

homing in

Newsletter of the Scottish Youth Housing Network

No 45 June 2003



Young speakers from the MoveOn Project helped set the scene at this year's conference

Conference does the business!

We've hit the mark again! That was the verdict of the majority who attended this year's *Homing In* Conference in Stirling. One hundred and forty people participated, and evaluation forms were received from over fifty per cent.

The wide range of workshop sessions ensured there was something to meet most people's interests. The day was opened and closed by presentations from young people.

The opening session featured presentations from Castlemilk Youth Complex Ltd, MoveOn, LinkLiving and KeySteps. The participation of young people

was seen as "very positive." It was felt to be appropriate and a "not too formal way to begin" with good information on a range of projects.

Role plays

The day closed with a stimulating session by young people from the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum, who used a mix of role plays and simple slides to illustrate a survey they had carried out testing the views of young care leavers.

Comments included: "Excellent role-play, brought out the pertinent issues"; "Impressed by young people's presentations. Presented very profes-

sionally". The play's characters illustrated "every bad practice rolled into one. Highlights the training needs for professionals and the need to achieve lower workloads to allow professionals to do their job;" and "Highlights the need for corporate working and partners life training."

Suggestions made for future issues of *Homing In* included linking of homelessness and health; topical legal briefings; LGBT issues for young people in Scotland; information on Streets Ahead training; and updates on how Supporting People is impacting on services for young people. ▶

Nightstop plans get underway

Last April saw the launch of Nightstops in Scotland, an event co-ordinated by the Scottish Churches Housing Agency to publicise the concept of emergency accommodation for young homeless people in the homes of volunteers.

The first Scottish Nightstop scheme is now being considered for Ayr. The Scottish Churches Housing Agency development manager, Diane Beckett, is supporting a steering group of local people who are carrying out a needs assessment for a Nightstop scheme.

Strategy linking

The steering group is also linking with South Ayrshire Council, to ensure that it fits with the council's wider homelessness strategy.

For more information, or to explore the possibility of a Nightstop scheme in your own area, contact Diane at Scottish Churches Housing Agency, 28 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3QH, tel: 0131 477 4500, e-mail: diane@ednet.co.uk or visit their new website at www.churches-housing.org. ▶

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Bridges young designers log on

Jim Boyle, assistant director of Bridges Project, describes the launch last month of their latest web initiative for young people

With more than a passing nod in the direction of the other democratic process taking place on the first of May, young people using the services of Bridges Project launched the first stage of what is hoped will be a sustainable user-participation process for the agency.

Thanks to New Futures funding and premises provided by MYPAS in Dalkeith, ten young people from Midlothian and East Lothian undertook a twelve week bespoke web design training programme with CRF Computer Consultancy Ltd.

The young people have now successfully designed and constructed their own web pages and web sites, some of which will be hosted on Bridges Project's main web site.

The launch was attended by friends, family and staff from the 15-24 Projects in East Lothian, Midlothian and Bridges Project. John Dickie, head of the Youth Unit at Scottish Council for Single Homeless, came along to present the successful participants with their certificates.

The technical skills developed by the participants will be of great value for the design and construction of a young person's web site at Bridges Project, as well as being very marketable commodities to potential employers.

Participants on the course have developed extra communication, team work, numeracy and literacy skills through the work and where requested have been able to arrange one-to-one sessions with personal tutors to enhance these skills.

They have also enjoyed trips to the theatre as part of the process and have been introduced to

actors, set designers, directors, dancers and a host of other professionals involved in arts and the media.

The participation site will showcase the work organised and undertaken by young people at the project. A virtual newsletter is planned, and this will report on activities already in the pipeline. These activities include CD burning, video making, drama production, European exchanges and script writing.

Some young people have already identified downloads they want to make available to others. These include cheap and healthy recipes and tips on how to survive bed and breakfast.

Now in its third year of operation in East Lothian and its second year in Midlothian, Bridges Project hopes to build on the previous success of other participation activities.

These have included publications such as the *Smash 'n' Grub Cookbook*, and *Leaving Home: A Few Home Truths*, which was a pack designed by school leavers for school leavers in East Lothian.

