

homing in

Newsletter of the Scottish Youth Housing Network

No 51 March 2005



Training for young researchers from Youth Connections homelessness research project in Greenock. Photograph courtesy of James Watt College. [Full story on page 2](#)

Renting advice

Priate tenants and landlords should be more aware of their rights and responsibilities thanks to a new campaign.

Better Renting Scotland will help Scotland's private sector landlords and tenants get the information they need to protect themselves and improve the standard of their housing.

Tenants and landlords, neighbours and potential landlords can visit www.betterrentingscotland.com.

Rights

Tenants can get facts on what they can and can't expect from their landlord and information on issues such as what to do if the landlord refuses to carry out repairs or retains a deposit at the end of the tenancy. It offers landlords information on leases, inventories, physical standards of the property and how to deal with problem tenants.

And by texting RENT to 84118, information will be sent out. Leaflets will also be distributed. ▶

Fife launches new youth work policy

To ensure that its youth work is carried out in a consistent manner and best use is made of limited resources, Fife Council has launched a youth work policy. Its priority is to provide a level of excellent common services for 13 to 18 year olds, and targeted groups aged 10 to 12 and 19 to 21.

By offering youth services to these groups the council hopes to involve them in a range of forums and structures that will let them have a say in the development and delivery of local services and will target extra resources towards disadvantaged geographical communities.

The policy has four themes: information, opportunity, participation and achievement.

Information is to do with making sure that young people have ease of access to online and printed information via youth groups, learning centres and libraries on topics such as rights and responsibilities, housing, sports and leisure.

Opportunity is about access to outdoor education and the environment and creative pursuits such as digital photography and filmmaking and the performing arts.

Participation is about being involved in decision making and learning processes such as social and political issues and membership of management committees and youth forums.

Achievement is about access to formal and informal award programmes.

At the launch, Councillor Jim Brennan, spokesperson for arts and leisure, said: "The publication of this policy comes at a time when young people are under scrutiny as never before. The pressures upon them, and the choices available to them, have multiplied many times in recent years.

"This policy redefines and clarifies exactly what is meant by youth work and refocuses our efforts in a way that integrates with and complements the broad range of other services to young people provided by the council, other public sector agencies and the voluntary sector."

For further info contact Tom Bain, Service Manager, on 01334 412827. ▶

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Look who's talking about housing!

Young people in Inverclyde are getting the chance to give their views on housing, homelessness and youth participation, thanks to a new research project supported by Communities Scotland.

Greenock-based Youth Connections, in partnership with the Housing and Young Persons Task Group, has been funded by Communities Scotland to research the needs, aspirations, opportunities and recommendations of young people who want to secure and sustain tenancies in Inverclyde.

As well as being the focus of the research, young people will be involved in conducting it. Recruitment is underway in Inverclyde to find young people from various backgrounds to become researchers. They will meet, listen to and interview their peers. The young people will be paid for their work and be trained in interviewing, data inputting and analysis.

The research hopes to establish how local government and voluntary agency services can best meet the needs of young people in terms of: securing and sustaining tenancies within Inverclyde; setting up young people's housing forums; and successfully sustaining young people's participation in housing and homelessness issues.

It will identify steps agencies can take to support young people as they move on to independent living. There will be the chance to identify areas for improvement and development and most specifically, support the set-up of an effective young people's housing forum.

Twenty one year old co-researcher Roseanne Murdoch from Greenock said: "Having had personal experience of not having had a stable home, being on my own and wanting somewhere safe where I could settle and make home, I want to help other young people in Inverclyde who are going through the same thing. I feel that this pro-

ject will make a real difference and means I can do something about it."

Dodds McFadyen, youth co-ordinator at Youth Connections, said: "Action research takes place in real-world situations and this project aims to solve real problems as defined by the young people involved. The results could enable projects and departments to deliver a more responsive and informed service to young people."

Alex Robertson, Argyll and Clyde area director for Communities Scotland, said: "This project will engage young people in their communities, bringing benefits both for the young researchers and their peers. It tackles social inclusion by encouraging young people to learn about housing issues.

The research recommendations will represent the collective voice of young citizens and will help to inform the policies and programmes of a range of agencies working with them."

Councillor Eddie Gallacher emphasised: "The project will allow service providers to engage with young people more effectively and will give the local co-researchers the chance to

learn new skills and open up the employment opportunities available to them. Engaging with young people, along with all the other groups within our communities, is very important to the Council and is vital if our plans for the social and economic regeneration of Inverclyde are to succeed. I think it is great to involve young people as they are the best source of information about themselves."

