

Scottish Democratic Alliance

Health – Executive Summary

Updated 17-06-2009

The health policy of the **Scottish Democratic Alliance** seeks to build on the excellence of our medical practitioners and health care workers, to support them in their vital tasks and services to our people, to maintain the hospitals and health facilities, and make improvements to buildings and equipment wherever necessary. We believe Scotland has a health service to be proud of, and dedicated staff who deserve our full support.

Two major areas for improvement in our considered view are (a) management and administration, and (b) the method of financing new construction. Our health service has suffered at times and in places, from administrative procedures that sometimes fail the patients, and from management decisions that have frustrated the clinicians and reduced their motivation and effectiveness. Examples of these failures have been seen in poor communication, loss of records, excessive time needed to make appointments or inform other relevant parties, and in the performance of hospital cleaning services which were contracted out to private sector companies.

We believe that clinicians should focus on patient care, and qualified, professional managers should organise and administer hospitals and care services, in close consultation with the clinicians. Too often management within the NHS has appeared to be amateurish, or conducted without meaningful input from the medical staff. On finance, we strongly oppose PFI arrangements which are putting the repayment burdens on our children, and are resulting in grossly escalated costs.

The **SDA** also supports the welcome emphasis on preventive care and agrees with measures and investments to encourage healthy lifestyles and diets, and provide facilities for sport and exercise, to halt illegal drug trade, and to discourage smoking and excessive drinking. The roots of social violence and much mental or emotional illness have to be addressed with strengthened care in the community, education at all levels, and considerable reduction in the gratuitous violence and pornographic images that young people are confronted by on a daily basis in some of the media.

The **SDA** strongly agrees with current efforts to address present social inequalities by increasing the supply of good quality sustainable housing; by tackling the issue of violence against women and those of minority races; and by innovative approaches to reducing poverty and disadvantages. We are also in agreement with the plan to phase out prescription charges. **The primary objective must be to put patient needs first.** Please refer to our full policy statement for more details of the Health Service innovations the **SDA** is proposing.

Contact: info@scottishdemocraticalliance.org.uk