Bridges Project hopes that as these participants graduate into peer volunteers, they will be able to pass on their skills to other young people, perpetuating the circle of involvement.

For further information about the user participation web design course contact Jim Boyle, assistant director, Bridges Project, Unit 1, Bogpark Road, Musselburgh EH21 6RT, tel: 0131 665 1621, email: mail@bridgesproject.org.uk.

You can take a look at some of the young people's work by visiting Bridges main web site at www.bridgesproject.org.uk. ▶



John Dickie chats to young web designers at Bridges' launch day

Homeless bill clears final hurdle

The latest homelessness bill has now been approved by the Scottish Parliament, to become the Homelessness Etc (Scotland) Act 2003.

The Act will introduce some radical changes which will assist young homeless people. The key changes are:

- priority need categories will include 16 and 17 year olds; 18 – 20 year olds at risk of sexual or financial exploitation or involvement in drug or alcohol misuse, or who were in care on or after their school leaving date; and people at risk of violence or harassment because of race, colour, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origins; or domestic abuse.
- the duty to investigate intentional homelessness will be replaced by a power to investigate.
- if a person is intentionally homeless accommodation still has to be offered, normally a short Scottish secure tenancy for at least a year, and housing support services.
- those with an Anti Social Behaviour Order against them, or evicted for anti-social behaviour in the last three years still qualify for Section 7 accommodation – in other words, a hostel or other short stay housing.
- the requirement that a person must have a local connection with the area will be suspended.
- the Code of Guidance is also being revised. ▶

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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

Laura, Fee and Debs find time to relax at the Drumchapel Supported Youth Housing Project



Quarriers in Drumchapel

The Drumchapel Supported Youth Housing Project is an exciting new organisation providing a high standard of accommodation and support to young people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in the Drumchapel area of Glasgow.

It is managed by Quarriers, a voluntary organisation which provides a range of services throughout Scotland for children, families and young people including various projects aimed specifically at young homeless people. In Drumchapel, Quarriers are working in partnership with a number of both statutory and voluntary sector agencies including:

- The Drumchapel SIP
- The Big Step SIP
- Glasgow City Council
- Communities Scotland
- Six local housing providers
- Local community representatives
- Employment and training providers.

Young people are allocated their own tenancy and a named project worker who gives one-to-one support. An individual support plan is agreed, defining the support the young person wants to help them live independently in their own home.

Support can cover a range of independent living skills including budgeting,

benefits, cooking, shopping, emotional, loneliness, neighbour issues and liaising with other agencies within the local community.

The project also explores employment and training opportunities. Direct support is available 7 days a week from 8.00am until 9.00pm, with an on call service from Project Workers outwith these times to offer advice in emergencies and support if a young person is feeling lonely or isolated.

Furniture

The project also provides a high standard furniture package for tenants which they are able to choose for themselves. Made possible by additional funding, there is no extra charge to the tenant, and thus no negative impact if a paid job is found.

Group work sessions are very popular and attract regular attendance. They include decoration and arts and crafts skills, in partnership with city based training provider Fab Pads. The training includes wall preparation, painting and hanging wallpaper. Young people are encouraged to personalise their own homes by developing skills such as stencilling, cushion and curtain making.

A local college has agreed to deliver training which includes first aid, confid-

ence building and personal development.

Local organisations giving advice and support at sessions include the police, Millennium Volunteers, community education, Careers Service and health promotion.

Social activities include group discussions, watching videos, communal meals, visits to the Science Centre/Imax, bowling, cinema, walking, eating out and a visit to Loch Lomond.

The Project supports 10 young people in their own tenancies, and aims to increase this to 30 over the next two years. Not only is this a genuine attempt by all relevant agencies to come together in a joined up approach, but it also offers young people a much more inclusive and locally based range of support services.

The model is enthusiastically supported by the Scottish Executive, who are interested both in the partnership working and in the outcomes for young people. The Project will be externally monitored and evaluated over three years.

