

# homing in

Newsletter of the Scottish Youth Housing Network

No 56 Dec 2006



Homing In conference participants relax after a hard day's design work. [Report page 3](#)

## House Key support goes on line

A unique resource for those who need to know about housing support services in Scotland is now online.

Commissioned by Scottish Executive, The House Key holds information on over 2,000 housing support services in Scotland. It aims to provide enough detailed information to help service users differentiate between services, and help workers locate the most suitable service for their clients.

### Quick search

You can access details of specific types of services such as those for young people, and call up lists of services run by providers.

Its library includes over 300 downloadable fact-sheets, guides and reports. And a handy glossary provides clear explanations of terms that service users might come across.

There is also an advice and information Helpline on 0845 271 2323 for those who prefer to talk directly to an advisor.

To find out more contact [info@thehousekey.org](mailto:info@thehousekey.org), ring 020 7820 3755 or visit [www.thehousekey.org](http://www.thehousekey.org).

## inside

Quality indicators for young people's care launched

Page 2

## Say Women's cash crisis is resolved

The funding crisis which threatened the stability of SAY Women's services has been resolved, thanks to financial assistance from Scottish Executive. This will allow them to develop further services and seek new funding.

As Professor Liz Kelly, Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit of London Metropolitan University, says in SAY Women's annual report: "We have very few dedicated services anywhere in the UK, and in this sense SAY Women are pathfinders and precious."

The service offers safe, supported accommodation and related services for single young women 16 to 25, who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and have disclosed childhood sexual abuse, rape or sexual assault.

Its Accommodation Project

continues to be unable to meet the needs of all the young women referred. Last year 51 were referred, of whom 70% had been sexually abused as children; 30% raped/sexually assaulted; 29% had experienced both; 31% had been involved in prostitution; 16% had experienced domestic abuse. Uncles were recorded as the majority of abusers at 33%.

### Mental health

Mental health needs remained high amongst all referrals, of which: 33% had self injured; 23% had overdosed; 14% had depression; 8% had attempted suicide. And for the second year running, high numbers had drug dependency 33%; alcohol dependency 14%; current criminal charges 31%; under social work supervision order 14%. 15 young women

took up a SAY Women tenancy – a rate of 1 in 3 referrals.

The Outreach service offers high levels of support to six service users, both emotional and practical, to help sustain temporary or permanent tenancies.

The Follow On service, providing emotional and resettlement support to those moving on, supported 15 people, an extra three since last year. Eleven are sustaining a tenancy, three are in supported accommodation and two are in detox projects.

The Resource Service, which offers crisis support to survivors in the homelessness network had 34 referrals, 31 women and three men. Half were from the Glasgow area.

SAY Women, 30 Bell Street, Glasgow G1 1LG, tel 0141 552 5803, or email [say-women@globalinternet.co.uk](mailto:say-women@globalinternet.co.uk).

# Quality indicators for young people's care

October saw the launch of new Quality Indicators in the support of young people who have been looked after.

*How Good is Your Throughcare & Aftercare Service?* is the result of a year's work by the Scottish Throughcare & Aftercare Forum to establish a tool to promote and develop best practice when supporting young people.

It ranges across nine key areas, including Accommodation, Young People's Involvement, Health and Well-Being and Financial Support. For each it sets out key principles alongside a set of specific indicators.

## Development

It can be used as a self-assessment tool to evaluate the extent and quality of support services provided to looked after young people as they approach adulthood. It can also be used to review services and identify areas for future development.

At its launch both the Care Commission and the Social Work Inspection Agency said they would be asking services whether they were using this document to self-assess their service. The document was also welcomed by the Scottish Executive, the Children's Commissioner, Careers Scotland and SCSH.

Kathleen Marshall, Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland, commented: "This is a very practical document. It takes agencies through

simple steps to help them assess and reflect on their own practice. It acts as a bridge between law and guidance, which is clearly indicated throughout the document, and its impact on young people.

"If we really want to improve the experience of young people, it is no good just ticking the high level boxes; agencies have to be sure that what they are doing is experienced and perceived by young people as helpful. That is why it is so significant that the indicators and outcomes are informed by what young people have said."

It is aimed at service providers, practitioners, carers and policy makers across the range of relevant services and agencies. Young adults who have been looked after should also know about this publication, so that they are aware of the levels of support they should receive.

## Best practice

Diversity of practice across Scotland often means young people receive varying levels of support, depending where they live. By implementing best practice across Scotland, there should be improved consistency and quality of throughcare and aftercare support.

The Forum sees the key message as to promote good corporate parenting where all services, departments and teams recognise their responsibilities towards supporting looked-after young people into adulthood: "Young people have

faced the most challenging childhoods. They should receive on-going support to lead successful adult lives."

It asks organisations to consider the quality of their services: "We need to know what it means to be a good corporate parent. Would the services you provide be good enough for your own children?"

