

Scottish Democratic Alliance

Social Policy - Executive Summary

Updated 17-07-2009

The **SDA** has a strong and focused social conscience. We support the principles of the Welfare State coupled with the concept of social justice suitably financed and designed to promote incentives to work.

The Social and Welfare system requires to redefine the eligibility for benefits in order to refocus the available funding towards **those genuinely in need** of care and support and encourage a timely return of those who are fit, back into employment.

Currently it is possible to receive more on benefits than for working. If the minimum hourly rate is adequate for working persons then gross benefit **payments should be capped at 90%** of a weekly wage based on the minimum hourly rate.

The **SDA** will ensure a minimum hourly pay rate targeted to encourage work, and set the benefits for those out of work at a level sufficient to provide decent and moral support for the duration of their unemployment. In general, benefits are **to be paid only to persons who have contributed** into the system for a minimum period of at least two years.

The **SDA** advocates that those who are fit in mind and body and unemployed, would receive four weeks of benefits, thereafter **they should provide 16 hours per week of community work whilst they are in receipt of state benefits**. Equally, up to 12 hours of paid employment can be entered into by the claimant without affecting their benefit entitlement.

The **SDA** would **halt the sale of social housing**, stop the priority allocation of housing to single parents and ensure that **those longest on the housing list** are given first priority. Immigrants would be allocated any remaining housing not taken up by citizens.

The current **Health and Safety** regulations are too bureaucratic, often unrealistic and **do little to provide safe working conditions**. A simpler system is required, which places the responsibility for personal safety on the individual and requires companies to provide the training and equipment to enable employees to work safely within risk assessed areas.

The **SDA** will allow **the retirement age to be flexible** in order to maintain and encourage experience within the work pool.

The current unrealistic Health and Safety regulations are driving away Youth Organisations' activity leaders, severely limiting the outdoor activities and **threatening the existence of youth groups** such as the Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Cadets and Boys Brigade. A responsible attitude to support these activities is required.

Child Benefits should be reduced. Parents should be responsibility for paying for their own children. Taxpayers' money should not be used to supplement the cost of child maintenance.

The **SDA** advocates that upon **entry** into Scotland **non nationals must prove they possess the means to pay** for health and social care or alternatively they have come from a nation with an agreement to provide equitable health and social services to Scottish nationals.

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