

homing in

Newsletter of the Scottish Youth Housing Network

No 58 May 2007

Telephone advice line launched

Shelter has launched a new homelessness advice service in the Borders. The Scottish Borders Project is a 12 month pilot offering independent housing advice and information about homelessness and how to prevent it.

The service is available to the public and to local agencies. A dedicated advice line will operate through a low rate phone number. The new service aims to:

- prevent homelessness through independent information, advice, advocacy and awareness raising sessions;
- alleviate homelessness and help to find sustainable solutions;
- reduce homelessness through advice and independent information on strategic and service development;
- identify emerging issues in relation to the council, registered social landlords and private landlords;
- supply evidence on the homelessness and housing issues in the Borders area. ▶



River City stars Natasha Watson (Freya) and Carmen Pieraccini (Kelly-Marie) outside the new Stopover building. See special feature on page 3

Underground's new cafe hits the spot

The Rock Trust in Edinburgh is further expanding its focus on social networks through the work they are carrying out with young people.

In April they launched their new cafe, part of the Underground project. Activities at the launch included head massage, DJ Decks, graffiti art and, most importantly, free food!

The cafe will continue to offer healthy free food as well as a space where young people, aged between 16 and 25 can

relax and spend time with their peers.

Behind the counter of the cafe young people will be given the opportunity to become volunteers. Training, including Elementary Food Hygiene Certificates and Health and Safety, will be offered as well as Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

The cafe will be offering more to the young people than certificated courses. It recruits volunteers from all ages and backgrounds which means that the young people will also have

the opportunity to practice social skills in a supported environment with people outwith their peer group.

As part of the support on offer, staff are focusing on appropriate behaviours, social networks and social skills. These transferable skills will look great on a CV or application form, as well as helping to increase the young person's confidence.

Contact the Rock Trust at 55 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3QY. tel 0131 557 4059. ▶

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DVD project aims to tackle violence and sexual abuse

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DVD tackles violence and sexual abuse

A new DVD is set to raise teenagers' awareness of domestic violence, sexual abuse, date rape and discrimination.

Produced by award winning charity Eighteen And Under the Teen VIP DVD was launched in April as the latest addition to the project's universally praised Violence is Preventable programme.

The launch coincided with the 13th birthday of the Dundee-based charity, making it an exciting double celebration.

Aimed at young people aged fourteen and over, the DVD explores a number of issues such as bullying, racism, domestic violence, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation in a thoughtful and sensitive way. Stills from the DVD can be viewed on the project's website.

It will allow teachers, social workers, the police, voluntary organisations and youth leaders to open up useful dialogues with young people about many of the issues they will face as they grow up in today's society.

The DVD was shot in and around Dundee with a host of young people playing each of the teenage roles. The adult roles were played by volunteers and supporters of the project.

Laurie Matthew, Coordinator of Eighteen And Under, said: "This is a hugely important addition to our Teens section of the VIP Programme. Everyone who has seen it has been amazed by the quality of the production and the depth of conversation each scenario

depicted in the DVD can evoke.

"We are extremely indebted to everyone who took part in making the DVD and feel really positive about the impact it will have on all who see and use it in the future. We must also express our huge thanks to our sponsors, the Nationwide Foundation."

The DVD is accompanied by a 40 page trainer's manual and costs £40 plus postage. It can be ordered from 01382 206222 or the online shop at www.violenceispreventable.org.uk.

Eighteen And Under offers confidential support and information to any young person,

“We feel really positive about the DVD and the impact it will have on all who see and use it in the future”

aged 18 and under, who has experienced sexual, physical or emotional abuse.

The charity is a member of the World Health Organisation's Global Alliance for the Prevention of Violence and has helped thousands of young people in the Dundee area and throughout the UK. For more information, visit their website at www.18u.org.uk.

The VIP Programme is a multi-award winning abuse prevention programme for children, young people and vulnerable adults throughout the UK. It aims to teach children and young people how to

identify unsafe situations and give them strategies to deal with them.

The Programme works on three levels:

- Early disclosures – meaning abuse is stopped sooner;
- Staying safe – avoiding violent or abusive situations;
- Changing the mindset of potential abusers of the future.

It covers all ages of children and young people from preschool to adulthood. The work with teenagers covers differing levels of violence, relationships, rights and responsibilities and conflict resolution. Young people can explore the impact violence can have on them and the impact they can have on violence.

The programme has won many national and international awards, including:

- 2006 Scottish Social Services Council Care Accolades: Special Commendation;
- Winner of the 2006 Scottish Crime-Stoppers – Community Safety Award;
- 2005 *News of the World* Children's Champion's individual award for Co-ordinator;
- Winner of the 2005 Dundee Partnership Awards: Community Safety Award;
- 2004 Women in Cities International & International Centre for the Prevention of Crime: Safety Award.