## Suggestions

The Forum makes the following suggestions for use of the Quality Indicators:

They should be applied to the range of practice and support services for looked after young people, across the whole organisation.

The publication is a self-assessment tool to measure the extent and quality of services. It can be used to establish a benchmark from which the development of services can be measured against in the future.

From this self-assessment, organisations should identify opportunities to improve and develop services for looked after young people.

Action plans can be established for each area which set out targets and priority areas to be addressed.

It can be used to raise awareness of the needs of young people leaving care and to widely promote corporate parenting responsibilities.

To download a copy go to [www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk](http://www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk) or ring the Forum at 0141 357 4124 for a free copy. ▶

# Housing pack for schools

Smart Move, Link Living Falkirk's Peer Education Project, recently collaborated with Scottish Council for Single Homeless to raise awareness of housing and homelessness issues through new education materials for schools.

The result is Home Smart, a pack with two easy to use lesson plans for S4 pupils, free to every Scottish secondary school.

To coincide with the 40th anniversary of Cathy Come Home, SCSH invited Smart Move to help develop ideas. The group came up with young people's scenarios, using real-life examples as the basis for the lesson materials.

## Testing

The peer educators then worked through the materials to see how easy they were to understand and deliver and whether they were interesting, enjoyable and challenged perspectives on leaving home and homelessness.

Smart Move recruits young people with experience of setting up their own tenancy and who may also have experienced homelessness. As peer educators they deliver leaving home and housing education to secondary schools, homeless hostels, youth clubs and young care leavers.

To find out more and download the two lesson plans visit [www.leavinghome.info/homesmart](http://www.leavinghome.info/homesmart). ▶

**SYHN**  
SCOTTISH  
YOUTH  
HOUSING  
NETWORK

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.

**SYHN**  
SCOTTISH  
YOUTH  
HOUSING  
NETWORK

getting on the network is easy!

## ■ CONFERENCE REPORT

# Helping you stay passionate!



*Young people hard at work in the Fab Pad workshop at the Homing In Conference*

**K**ee on having these events! enthused one of the conference delegates after the 2006 Homing In Conference in Stirling, whilst another person emphasised that the conference “reinforces the need to stay passionate about our work”.

The input of young people was again highlighted in feedback received, and one worker accompanying some of the young participants commented that “myself and the young people with me enjoyed the day”.

The Fab Pad project worked

with a group of invited young people to show them design techniques which they could use when they get their own flat. As our photos show, the enthusiasm was impressive.

Overall, the range of topics and the information gained from the conference sessions was appreciated: “really interesting, lots of info to pass on.” And, of course, the opportunity to network with other people from across Scotland was valued.

Many suggestions made by participants have been taken on board, and they will be incorpo-

rated into this year’s planning.

The next annual Homing In Conference will take place on Friday 1 June again in the Stirling Management Centre, Stirling University Campus, Stirling. Feedback has shown that the venue and catering were enjoyed: “Excellent”, “Fab”, and so it has been booked again for 2007.

### 2007 topics

AGAIN we will be including a group of young people in the conference programme. This year they will work throughout the day on a task related to

designing a supported accommodation unit, with feedback to the full conference at the end of the day. Workers will support the young people during this activity.

The workshop topics which we plan to cover include:

- Legislative update.
- Prostitution and young people.
- Using graphic communication to get your message across.
- Restorative justice.
- Working with asylum seekers and refugees.
- Ready to let go? – Disengaging with young people.
- Using the My Space, My Place materials.
- What every worker needs to know: service users on what’s important in the delivery of support.

The cost for SYHN subscribers is £105, and for non-subscribing organisations £165. The subscription fee for organisations wishing to join is either £45 or £55 dependent on the size of the organisation.

Full conference details and a booking form will be circulated shortly. Contact details for future bookings, subscriptions or other SYHN information: Wendy Devall, 0131 226 4382, or email [wendy@scsh.org.uk](mailto:wendy@scsh.org.uk).

We hope to see you there again this year! ▶

## New disabled equality duty comes into force

**O**ne in five people in Scotland is disabled, with this figure set to rise significantly, reports the Disability Rights Commission in its Impact Report 2006.

It highlights the Disability Equality Duty in the public sector which came into force in December. All public bodies must now actively look at ways to ensure disabled people are treated equally. Policies must actively promote equality and therefore improve service.

The DRC has details of the new Equality Duty and its activities on its website at [www.drc-gb.org/scotland](http://www.drc-gb.org/scotland), where you can sign up for information e-bulletins.

A partnership project with a Glasgow law centre employs a solicitor to advise and represent disabled people in cases under parts 3 or 4 (education) of the DDA. And a reference group for childcare partnerships and out-of-school care groups is helping to tailor information.

Regulation of “fitness standards” in teaching, nursing and social work is currently being examined, starting with a legal review of regulatory frameworks for these occupations. Decision-making by colleges, employers and others and the issue of disclosure of impairments will also be looked at by the DRC.

