

# homing in

Newsletter of the Scottish Youth Housing Network

Homing 41 July 2002



Canongate Youth Project's publicity material for its "survival" skills workshops

## Young people tell own story on video

**C**anongate Youth Project have produced two videos entitled *Who...me?* They depict the stories of two young people who have experienced alcohol and drug use, sleeping rough and homelessness.

Since 1977 CYP has delivered youth work services to young people aged 15 to 21, living in the Southside of Edinburgh: open youth clubs, girls group, activity clubs and work aimed specifically at young people experiencing difficulties. The project also works alongside local primary and secondary schools.

A Community Fund grant to run a Preparation for Independent Living Project now offers group work programmes, practical assistance and individual support for teenagers who have moved or are think-

ing of moving into a tenancy of their own.

The aim of the video project was to reflect the views of young people and their experiences. It was decided to make two with one being used for staff and volunteer training.

### Discussion

By encouraging discussion around the issues raised on the video, it allows young people and youth workers to look at issues such as: What was it like for them during this period? What was practical and useful in helping them to move on? What steps did they have to take to overcome their situation? What made their situation worse or better?

Drugs, alcohol, homelessness and having or losing their own tenancies had a serious impact on the lives of the young people

on the video. Young people are encouraged to relate the video to situations that they or friends may be experiencing. Groups are asked: What choices were available to the young people on the video? How could they have done things differently? Which agencies, (if any) could have helped them? What information would have been helpful and who would be best placed to provide this information? How do you avoid finding yourself in a similar situation?

Agencies working with young people should find the videos a valuable resource. Produced by Mirage Television Production and Neil McCallum, who developed and co-ordinated the whole project, the video costs £5 inc p&p from Shirley Banks, Canongate Youth Project, Infirmary Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1L, tel 0131 556 9389/9719. ▶

## Anti-social penalty is talked out

**A** move to withdraw housing benefit from anti-social tenants for up to a year has failed after it was talked out in Parliament.

Proposed by Frank Field MP, the Housing Benefit (Withholding of Payments) Bill will now be shelved.

Seven of Scotland's national housing organisations – CoSLA, SCSH, Scottish Churches Housing Agency, Chartered Institute of Housing, SFHA, TPAS and Shelter (Scotland) – had joined forces to write to Scottish MPs asking them to oppose the implementation of the Bill in Scotland.

### Draconian

Calling it "draconian" they said that implementation would increase homelessness and would not be effective against anti-social behaviour.

The Bill was restricted to tenants and to the recipient of HB, though it was not just tenants who perpetrated anti-social behaviour, nor was the main tenant in a household necessarily to blame. Scotland already had many controls to tackle anti-social behaviour. ▶

**inside**

New supported  
carers project

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# Placements offer new beginnings

Supported care for homeless young people will soon be available in Glasgow, thanks to a new project being run by the Homeless Young Persons Team, which is part of Glasgow City Council Social Work Services.

Called New Beginnings, it is a supported carers project which aims to provide placements in a home setting for homeless young people of 16 to 21 who may have or have had drug or alcohol problems.

The project is now recruiting carers with the aim of making their first placements by the end of the year. Funded through the Children's Change Fund, it was part of a wider bid submitted by Glasgow City Council Addiction Services.

In 2001, the Council's Best Value Review identified a gap in current accommodation provision for young people who had no history of being in care. It recognised that some young people were not ready to live independently, but that only group living accommodation such as supported accommodation or hostels was available to them.

The Council recognised that for young homeless people with no previous experience of group living or the skills to cope in a group environment, this kind of placement could be inappropriate. In response it has set up New Beginnings, which will offer them a new supported care service.

The project recognises that homeless young people may have become homeless because of overcrowding, family breakdown, abuse, violence, bereavement or other events outwith their control.

Some may never have experienced a stable family environment and may have a range of complex needs. They may be easily influenced by others and possibly have become involved in drugs and alcohol. For many, the prospect of successfully setting up and running a home is unrealistic

because they do not yet have the maturity and skills required.

The homelessness culture and network in Glasgow is associated with many negative influences, in particular the risks of addiction or prostitution. There is a need to prevent or divert vulnerable young people away from these influences into a safer, more settled, environment. New Beginnings, by offering supported care to homeless young people, aims to offer an alternative resource to prevent a return to homelessness.

The Council describes supported carers as "ordinary people who welcome a homeless young person to stay in a spare room in their home, include the young person in their household and provide emotional and practical support to them."

They hope that supported carer placements will assist homeless young people

in developing the practical and emotional skills required for independent living without the negative peer group influences often associated with group living. Glasgow City Council Leaving Care Services has already successfully developed a similar supported carers resource for care leavers.

There is a formal assessment process and regular support from a Link Worker. There will be opportunities to meet with other carers on an ongoing basis and access to advice, information and training.

In recognition of the addiction problems faced by this group of young people, New Beginnings will also have the services of a specialist Addiction Support Worker who can offer advice and support to both the carer and the young person.