For more information about the VIP programme visit www.violenceispreventable.org.uk or contact VIP Project, 18 and Under, 1 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1EL, 01382 2062, Email lormac1053@aol.com. ▶

Rethink on drugs strategy outlined

Before Holyrood was suspended for the elections, the Justice Minister, Cathy Jamieson, announced an overhaul of the Executive's strategy on drugs.

As well as strong enforcement, effective treatment and rehabilitation, along with support for communities affected by drugs, more emphasis would be placed on tackling the demand as well as the supply of drugs, to stop more young people getting involved.

Key aspects

The initiatives being planned included:

- An examination of the materials available for young people, including the Know the Score campaign, to develop more targeted, specific messages for those most at risk of moving from experimentation to addiction.
- More work to support young people exposed to drugs through their parents, including piloting voluntary "contracts" between service providers and drug-abusing parents to clarify their responsibilities, the consequences of their actions and the support and treatment they would receive.
- Improved drugs education in schools, to include better explaining the links between underage smoking, drinking and drug use, and drawing on the experience of recovered addicts and of young offenders. ▶

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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

Stars launch new Stopover



The balloon launch in the Stopover garden, with River City stars and residents

River City stars Carmen Pieraccini (Kelly-Marie) and Natasha Watson (Freya) paid a visit to Quarriers Stopover Project in Glasgow on 19 March to celebrate the opening of its new £2 million purpose-built accommodation for young homeless people.

To mark the official opening, they released 1,000 helium balloons from the new project base at 200 Pollokshaws Road, and were on hand throughout the day to chat to residents and take part in an informal question and answer session.

Rachel Sawyer, Quarriers project manager at Stopover, said: "We're delighted that Carmen and Laura came along to support Quarriers. Our new building is a real milestone for the project and is a fantastic resource for young homeless people across Glasgow."

She continued: "We are one of only two direct-access units in the city and there is high demand for our services. It is vital that projects like this con-

tinue to receive the support necessary to help some of our young people who are struggling to cope with massive problems, often not of their own making, and bring about positive changes in their lives."

Stopover provides short-stay emergency accommodation for young men and women aged 16 to 25 who find themselves

“My friends used to take the mickey when I lived in the old Stopover, but now they’re mostly jealous”

Young resident

homeless. The project aims to bring stability to their lives and help them get back on their feet.

It also helps them find somewhere more permanent to live as well as assisting with life skills such as budgeting and cooking. Donna is one young person who is benefiting from her stay

at Stopover. She said: "There seems to be a real shortage of accommodation for people like me, which makes it difficult to move on even when you are ready for it. I'm looking in several areas of Glasgow but really want to find somewhere near my sister or my dad."

When Donna first arrived at Stopover, she was staying in the old building but along with 13 other residents moved across the road as soon as the new facility was ready.

"It's hard to feel good about yourself when you feel like you are living in a hostel, all my friends used to take the mickey when I lived in the old Stopover building, but now they are mostly jealous!

"One of the best things about the new Stopover is the IT room. I've been working on my CV and doing some research and have even practised my theory test. It's a great way to help people get themselves sorted out.

"All we had before was a tiny

room with a bed and we'd be sharing communal facilities, like the bathroom and kitchen, which could sometimes be a bit of a nightmare. Now we've got our own self-contained flats to take care of, I feel like I'm well on my way. It really helps you learn how to look after your own space and the staff will even help with cooking lessons which were almost impossible in the old place."

Once she is back on her feet she hopes to find a full-time job or continue her childcare studies and continue to support herself with part-time income.

The project is funded by Supporting People, the Glasgow City Council Social Work department and Communities Scotland.

West of Scotland Housing Association is the project's landlord. They commissioned the new building, funded by Glasgow City Council and a Compulsory Purchase Order through the Scottish Executive.

'Superb project'

Quarriers has managed Stopover since 1995, when it took over from Glasgow Council for Single Homeless. Duncan McNaught, chief executive of the West of Scotland HA, said: "We are pleased to be involved in this superb project providing much needed accommodation for young single homeless.

"This is a replacement project for one which was previously owned by the association and run by Quarriers, which had to close due to the M74 extension.

"This new project therefore allows us to continue with our long established and very successful partnership with Quarriers, which is able to provide excellent support to the young individuals in this purpose-built building." ▶

Shelter conference

SHELTER aims to set out the housing challenge in Scotland for the next parliamentary term and beyond at a conference in May. Particularly relevant for anyone working in housing policy, Housing Scotland: Setting the Agenda 2007, is on 24 May, at Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh. Details at www.shelter.org.uk, tel 0844 515 2483, email scotlandevents@shelter.org.uk.

