

homing in

Newsletter of the Scottish Youth Housing Network

No 44 March 2003

Streets Ahead hits the road

Demand for training in the use of the *Streets Ahead Guide to Leaving Home and Housing* has resulted in a series of successful seminars being run across Scotland, including Inverness, Edinburgh and Dumfries.

Last November saw the first training and information seminar launched in Dundee, facilitated by SCSH's Housing Education Team. The participants, ranging, from frontline workers to homelessness strategy officers, gave plenty of positive feedback as well as great ideas on how to improve future seminars.

A taster?

Interested? Then why not sign up for this "taster" training and get familiar with how the *Streets Ahead* guide can be used in a range of work settings.

The remaining dates are both in Glasgow on 25 March and 3 April. Places are filling up fast so book quickly through the Housing Education Team on 0131 226 4382 or fax 0131 225 4382 to ensure you have a place. ▶

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LinkLiving: helping people to take control of their lives

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The staff team from Horizons, Edinvar Housing Association's new support project

Horizons promises a bright future

Christmas time saw the launch of a new support project for young people living in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Two long-standing support projects – Slipway and SAILS – have now combined their services under the project name of Horizons. The new name was suggested and chosen by service users after much discussion and deliberation.

As part of Edinvar Community Care, the new project will continue to offer supported accommodation, visiting support, groupwork activities, a drop-in centre, an emergency on-call service, residential trips and partnership working to young people aged 16 to 25 who have experienced leaving care or hospital, who have faced homelessness,

and/or who have mental health issues.

Plans are also underway to extend the service. Horizons will be expanding the team so that they can offer additional supported accommodation places to young people.

Expansion

In future the team will have 28 supported accommodation flats and 10 visiting support places for young people – a welcome addition to service provision, given that requests for these services constantly outstrip supply at present.

The Slipway young person's support service was established by Edinvar Housing Association in 1987. The SAILS service has been working with service users referred through the

Young People's Unit at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital since 1994. Both projects have been working increasingly closely in recent years.

The merging of the two services is a natural progression and allows for a greater sharing of skills and resources under the one name.

Staffed by an energetic team, the Horizons project looks forward to building on the quality services that have been offered over the years.

For all enquiries about the service, including referrals, please contact the Project Coordinator, Richard Johnston, at Horizons, 35 Marshall Street, Edinburgh, EH8 9BJ, Tel: 0131 667 4775 or email to marshallst@edinvar.co.uk. ▶

Care forum seeks views of young

The aim of the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum is to promote young people's participation in national throughcare and aftercare policy developments and in the development of local services for young people leaving care. Promoting the work, meeting young people and encouraging others to get involved were obvious priorities but the major focus was getting involved with national policy developments taking place at this stage.

The Scottish Executive asked The Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum and Who Cares? Scotland to consult with young people on the Throughcare and Aftercare Working Group Report, published last September.

The report has implications for supporting Young People when they move on from care, and consultation on both its contents and the effects it will have on services when its recommendations are brought into being, will be vital.

Having just three months to do this particular piece of consultation we began with a small consultation meeting with young people. From this, we decided which questions about the report should be put to young people around the country. After further consultation about design and wording, as well as some more focused consultation with groups of young people from specific backgrounds, we put together a young people's questionnaire on the report.

The response to the questionnaire was really good and working with the young people and hearing their thoughts and opinions was really enjoyable, not to mention inspiring!

The results have now been compiled in a document called *Having Our Say*, which has been passed to The Scottish Executive and to Cathy

Jamieson, Minister for Education and Young People. It is also being used in the development of local services and policies – a very promising result. This work will continue over the coming months and it is great to see young people's views being listened to and taken seriously. Copies of the results are available from the forum's website: www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk.

We hope to get more young people involved and distribute the results of the questionnaire. Some have already had the chance to speak to

MSPs about their views and the results have been shared at the Local Authority Lead Officer's Group for throughcare and aftercare.

We intend to set up issue specific Young People's Focus Groups. Initially these groups will look at young people with disabilities; accessing further and higher education; with the possibility of a young parents' group happening later on.

We also hope to further our partnership working with local agencies across Scotland and help establish Young People's Groups in other areas of the country.

Our young people will be working especially hard as they hope to organise a Young People's Debate with MSPs and local councillors. Six young people are currently working on the idea and applying for funding from the Prince's Trust Millennium Awards scheme.

At the SYHN Conference in May our young people will perform their *Moving On* role play and will feedback the questionnaire responses from *Having Your Say*. We look forward to seeing you there.

