



IASW

Irish Association of Social Workers
Cumann na hÉireann um Oibrithe Sóisialta

PRESS RELEASE DATED 23rd April 2009

Social Justice – the Challenge to Social Work Practice.
The Irish Association of Social Workers Conference & AGM, Dublin
Friday, 24th April 2009.

Many people in Ireland never grasped as much as a touch of the tail of the Celtic Tiger. But with the much mentioned hasty retreat of the Celtic Tiger, many more children, families and individuals in our communities are threatened with poverty and marginalisation. Poverty, discrimination, disability, trafficking and illnesses are some of the issues with which social workers and many others in Ireland are confronted. The annual conference of the Irish Association of Social Workers examines these questions. As social workers often speak on behalf of those without voice in society and work to empower people to effect change in their lives, the conference will also explore the role of advocacy in promoting systemic change.

The speakers include Dr. Maurice Manning, President of the Human Rights Commission; Anna Lee, Manager with the Tallaght Partnership and Norah Gibbons Director of Advocacy and Central Services with Barnardos.

Dr. Maurice Manning, President of the Human Rights Commission will consider social work from the human rights perspective. He will focus on the steps towards creating a human rights culture with special reference to human rights making a difference in areas such as disability, housing, education, trafficking and illness.

Norah Gibbons is the Director of Advocacy and Central Services at the children's charity Barnardos. She was recently appointed by the Health Services Executive to chair the investigation into the Roscommon Childcare Case. Speaking on the theme of "Advocacy: A Case Study", Norah will outline the development of advocacy in an organisation and emphasise its role in promoting systemic change.

With a presentation entitled "Between the client and society", Anna Lee, Manager from the Tallaght Partnership will reflect on social justice as a core value and principle of social work, noting that social workers are committed to social justice and to challenging poverty and discrimination. Anna Lee stated that she will identify a number of key social justice issues facing society, and social workers, in today's Ireland. Anna will propose some suggestions as to how social workers and representative organisations might strengthen their role in addressing these societal issues.

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Representing Social Work in Ireland since 1971

A Member of the International Federation of Social Workers

Declan Coogan, Spokesperson for the IASW, noted that this year's conference takes place in the context of rising unemployment and the fresh fears faced by many people for perhaps the first time. "Social workers are concerned that the voice of the marginalised, the poor and children may be further weakened in the current economic context. The conference will focus on the key role of social workers in advocating for the rights of the marginalised and in empowering people in taking steps towards concrete change".

What is the event?

This is the annual conference and AGM of the Irish Association of Social Workers.

When is it?

The conference and AGM takes place on Friday the 24th of April 2009, starting at 9.30am. Further details are available through the website: <http://www.iasw.ie> together with a pdf booking form, which also contains the schedule for the day.

Where is it?

It takes place at the Holiday Inn, Pearse St., Dublin 2.

What about Media Access/Information?

Declan Coogan, spokesperson for the Irish Association of Social Workers can be contacted at 087 6554781 or dcoogan@gmail.com by journalists or reporters who wish to attend the conference and for further information about media access during the conference.