Try Freeshare

DO YOU have a sofa, old PC, some packing boxes cluttering up your house which could be of use to someone else? If you're already reducing, reusing and recycling, then try regiving too. Join Freeshare and find someone in your local group who will turn up and take it off your hands. The groups are run by and for local people, and everything posted on the website must be free. Charities and other not-for-profit groups are

noticeboard

Benefits update for 2007-08

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| Income Support and income based Job Seekers Allowance | |
| Single under 18 | £35.65/46.85 |
| Single 18-24 | £46.85 |
| Single 25+ | £59.15 |
| Lone parent under 18 | £35.65/46.85 |
| Lone parent 18+ | £59.15 |
| Couple under 18 | £35.65/46.85/70.70 |
| Couple, one under 18 | £46.85/59.15/92.80 |
| Couple both 18+ | £92.80 |

also welcome to join. Visit groups.yahoo.com/group/Edinburgh-Freeshare/ and groups.yahoo.com/group/Glasgow-Freeshare/.

CPAG handbook

THE NEW CPAG Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits Handbook 2007-8 is out. Content includes IS; JSA and work tests; HB; the social fund; incapacity benefit and the personal capa-

bility assessment; rules for special groups, including 16/17 year olds, students and people from abroad; backdating; overpayments; fraud; challenging decisions, including appeals. Cost is £35.00 or £8.50 for claimants. Order at www.cpag.org.uk.

Leaflets project

DOVER District Council is the lead authority for the National Leaflets Project for housing

benefit and council tax benefit, a DWP funded scheme to create leaflets giving information for claimants that can be used nationally. All are downloadable, have the Crystal Mark and are in eleven languages. Braille and large print versions on request. Visit www.benefit-leaflets.org.

Repairs seminar

GETTING Repairs Done: New Solutions is a Shelter seminar on the new repairing standard for private rented sector housing and the role of the private rented housing panel. Aimed at advisers and those working with PRS tenants, it is on 14 June, at The Teacher Building, Glasgow. Details are at www.shelter.org.uk, tel 0844 515 2483 or by email at scotlandevents@shelter.org.uk.

News wanted

NEWS items, project features and pictures always welcome. Ring Norma Jones, 0131 557 1954 with your ideas. ▶

New benefit for those unable to work

Employment and Support Allowance is the name of a new style of benefit intended to replace incapacity benefit, and income support for incapacity, from October 2008. Part of the Welfare Reform Bill, this simplified style of benefit will be a "single integrated income replacement benefit" for people who are not working and who have an illness or disability. At present, these claimants have to claim two separate benefits.

Like Jobseeker's Allowance, ESA will have two strands: a contributory allowance, and an income-related allowance. When processing the claim there will be two phases: an Assessment Phase and a Main Phase.

The Assessment Phase will usually be a fixed period of 13 weeks. While underway, a basic benefit will be paid, equivalent to the JSA personal age related allowances. Once the assessment is completed and a claimant has satisfied a Personal Capability Assessment, (what used to be called the All Work Test) they will move on to the main phase of ESA, which consists of:

- the basic allowance;
- the Work-Related Activity Component or the Support Component;

benefits briefing

- extra premiums (in income-related benefit only).

Once in the main phase, young people under 25 will get the same basic rate as everyone else, equivalent to the JSA personal allowance for people aged 25 or over.

Most claimants will also be paid a work-related activity component (WRA) addition once in the main phase. But this will depend on them taking "reasonable steps to manage their condition and to help move towards the workplace."

Sanctions

There must be "continued engagement and commitment to undertaking relevant activity", developed with the support of specialist Personal Advisers. Failure to participate in interviews or carry out certain activities may lead to sanctions and a consequent benefit cut.

Claimants assessed as having "limited capability for work-related activity" will be paid the Support Component instead of the WRA component. This will be paid at a higher rate and will not be dependent on work-related activity, and because of this there will be no sanctions.

Those in the WRA group must attend work-focused interviews, starting eight weeks after their claim. A Personal Adviser will discuss benefit entitlement, work aspirations, the steps they might take to help them take up a job and the Pathways-style support available to them.

There will be five further monthly interviews with a Personal Adviser focused on helping them back to work. The information from a work-related health-focused assessment will also be used.

The Pathways-style support will offer a range of options including Condition Management Programmes. There will be no obligation on the claimant to take up this support. The claimant will be given an action plan drawn up from each interview listing the steps they could take to help them take up a job or prepare to return to work. ▶