For more information contact Scott Robertson, Project Manager, Quarriers Drumchapel Supported Youth Housing Project, Units 26 and 30, KCEDG, Commercial Centre, Ladyloan Place, Drumchapel, Glasgow, G15 8LB. ▶

Budget reforms

SEVERAL welfare benefit related reforms came in with the last Budget. These include: more flexibility for Personal Advisers to allow early entry into New Deal; additional funding for Jobcentre Plus to help people from ethnic minorities into work. The distance JSA recipients will be expected to travel for work will be extended from one hour's travel to one and a half hours after 13 weeks of the claim; and an increase in the minimum number of job applications that all JSA claimants will be expected to make.

Training incentives

THE Chancellor is also looking at financial incentives for young people to participate in education and training and where it would fit with any new minimum wage for 16 and 17 year olds. He will also review the financial support for young people and their parents or carers, those living independently and those in low-paid employment.

Bullying website

A WEBSITE to help parents and children combat bullying has just been launched. The

noticeboard

SYHN Training Programme

The new training programme for 2003-2004 will shortly be launched. Each course costs £85 to subscribers.

- personal welfare benefits ■ paying for accommodation
- young people and drugs ■ challenging behaviour
- beginners guide to housing law ■ working with survivors of sexual abuse – Levels 1 & 2

website, run by Edinburgh University's Anti-Bullying Network, offers advice on how to confront bullies and how adults can help children overcome the problem. It also contains academic research on bullying in schools written in lay terms to make it more accessible. Visit the site at www.antibullying.net.

Survivors course

IN RESPONSE to requests for follow-on training for those who have attended the Working with Survivors of Sexual Abuse course, SAY Women have designed a Level 2 course for us. It will run on 17 September in Edinburgh, and will be

strictly limited to those who have already attended the first course. The original course will also continue and will now be described as a Level 1 course. See training programme details in the box above.

Rightsnet

TO FIND out more information about welfare benefits visit www.rightsnet.org.uk, the welfare benefits website for advice workers.

Dunblane conference

THE Scottish Housing and Support Conference 2003 will take place on 9 and 10 October in Hilton Dunblane Hydro. A lim-

ited number of reduced rate places are available for low income organisations and service users. For further details and a booking form contact Norma Jones on 0131 538 8191 or email shasc@joa.co.uk.

HB pilot projects

THE Government has confirmed it is about to introduce 10 pilot projects across the UK to test out the idea of standard local housing allowances in the private sector based on geographical area and size of the household. A flat rate sum would be paid, regardless of rent due. October is the likely start date, and Edinburgh will be one of the pilot areas.

Minimum wage

RATES for the national minimum wage are to be increased from October. The adult rate will increase to £4.50 an hour and the youth rate to £3.80.

Copy 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. ▶

Court support for witnesses

The Witness Service is a recent development by Victim Support to assist people called to court as witnesses and as victims. Individuals are offered support to help them through the judicial process by providing practical and emotional support. The service was developed as a result of research which showed that both witnesses and victims lacked information about the case progress and about the criminal justice procedures.

Then came concerns that courts were run with little regard for victims' needs. Nobody was designated to show them the courtroom layout or explain procedures, and inadequate waiting room facilities often led to victims being confronted with the accused and their supporters.

Victims often found the experience of giving evidence very distressing, particularly in cases of violence or sexual assault. Lack of protection from

special briefing

intimidation and harassment caused many victims to be reluctant to report and caused witnesses to be unwilling to come forward with the vital evidence.

As one person commented: "It's frightening, the first time you go into a High Court ... all those wigs and gowns, the way people talk ... it's like a show. You don't know the procedures."

In response, Victim Support has developed a free service available to all victims and witnesses attending court. The service will support those called to court; those not called to court; and the families and friends of

victims and witnesses. It is a court-based service and gives practical help with expenses forms for such costs as travel, essential child care and loss of earnings.

The Service also arranges a pre-court visit, and information on court procedures. The Service will put witnesses in touch with people who can answer any specific questions they may have about the case, and provide guidance on other services which may be able to assist.

Trained volunteers offer emotional support, will discuss any concerns and anxieties the person may have, and will be there to continue the support after the person has given evidence.

Victims and witnesses can get in touch at any time before, during or after attending court. For details of local services contact Victim Support Scotland on 0845 603 9213. They are based at 15/23 Hardwell Close, Edinburgh EH8 9RX. ▶