For more information contact New Beginnings at the Homeless Young Persons Team, Glasgow City Council Social Work Services, 118 Osborne Street, Glasgow G1 5QH or telephone 0141 552 7981. ▶

For many, running a home is unrealistic because they do not yet have the maturity required ▶

## Runaways asked for service priorities

Nine focus groups on the issue of running away have been conducted by Barnardo's and the National Children's Bureau. The sessions took place from December to January.

The groups were recruited from a range of geographical locations, and included 65 young people.

The consultation involved young people who had experienced running away, and other young people who had not. Barnardo's also spoke to specific groups which may be at particular risk from running away, such as gay, lesbian and bisexual young people and people in care.

The discussion was structured around three key areas: prevention, immediate safety and longer term needs. Most said the main contributory factor to running away was lack of communication.

### Safe houses

The consultation highlighted the importance of peer support and family support. Young people wanted gaps in service provision to be filled by outreach work and by "safe houses".

They favoured a professional contacting young people initially by letter to provide support after running away, but allowing a young person to decide if they want to access support and when and where this would be.

For further information please contact Di McNeish, Head of Research and Development at Barnardos, tel: 01133 933211 or send email to Di.McNeish@barnardos.org.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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## ■ SPECIAL FEATURE

# How to get Streets Ahead

The prevention of youth homelessness in Scotland will soon be helped by the publication of *Streets Ahead*, a national guide to leaving home and housing for young people, thanks to the joint work of the Scottish Youth Housing Network and Scottish Council for Single Homeless.

The guide aims to be an effective and valued possession that gives young people the advice, information and contacts needed to make a successful and well planned transition to independent living.

It replaces the earlier resource which was called *I'm Offski: A Guide to Leaving Home and Housing*.

*Streets Ahead* has been endorsed by the Scottish Executive, Communities Scotland and Homepoint, the Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and YouthLink Scotland, and is welcomed by Learning and Teaching Scotland.

The guide is not just one booklet but a series of sharply titled CD-sized booklets held in the sleeves of a zip-up CD carrier case. This allows the young person to flick through the sleeves and access the right information extremely fast.

This format will allow young people to tailor their own guide as there is space for CDs, computer games and other literature to be kept. This is crucial as it gives the guide added value beyond just being a

### The new resource guide aims to:

- be a key housing education resource for local authorities in their homelessness and advice and information strategies;
- be a comprehensive guide to leaving home and housing for young people of 14 to 25 in Scotland;
- be a resource that young people keep far longer than a stand alone booklet or leaflet;
- encourage young people to seek advice and information before problems become crises;
- become an integral tool for youth workers and teachers in housing education programmes.

source of information, and should mean that young people keep it and know where it is when they need it.

*Streets Ahead* covers the financial, emotional, legal and practical issues that face a young person leaving home and provides helpline numbers and essential contact details for every local authority.

It puts a firm emphasis on the importance of workers in this process, encouraging young people to seek advice on their

situation before problems overwhelm them.

The content and design of *Streets Ahead* have been inspired by the views of young people, gathered during extensive research by SYHN and SCSH to establish the most effective way in which leaving home and housing information can be provided. This research was published as *Watch This Space: young people's views on writing and designing an effective leaving home guide*.

Many housing, homelessness and young people's projects were also consulted to ensure the appropriateness of the guide.

In addition to the research with young people a development group has also been contributing on a regular basis to the content and design of the guide. This group is made up of eleven young people with experience of homelessness from projects across Scotland.

In order to ensure that *Streets Ahead* becomes embedded within school curricula and youth work settings SCSH will be providing training in the creation of an effective and enjoyable leaving home and housing education programme.

For further information and to find out how to order the new guide, please contact Nick Bell at SCSH's Youth Housing Strategy Unit on 0131 226 4382 or email her at: [nick@scsh.demon.co.uk](mailto:nick@scsh.demon.co.uk).

### Fife Keyfund correction

IN OUR last issue we mistakenly included Fife Keyfund as one of Lomonds Trust's initiatives. Fife Keyfund was actually set up in partnership with East Fife Keyfund, Open Door Fife, and Lomonds Trust.

Each organisation originally had its own rent/deposit scheme. They came together in March 2001 to provide a more effective, coherent service. Funding was sought from the Rough Sleepers Initiative, and a grant was awarded to employ two support workers to run the project.

Fife Keyfund has helped set up 93 tenancies throughout Fife during the past financial year. Due to the success of this service, Fife Council has recently awarded an additional grant to increase the staff team, and another support worker and administration worker have recently been appointed.

## Launch of social justice centre for Scotland

First Minister Jack McConnell officially launched the Scottish Centre for Research on Social Justice (SCRSJ) at Glasgow University this July. The Centre, which works to link research and policy in Scotland and the UK and to influence international debate, is organising its research around four related themes:

- The quality of people's lives at different stages of their lives;
- The communities and neighbourhoods in which people live;
- The ways in which different groups, particularly "excluded" groups, engage with processes of policy making;
- The impacts of policy in one policy field on other fields.