If you would like more information about the forum's work with young people and a copy of the first newsletter, please contact Janet Sanders on 0141 341 0144. ▶

Janet Sanders is Young Person's Development Worker with the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum. Funded for three years by Comic Relief the post reflects the Forum's desire to give young people a voice when leaving care. Here Janet describes the task

Nightstop could use that spare room

An event to introduce a new concept in emergency accommodation for young people in Scotland takes place next month.

Nightstops in Scotland is a free conference which is being co-ordinated by the Scottish Churches Housing Agency in conjunction with Nightstop UK.

Nightstops have developed in England and Wales over the past decade as a response to youth homelessness. The concept is simple. People with a spare room make it available one or two nights a month as emergency accommodation for homeless young people.

The Scottish Churches Housing Agency and Nightstop UK are now working together to develop the idea in Scotland.

Is it for you?

This conference is your opportunity to find out more, and to assess if a Nightstop scheme might be appropriate in your community. It will include speakers with experience of running a scheme; and workshops will provide the opportunity to meet Nightstop volunteers, to examine procedures and practice, and to look at starting a scheme.

The conference is on Friday 11 April 2003 at The Wynd Centre, 6 School Wynd, Paisley, from 11.30 to 3.30. It is free and includes a buffet lunch. To book contact Len Wright, Scottish Churches Housing Agency, 28 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH15 2ES, 0131 477 4500, fax 0131 477 2710, or website www.churches-housing.org. ▶

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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

Person-centred approach offers a different future



One of LinkLiving's service users in a summer residential week to develop skills, experience and capacity, run by Falkirk Council's Community Education Service.

LinkLiving offers more than supported housing: by providing individual services, promoting inclusion, developing person-centred approaches and focusing on user involvement it supports people to take control of their lives and shape different futures.

It provides services to 300 people in Edinburgh, Midlothian, Fife and Falkirk who have faced social exclusion through homelessness, mental health problems, learning disabilities or because they have multiple needs. Within this, LinkLiving supports around 200 young people through the provision of housing or support services. Each young person has their own council or housing association tenancy and receives flexible, responsive tenancy support for as long as is needed.

Supported living services are also offered to those not yet ready to take on the responsibility of their own tenancy. This support is available for as long as required and includes helping the young person to find their own permanent accommodation.

Whether as the main support provider or working on varying levels of partnership with other agencies and organisations LinkLiving adapts each of its services to local circumstances. It provides strong, flexible support networks for people who need help to manage the challenges and stresses of daily life and offers a comprehensive range of services to meet individual needs.

An innovative, dynamic and growing

organisation, it is committed to mutual support, participation and personal development for staff, service users and committee members.

Two recent initiatives which helped to promote service user involvement and building capacity within the organisation were "In the Know" training and a Young Persons Conference in West Bridge Mill, Kirkcaldy. Each was aimed at building young people's personal skills and experience



“The conference was so good I didn't want to go home”

while helping them develop their confidence, abilities and involvement in LinkLiving.

One young person said the conference "was so good I didn't want to go home" and participants were keen to repeat the experience. Workshops were held on drumming, arts, mental health awareness and sexual health, with lunchtime entertainment from hiphop band Discipline.

Many training and conference participants have volunteered to stay involved with LinkLiving; one spin off is that young people are set to design a training course and pack which they will deliver to staff.

They will also be trained to use person centred planning tools and facilitate person centred plans for other young people in the organisation or in other organisations. This would reduce the number of professionals involved and thus help young people to be in, and keep control of, their lives and future plans.

The "In the Know" training course was facilitated by Diversity Matters, who trained young people and staff together as a team. They explored person-centred planning tools and values. From this course LinkLiving hopes to offer training for new and existing staff as well as staff in other organisations. Young people are developing a training manual and pack and LinkLiving hopes to train young people as person-centred facilitators so that they can do some planning with and for other people who use our services or for people in other organisations.

The training was seen as "an excellent opportunity to learn something about yourself. Give it a shot, and stay open-minded!" Another said: "It was good to meet other people and do something different".

There are many other opportunities for involvement. LinkLiving has service users on its board of management and are setting up advisory groups in each area of operation, with the help of its service user involvement officer to advise on policy, procedures and direct involvement in monitoring the quality of services.

For further information please contact Linda Burnett, Service Manager (Young People), LinkLiving, 23 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh EH8 6PG, tel 0131 625 0777 or email lb@linkhaltd.co.uk. ▶

Equal Voices

FIFE Racial Equality Council – home of Equal Voices and Equal Futures – has folded due to changes in its funding structure. Saeed Akbar, chairperson of Fife REC, says that discussions on setting up a new community-led organisation are ongoing. However, SYHN has been unable to contact Equal Voices to establish whether there is any prospect of their service receiving new funding.

