



SWAN members at Defending the Welfare State demo (Pic: Jon Dodds)

To return your booking form or for more information please use the following address:

SWAN Conference 2011,
c/o IASS, 8th Floor Muirhead Tower,
University of Birmingham,
Edgbaston, Birmingham
B15 2TT

Or email: swanconference2011@gmail.com

The conference has been organised with the support of IASS, University of Birmingham

**UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM**

Since coming to power in May 2010, the Con-Dem coalition has announced the biggest cuts in public spending since the Second World War. The figures are so large as to be almost incomprehensible. The cuts are a clear attempt to abolish the welfare state. The government are slashing a third of council spending by 2015. This will mean social work, social care and youth services reduced and outsourced. It will mean a poorer service for users, worse pay and working conditions for workers, and services which are less safe.

The people who will be most hit are those with least money and resources, least advantage and power – poor parents, older and young people, women workers, disabled people, mental health service users, carers, people on benefits, black and minority ethnic communities, social housing tenants and students. Those most to blame for the financial mess, banks, private sector and business leaders, are largely left untouched.

But there is an alternative to austerity. In France, Greece, Ireland and across the globe there are growing struggles against such measures. In Britain we are seeing the beginnings of such a movement. Students are at the forefront of this with student SWAN members involved in marches and occupations against education funding cuts, and young people demonstrating against the closure of youth facilities. SWAN supporters have also been active in the growing anti-cuts protests and campaigns around the country.

It is in this context that SWAN will hold its next annual conference in Birmingham during April 2011. The theme of the conference will be building alliances in the struggle to defend services. As social workers, students, educators, service users and carers we need to stand together and engage in action against the cuts and their effects. The conference will bring people together to share experiences of this struggle and develop our networks of resistance.



Social Work Action Network (SWAN) 6th National Conference

**In collaboration with
*In Defence of Youth Work***

Building Alliances Defending Services

**Friday 15th April to
Saturday 16th April 2011**

**Avon Rooms,
University of Birmingham,
Edgbaston, Birmingham**



About the Social Work Action Network (SWAN)

SWAN is a network of social work practitioners, academics, students and social welfare service users united in their concern that social work activity is being undermined by managerialism and marketisation, by the stigmatisation of service users and by welfare cuts and restrictions.

We believe that good social work is a worthwhile activity that can help people address the problems and difficulties in their lives. Many of these difficulties are rooted in the inequalities and oppressions of the modern world and good social work necessarily involves confronting such structural and public causes of so many private ills.

SWAN's current campaigning priorities are building the movement against austerity cuts, and involvement in campaigns to challenge racism and Islamophobia.

SWAN info & to join: www.socialworkfuture.org

About In Defence of Youth Work (IDYW)

The *In Defence of Youth Work* campaign stands for a democratic and emancipatory relationship with young people, that is open, voluntary and based on their agenda rather than the state's. We seek to resist the pressure to become no more than a behavioural modification agency targeted at 'demonised' youth.

IDYW info: www.indefenceofyouthwork.org.uk

Conference Programme

Speakers include

Professor Sue White (Critic of social work targets)
Bob Holman (Community campaigner), Helga Pile (Unison Social Care Lead), Kalbir Shukra (Youth worker activist), Bob Williams-Findlay (Disabled People Against Cuts), Education Activist Network
International speakers: Linda Smith (South Africa), Vassilis Ioakimides (Greece) and others

Sessions include

- Challenging Cameron's Big Society and fighting welfare cuts
- Building alliances defending services - a session led by young people
- Social work and resistance across the globe
- Workshops on radical social work, challenging racism and oppression and related topics

Note: Conference begins at 1pm on Friday 15th April and finishes at 5pm on Saturday 16th April

Call for Proposals

Presentations are invited for seminars and workshops on the theme of building alliances and defending services or related topics. Proposals from service users & practitioners particularly welcomed.

Proposals should be 300 words or less, and should indicate the aims of the session, style and content. Please include a cover sheet with your name, contact details & status (practitioner, service user, etc.)

Please email proposals by **17th January 2011** to: swanconference2011@gmail.com

Booking Form

Conference registration costs:

£15 Unwaged/student/service user

£45 Waged

£65 With institutional support /Solidarity price

Free For asylum seekers

If you can, please pay the **solidarity price**. This enables us to charge those on low incomes less. Please contact us if you have concerns about costs.

There are several ways to book for the conference:

1. ONLINE (by PAYPAL or BANK TRANSFER)

Follow the instructions on the SWAN website here:

www.tinyurl.com/SwanConference2011

2. By CHEQUE

Please print off this form & post with your cheque to *SWAN Conference 2011* at the address overleaf

Name:

Email:

Address:.....

Post Code:.....

Organisation/designation:.....

Dietary Needs:.....

Access Needs:.....

I enclose a cheque payable to 'Social Work Action Network West Midlands' for (amount):.....