Also planned is information on the role disabled people can play in helping public bodies achieve disability equality. ▶

## Legal website

SHELTER has launched a subscription-based legal website in Scotland. Written and produced by Shelter's housing experts, Shelter Legal is the most comprehensive and up-to-date housing law information resource available online.

Clear and concise, it covers all aspects of housing and homelessness, explaining how the legislation and case law works in practice in a way that is accessible and relevant to those working in every area of housing. For more information go to [www.shelter.org.uk/legal](http://www.shelter.org.uk/legal).

## Toolkit

SCSH Youth Unit has now compiled its *Workers Toolkit*, which includes a CD-ROM with session plans, templates, video clips and a *Workers Booklet*. This is produced as a supplement to its *My Space My Place* publication. To order either of these publications please ring 0131 226 4382.

# noticeboard

## SYHN event dates

Places are still available on the training courses listed below. To book please contact SYHN on 0131 226 4382, fax 0131 225 4382. Training costs £95 to subscribers, £140 to non-subscribers. Conference details out soon.

Young people and mental health	1 February, Edinburgh
Working with survivors: Level 2	14 March, Glasgow
Young people who use alcohol	15 March, Glasgow
Homing In Annual Conference 2007	1 June, Stirling

## Bites

VISIT the *Practice Bites* database at [www.scsch.org.uk/bites](http://www.scsch.org.uk/bites) where SCSH is seeking practice examples from people with experiences to share.

## Adult learning

TWO hundred pounds towards the cost of learning is available for anyone who is unemployed or has an income of less than £15,000. To qualify for

the payment every learner must pay £10 towards their course. More on Individual Learning Accounts from 0808 100 1090 or check out [www.ilascotland.org.uk](http://www.ilascotland.org.uk) for course details.

## On the move

SHELTER Housing Support Dumfriesshire is the snappier new name for the former Dumfries and Galloway Shelter Single Homeless Persons Support

Service. It will continue to support single homeless people aged 16 and over in the Dumfries and Galloway area, and is extending support to families through its new Families Project. The office has moved to premises at 95 Irish Street, Dumfries DG1 2NP.

Glasgow Housing Aid Centre and Glasgow Families Project have moved to premises at First Floor Suite 2, Breckenridge House, 274 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3EH.

Link Living Falkirk Service has now moved from Wellside Place to new premises in Watling House, Callendar Business Park, Falkirk FK1 1XR, main phone 01324 629200, or [linkliving@linkhaltd.co.uk](mailto:linkliving@linkhaltd.co.uk).

## News wanted

GOT something to say? Topical news items and project features are always welcome. Please send to [syhn@joa.co.uk](mailto:syhn@joa.co.uk) along with contact details and any pictures to accompany items. ▶

# Local connection views sought

One of the Homelessness Task Force's recommendations endorsed by the Executive and the Scottish Parliament and included in the Homelessness Etc (Scotland) Act 2003 was to suspend the "local connection" test applied to homeless applicants. Now, the Executive is consulting on how this provision will be introduced.

At present, an applicant must be able to show they have a local connection with the area they are applying to through employment, family or any special circumstance. If they cannot, the legislation gives local authorities the power to refer homeless households to another local authority where they do have a connection.

The household must have a priority need, and must not be intentionally homeless. There must be no risk of domestic abuse in that authority.

The 2003 Act requires Ministers to make a statement within a year of this part of the law coming into force, setting out the circumstances and the general criteria by which the power to modify local connection is to be exercised.

The Executive is now proposing

## special briefing

secondary legislation to suspend the current local connection provisions. It has stated that the Task Force approach should be implemented.

"Homeless households are more likely to resettle successfully, and avoid repeat homelessness, if they are living in an area of their choosing and which supports other elements of their lives (family, social networks, employment, education etc) and their future aspirations and where they are integrated into the local community.

## Realistic choices

"Homeless people themselves are best placed to make the judgment as to the geographical area which best meets these needs."

The consultation recognises that it will be necessary to balance this with the need to ensure that choices are

realistic in terms of accommodation and support capacity within local authorities.

The Task Force had recommended that the Parliament should have the power to re-activate the local connection power across Scotland or for particular local authorities "in case demand pressures prove intolerable." However, research has shown that current referrals are low, at only 1%.

In recognition of concerns expressed by some local authorities that increased applications could undermine their capacity to fulfil their duties to all homeless households, the Executive will monitor the new arrangements and local authorities will be able to make a case for reversing any modifications made.

The outcome of the consultation will be announced in February, and it is planned to introduce the suspension of local connection in April 2007, alongside the revised HL1 homelessness monitoring form which will now record whether or not an applicant has a local connection with the area, or with any other Scottish authority.

The full consultation document is at [www.scotland.gov.uk/publications](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications). ▶