Wanted

IDEAS for articles, good quality photographs and information on your activities for inclusion in the Noticeboard. Contact Norma Jones on 0131 538 8191 or email to syhn@joa.co.uk.

Welfare rights

SCOLAG Journal has reviewed Glasgow City Council's welfare rights website and given it high praise for "excellence in interactivity and usefulness to adviser and applicant alike." It covers a wide range of benefit information, benefit rates and a frequently asked questions section. It links directly to the DWP's downloadable application forms and will even draft an appeal let-

noticeboard

SYHN Conference 2003

THIS year's conference includes young people describing their input to projects; giving their views on moving on; plus sessions on mediation, equalities, the homelessness bill, alcohol use, consultation, mentoring and befriending, acceptable behaviour contracts, and education taster sessions. Be there!

Date and venue: Stirling Management Centre, Stirling, Friday 16 May. The cost to subscribing organisations is £80, which includes lunch. To book your place contact SYHN on 0131 226 4382.

ter for you, and will add your appeal grounds for certain benefit claims. You can calculate your own benefit entitlement, and print off letters of claim. And you can send an email enquiry to a welfare rights officer and receive the reply by email or post. The site is at www.glasgow.gov.uk/html/council/dept/social/welfareonline/index.htm.

On the move

HEMAT Gryffe Women's Aid, a voluntary organisation primarily for Asian, Black and Ethnic Minority women who are escaping domestic violence, has

now moved to Unit 13, Mansfield Park, 32 Mansfield Street, Glasgow, G11 5QP, tel: 0141 339 519, fax: 0141 339 7346.

HSUG

DO YOU use housing statistics to plan, deliver or comment on housing? Do you want to find out more about what data is available or comment on its quality? The UK Housing Statistics User Group is an open forum with the general purpose of improving communication between all users and providers of housing statistics in the UK. It is independent, with support

provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It is self-organised through a management committee of social housing organisations; private housebuilders and financiers; local authorities; housing charities; housing consultants; and academics. The group operates by holding open meetings around particular topics, and through electronic communication. It recently looked at homelessness strategies and statistics. To get involved, visit www.housing.odpm.gov.uk/statistics/hsug.

Housing rights

THE Scottish Secure Tenancy is a new leaflet for tenants and is available from the Scottish Executive. It has the clarity Crystal Mark of the Plain English Campaign and sets out in simple question and answer format the basic facts around the new SST. Available from The Scottish Executive, Housing 2.3, Area 1-G, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ or by phoning 0131 244 2105, or sending an email to housing.information@scotland.gsi.gov.uk. The Scottish Executive's website is at www.scotland.gov.uk.

Homelessness figures released

Statistics just released by the Scottish Parliament show that there has been an increase in the number of people applying to local authorities for assistance under the homelessness legislation.

Social Justice Minister Margaret Curran commented: "As we fully expected, there is an increase in the number of people who have applied to local authorities for assistance. The reason for this is quite straightforward – changes in the law mean that far more people are now eligible for help. It is worth noting that the biggest increase has been in the number of single people now being assessed as a priority."

This is well illustrated by Glasgow where, since January 2002, the city council has assessed 72% of single homeless applicants as a priority, compared to 25% in 1999.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced a duty on local authorities

special briefing

to carry out an assessment of homelessness in their area and develop a strategy to tackle it. Since September 2002 they have also had an increased duty to provide temporary accommodation, advice and assistance to everyone assessed as homeless.

Temporary accommodation figures show that in the six months to the end of September 23,150 households applied as homeless. Sixty three per cent of those applying between January and September were single and a further 24% were single parents.

Between April and September 18,918 households had their cases concluded, and half were found to be

in priority need. Of these, 48% were offered a permanent social rented tenancy and 21% were offered temporary accommodation.

Meanwhile, the Homelessness Etc (Scotland) Bill passed its third reading in the Scottish Parliament on 5 March. The Bill will shortly become law and guidance will be published to accompany it. The full text of the debate at the Social Justice Committee is at www.scottish.parliament.uk/official_report/meeting.html.

The Bill extends priority need categories. The first phase includes young people up to the age of 20. Age limits will be further extended as the categories are phased in up to 2012. Deciding whether an applicant is intentionally homeless becomes a power, not a duty. Statistics have shown that only 7% of all applicants were intentionally homeless. Local connection will be suspended, though its impact will be monitored.