The research is also supported by Inverclyde Council, Cloch HA, Larkfield HA, Oak Tree HA and Port Glasgow HA, Barnardo's, Careers Scotland and the Federation of Inverclyde Tenants and Residents Associations.

For further information and recruitment of researchers contact Dodds McFadyen on 01475 787049 or Christine Cumming at Communities Scotland 0141 305 4161. ▶

“I feel this project will make a real difference and means I can do something about it”

Roseanne Murdoch, 21

Guide stresses crucial role of sharing

A guide to sharing information, aimed at partner agencies working with homeless young people and vulnerable groups, has been published by Bridges Project and East Lothian Council, who commissioned the guide as part of its work in relation to its housing and homelessness strategies.

It tackles how information, particularly sensitive information, can be more effectively shared among those who deliver services for homeless young people.

The partners emphasise that what underpinned this work was the understanding that effective information sharing is crucial to achieve good quality outcomes for clients, and to maintain the principle of partnership itself.

Adaptation

The guide can be adapted by partnerships working in other settings, and can also be adapted for use with other vulnerable groups.

It contains guidance, case studies, recommendations and a framework for others to adapt to their particular circumstances and available resources.

Managers and supervisors can use it to tailor their day-to-day operational procedures and protocols for partnership staff.

Information Sharing – A Managers' Guide To Improving Practice costs £25 from Bridges Project, 0131 665 1621, mail@bridgesproject.org.uk or from East Lothian Council, 01620 827 199, publicinfo@eastlothian.gov.uk. ▶

SYHN
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The **Network** and **Homing In** provide the ideal forum for news of youth housing initiatives, problems and events in your area. **All ideas and feedback welcome.**

Contact the **SYHN** c/o SCSH, 5th floor, Wellgate House, 200 Cowgate, Edinburgh EH1 1NQ, tel 0131-226 4382 fax 0131-225 4382.

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getting on the network is easy!

■ SPECIAL FEATURE

Busy day in Dundee!



*On cue:
Another DJ
workshop
pumps up
the volume
at The Shore,
Dundee*

The Shore, Dundee's "premier young person's venue and activity centre", was the starting point for members of the Group. **The Shore** has a welcoming feel to it and is a great venue for young people, with big open spaces and a relaxed atmosphere.

Young people can participate in activities or just chill out. Art-work made by young people covers the walls. Even the toilets had been given a makeover, with hand-done mosaic work on the washstands!

While there we saw young people taking part in a DJ workshop. There's the opportunity to learn in dance classes; art workshops; drama workshops; filming workshops and discussion groups. There's advice on healthy eating, cooking and a café. It also has free internet access, and games consoles, and live events such as monthly band nights. Contact details: 15 Shore Terrace, Dundee DD1 3DN, tel 01382 435435 or email office.shore@dundeecity.gov.uk.

Our next visit was to **Carolina House Trust**, founded in 1815 after the Tay Bridge railway disaster. It continues to offer social care, and has developed a range

of innovative services for young people. An example is Care Rescue, unique to Scotland, providing residential emergency care to young people unable to cope with their placement in foster or residential care.

Moving On is a CHT outreach service which helps young people to leave care and establish an independent life for themselves. Their eight-week course in independent living

have difficulty accessing training or work due to personal circumstances and special training needs. Their training plan, discussed with a careers advisor, offers courses in core skills, personal development, vocational skills and life skills.

Address: 23 Roseangle, Dundee DD14LS, tel 01382 202029 or email reception@carolina.org.uk .

Next stop was a visit to **NCH**

The SYHN Steering Group recently went to Dundee to visit some local projects. Here's their report

skills includes budgeting, self-awareness, tenancy issues and claiming benefits. Eight flats leased from the council provide supported accommodation while other young people are supported in rented flats.

The Scott project similarly works with those not from care. Volunteer mentors are linked to 17 young people. The TRYET project provides limited training and an experience of employment to eight young people from New Deal and the Life Skills Programme works with young people who may

(National Children's Home) who welcomed us to their latest project in Dundee, a fresh, bright new building in Cowan Grove. It holds an on-site office and will eventually house up to eight supported young people, two of whom will be in bedsits. Three will have intensive packages of support of 30 hours or more. NCH take referrals and so there are issues around anticipating the extent of support which may be required by those previously unknown young people who might be referred.

The building has 24-hour

cover, with a concierge service at night and CCTV. NCH staff also provide extensive outreach work with those who live in ten dispersed tenancies. Young people regularly drop in for advice, and particular theme days have been organised for them, eg energy advice sessions. Focus groups are planned to discuss the service and get feedback from the young people.