The research programme is being developed with an external Advisory Group, other researchers, policy groups and representatives of excluded groups. SCRSJ is based jointly in the Dept of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow and the Arkleton Centre for Rural Development Research, University of Aberdeen and funded by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council. ▶

## Cybercafe

BROXBURN now has a youth and community cybercafe, thanks to the partnership between West Lothian Youth Housing and Support Team and West Lothian Youth Action Project. It provides affordable internet access and meeting space for youth groups, tenants groups and the community.

It also promotes health issues for young people, a drop-in service and the Net Project, a community safety initiative from education services to target young people at risk. Funded by the Council Housing Services, Esmee Fairbairn Trust and with PCs from the Scottish Executive Digital Inclusion Initiative, you can get more details from Amanda.Downie@westlothian.gov.uk or on 01506 777515.

## Refugees

LEGAL Services Agency has set up a new service for asylum seekers and their families in all legal and human rights matters, including asylum law, housing rights, financial support, social security and employment rights. Cases can also be taken to relevant courts and tribunals. The Refugee Legal Project can be

# noticeboard

## Update your housing knowledge

In response to the introduction of the new Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 we are running two extra training courses geared specifically to the Act and its implications for young people. Places are limited, so book up soon.

- Edinburgh: Wednesday 28 August
- Glasgow: Tuesday 24 September

To book contact SYHN training administration on 0131 226 4382. The cost per course is £75 and this includes lunch and coffees.

contacted for free advice and appointments at LSA, Fleming House, 134 Renfrew Street, Glasgow on 0141 353 3354. To download free information leaflets visit [www.lsa.org.uk](http://www.lsa.org.uk).

## Sure Start

THE Sure Start maternity grant has now been increased from £300 to £500 for each baby who is born on or after 16 June 2002.

## Wanted

IDEAS for project features, good quality photographs and noticeboard items for future issues of *Homing In*. Contact

Norma Jones at 0131 538 8191 or email [syhn@joa.co.uk](mailto:syhn@joa.co.uk).

## Publications

CPAG's benefits "bible", the *Welfare Benefits Handbook 2002/03* (cost £25), is now also available on CD-ROM. Send for a free 28-day trial disk. It also has key case law, HB and CTB circulars, and briefings and is updated three times a year. Cost is £255 + vat for single user. Phone 020 7837 7979 ex 212 for trial disk.

Two new publications due out this summer are the *Guide to Training and Benefits for Young People* at £7.99 and the *New*

*Deal Handbook* at £9.99.

Benefits posters are also available at £4.95. Cheque with orders to CPAG, Pubs/WRB, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF. Add postage of £1 for orders up to £10, or £3 up to £200.

## Conference

ACTION Together is a joint Health and Homelessness Conference between the Scottish Executive and SCSH. On 9 & 10 September in Hilton Dunblane. It costs £185 residential (no dinner). Some subsidised places available. Contact 0131 226 4382 for full programme.

## Throughcare

SCOTTISH Throughcare and Aftercare Forum has a variety of useful publications available. The Skills For Life Pack gives a framework for throughcare preparation for support workers, carers and tutors. Accompanied by an information-based handbook it is £55 + p&p.

A useful leaflet called Consulting with Young People is also available. Contact the Forum at 37 Otago Street, Glasgow G12 8JJ, tel: 0141 357 4124. Or visit them at [www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk](http://www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk).

# New Homelessness Bill proposals

All 59 recommendations of the Homelessness Task Force were accepted by the Scottish Executive, who say they will "now form the basis of a long-term plan to prevent and alleviate homelessness in all its forms." Consultation has now ended on what the new Homelessness Bill should contain. It is likely to be published this autumn.

The main aspects covered are priority need, intentional homelessness and local connection. Here are the proposals:

**Priority need status** should eventually be extended to everyone assessed as homeless. It would be phased in so that accommodation and services are available but in a way that does not disadvantage those in greatest need.

The first step would be to include as priority need those who:

- are aged 16 to 17, or
- are suffering or in fear of domestic abuse, or

## special briefing

- are vulnerable within the terms of the Code of Guidance.

The second step would cover those under a specified age, perhaps 25, and those over a specified age, perhaps 55. The target for this is 2007/8.

The third step would be to abolish priority need altogether, by 2012.

**Intentional homelessness** is when a person is deemed to have contributed to their own homelessness through a deliberate action or inaction. This would be retained, but there should be a problem-solving approach by the local authority, who would continue to retain responsibility for dealing with intentionally homeless people.

The duty to investigate intentionality would be replaced by a power to do so, allowing more discretion. And where a person is found to be intentionally homeless the local authority would be required to ensure that a short Scottish secure tenancy (SSST) is offered, with appropriate support.

This would be a similar duty to that in the 2001 Housing (Sc) Act which obliges authorities in cases of anti-social behaviour orders or eviction for anti-social behaviour to provide support services with a view to converting the SSST to a Scottish secure tenancy.

**Local connection** rules mean that local authorities can at present refer a homeless person to another authority where there is a local connection. This power would be suspended for the whole of Scotland, and monitored by the Homelessness Monitoring Group to find out its impact and any remedial action needed if it became unmanageable.