great concern to us given the paucity of external monitoring and the absence of any right to information about Trusts.

#### 2.6 Priorities for Trust Hospitals

Another major concern is that the high priority given to the financial viability of Trust Units will in practice conflict with the objective of providing good quality clinical and personal care.

### 3. TRUST STATUS FOR COMMUNITY UNITS

3.1 We are seriously concerned about the prospect of Trust status for Units providing personal social services. These Units have a major statutory social control role in respect of children and the mentally ill. It is quite inappropriate to delegate Departmental responsibility for exercising powers of this nature to a virtually independent body even by legislation.

3.2 The Community Units face an extremely testing time in 1993 with the implementation of needs assessment in the face of very tight resources. It would be grossly irresponsible to allow them to take on the additional strains of change to Trust status.