NCH has identified the particular issues for young people locally as gaps in service provision; the difficulties of shared living; challenging behaviour; drugs; offending histories; young people who have been looked after but with needs not met; and those who don't meet the criteria but who are in need of support. The problem of young people with severe mental health problems was also raised, and their need for external support packages.

NCH was also actively involved in working group discussions with Dundee City Council Housing on their project's role within Dundee's Homelessness Strategy and where the service would best fit in. Contact details: Angie McDonald, NCH, Cowan Grove, Dundee. ▶

Nightstop

SCOTTISH Churches Housing Action has been working over the past year to establish South Ayrshire Nightstop. And now the management committee of Nightstop are forming a partnership agreement with Quarriers to ensure that the minimum standards of practice set by Nightstop UK are kept to.

Nightstops offer short-term emergency accommodation to homeless young people in the homes of volunteers.

If you think your area would benefit from a Nightstop project contact Diane Beckett on 0131 477 7042. Or you can email her at diane@scotchho.org.uk.

Funding

SCOTTISH Community Action Research Fund (SCARF) provides funding, training and mentoring for communities to enable them to carry out their own research into issues of concern to them. For more information and an application pack visit the Communities

noticeboard

SYHN Training Programme 2005-6

New and revised courses and a price freeze at £90!

- personal welfare benefits and accommodation costs
- beginner's guide to housing law and related issues
- young people and antisocial behaviour issues
- working with young people who use alcohol
- working with challenging behaviour
- working with young drug users
- introduction to young people and mental health
- working with survivors of sexual abuse: Levels 1 and 2

Scotland website at www.comunitiesscotland.gov.uk.

ASB advice line

A NEW advice line from the Scottish Executive is offering specialist advice on all aspects of antisocial behaviour – prevention, early intervention and diversion, enforcement action, rehabilitation, the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act

and other relevant legislation.

It is aimed at housing officers, police, environmental health officers, social workers, children's panel members and anyone working on the front line tackling antisocial behaviour. Call free on 0800 850 500.

Health

VISIT the Healthy Living website which promotes Scotland's

healthy living programme. It is designed to help people attain a healthier diet and a more active lifestyle by providing resources, advice and support on healthy eating and physical activity.

You can download recipes and information leaflets and packs, or order them free by post. The helpline number is 0845 2 78 8878 and the website is at www.healthyliving.gov.uk.

Resources

PURPLE Youth's website was designed to provide resources to professionals working with young people including teachers, learning mentors, social workers, youth workers and anyone else who works with young people.

The site lists events taking place across the country, in-house training resources and downloadable information. It also covers news items from around the UK, and is keen to receive information on local activities for publication on its website. The site is at www.purpleyouth.com. ▶

Restorative justice action

A new Scotland-wide system is set to replace Senior Police Officer warnings by 2006. It will be used against young offenders aged 8 to 15 (or 16 and 17 year olds under supervision). Called Police Restorative Warnings, they are "a process, facilitated by trained personnel that involves the warning of an offender whilst addressing the impact on the victim and the community. The victim will have the opportunity to be informed of the outcome."

A restorative warning is an early formal recorded intervention aimed at reducing the likelihood of re-offending, principally first offenders or those who consequently re-offend.

These warnings are expected to be issued quickly, by police officers who have first been trained in restorative warning methods. The case must be suitable for this process, for example because the person has committed a minor offence.

Where a "responsible officer" decides a warning would be appropriate, he or she will either take advice from the Children's Reporter (Option

special briefing

1) or will refer the case to the Reporter (Option 2). The Reporter will advise on whether there are any known welfare or other grounds as to why a warning should not be given.

The young person is expected to attend the police station along with their parents (if a child) to have the formal warning issued to them.

Focus

The focus is to impress on the young person and their parents the impact the offence has had on the victim or the community, encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions and getting over to them the implications should they offend in future.

The aim is to change the behaviour and attitude of the young person

rather than humiliating them. The victim will be told of the warning and will be able to make known how the offence affected them. If the victim wishes they can be told of the outcome from the warning.

There may be situations – depending on victim needs – where the police decide to hold a Police Restorative Warning Conference instead. The victim and any supporter is invited along to discuss the impact of the offence. The offender must agree to participate. Teachers, social workers, friends may be invited along and there may be more than one young person present. The person who facilitates the conference must be trained in restorative conferencing, and may be a police officer. Whoever facilitates, the police will still attend.

The police still have discretion not to issue a warning for a minor offence. They and the Reporter can instead send warning letters to the young person. And the police will continue to be able to deal with low-level antisocial behaviour which is not "a substantive offence". ▶