

homing in

Newsletter of the Scottish Youth Housing Network

No 32 August 2000



Jackie Baillie MSP, chair of the Homelessness Task Force receives the report, *Young homeless people – speaking for themselves*, from SYHN's John Dickie

Network's survey published

The Network's survey into the views of young homeless people on the services they use has been presented to Jackie Baillie MSP, chair of the Homelessness Task Force. The report describes both how services fail and how they can be effective.

Those interviewed expressed strong views on the use of B&B and traditional hostels: "There is a fear of coming to places like this, its full of old guys. Because you're frightened you stay on the streets."

Attitudes

The professional workers' attitudes ranged from "very nice, polite and helpful and supportive" to "didn't tell us anything worth hearing, said it was our ain fault." Half had never been consulted about services.

This survey highlights the very strong messages from young people. The challenge is to listen to these views and act on them, working alongside young people to provide services to tackle the problem of youth homelessness. ▶

Tapping into the future in Dundee

A pocket size survival guide to homelessness in Dundee for 15–25 year olds is launched this month. In the form of information cards on a key ring, it has simple information on how and where to get help locally on housing, drugs and benefits.

Called *Tapping into the Future*, the initiative is based at The Corner (Young People's Health & Information Project) and funded by Scotland Against Drugs, through Tayside Police. It targeted young people across the city who were excluded or at risk of exclusion to offer training opportunities and learning experiences.

Thirteen young people initially signed up, with seven seeing the project through to completion. A 12-week programme included sessions at Dundee College, the Contemporary Arts Centre and The Corner. The group met regularly and came up with a key title and themes for the basis of the

guide. They gathered the information, key contacts, addresses and telephone numbers.

Produced by young people for young people, the guide does not list every service but only those projects used by those involved and which they felt others could benefit from. In the words of one: "We want other people to realise how important our story is!"

The Corner is committed to developing work with minority groups and this project has strengthened links with young people with specific needs and those potentially vulnerable to homelessness or drug misuse. Manjeet Gill said: "This guide is unique because the process of making the guide allows young people to express their views and experience through poetry, arts and crafts, and story writing." Contact Manjeet Gill or Pete Glen at The Corner, 18 Dock Street, Dundee DD1 3DP, tel 01382 206060. ▶

inside

The consultation paper on the proposed contents of the Housing Bill has now been published. See our Briefing

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Helping break the 'no job, no home' cycle

Homeless people are amongst the most disadvantaged, vulnerable and excluded people in society. Homelessness is usually only one of many problems which homeless people have to overcome to achieve a position of self-reliance and independence. Other problems include unemployment, drug and alcohol problems and mental health problems.

Recognising that breaking the cycle of no job, no home is a relevant way of assisting clients from dependant living to independent living, Aberdeen Cyrenians have set up a new project.

It has been established under the New Futures Fund from Scottish Enterprise and is part of a Grampian Consortium. Funding has initially been agreed for two years to 31 March 2002 at £40,000 a year.

Holistic approach

The Aberdeen Cyrenians believe it is important to address all the issues in a homeless person's life if any long-term difference is to be made. By improving the life chances of a homeless person they are empowered and are more able to secure and hold down tenancies.

The project will enable Aberdeen Cyrenians and other agencies to approach the issue of homelessness holistically, addressing their unemployment issues whilst giving them support with any other issues and problems in their lives, such as drug abuse, alcoholism, mental health problems and criminal involvement.

They see this as effective pre-vocational support which includes help with personal problems and focuses on individual need.

The Project aims to:

- reach out to homeless people where they are, both in terms of physical location and personal development;
- provide a range of activities that will appeal directly to individuals' interests, encourage individual and collective effort, engage and maintain interest and enhance skills;
- provide them with the means to develop personally and socially;
- work with around twenty individuals.

The range of activities which the project plans to offer will be very varied and could include: sport, arts, cultural and social activities, crafts, group work, and outdoor activities such as sailing, mountain biking, and outward bound.

■ Last year the Cyrenians also opened Craig House, supported accommodation for any young person at risk of sleeping rough. It recognises that some young people's options can become more limited because of drug or alcohol related problems etc. The project has 24-hour staffing, ongoing support, and help to find a permanent home.

For more information contact Paul Hannan, Director, Aberdeen Cyrenians, 100 Crown Street, Aberdeen AB11 6HJ, tel: 01224 572877, email: paul.hannan@aberdeen-cyrenians.org. ▶

Help in crisis for abuse survivors

Thanks to fundraising activities, SAY Women's resource service has at long last been re-established. The Glasgow-based voluntary project works with young survivors of sexual abuse who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The resource service provides crisis support to young women and men who have experienced sexual abuse, rape or sexual assault.

The support aims to give the young people a safe place to talk, to explore how they are feeling and ways of coping, as well as offering information and advice on other agencies and resources.

Referrals

Young people can be seen in different community locations. Referrals can come from any source, including self referral, and the service is not restricted to Glasgow.

Also on offer is support, information and training for workers who are in contact with survivors.

A particular emphasis of this service is the development of links with disability organisations, to make the links between disability and abuse and to make the service as accessible as possible. Leaflets on the service are also available in a variety of formats.

For more information about the Resource Service or the accommodation project contact Sandie Kemp at SAY Women, 11 South Vesaluis Street, Glasgow G32 7XP, tel & textphone: 0141 778 4777, or e-mail: SayWomen@SayWomen.fsnet.co.uk. ▶

Homechoice streets ahead

Aberdeen is spearheading a new, hi-tech way of giving people more information about housing availability, and matching housing providers with people on waiting lists. The service is called Homechoice and operates through a housing option shop in the city centre at 101 George Street.

People who are looking for accommodation can drop in during business hours

between Mondays and Saturdays and get expert advice. The service is run by Aberdeen City Council, Scottish Homes and four local housing associations.

The use of cutting-edge technology means that the shop has up-to-date information on what is available, and the service is to be expanded to include a computerised single waiting list for all four housing associations and the council. ▶



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.



getting on the network is easy!

■ FEATURE: The Rock Trust

Bedrock project goes west

As part of their review of services for young homeless people, West Lothian Council identified a gap in the provision of longer term supported accommodation for young people who had either failed in their own tenancy, were unable to sustain placements in existing accommodation services or who had previously been in local authority care and required continuing high levels of support.

And so in March 2000 the Council made an approach to the Rock Trust to put forward a proposal for a supported accommodation model for young homeless people displaying a variety of support needs.

As a result of this approach, a new service providing group housing will shortly be underway in West Lothian.

Three new members of staff will be recruited by the Rock Trust in early September and it is hoped the first group house will be up and running by the beginning of October. The staff in the new project will be working closely with the new West Lothian Youth Housing and Support Team currently based in Livingston.

Evelyn Freeman, Care Team Manager with the Rock Trust in Edinburgh, is particularly pleased that the strong links the Trust has built up with West Lothian over the years have culminated in this partnership.

She said: "Over the years the Bedrock flats and houses in Edinburgh have been home to many young people from West



A service user is interviewed by BBC Radio for Homelessness Sunday

Lothian, young people who up until now have had no alternative but to move to Edinburgh. This exciting new project means we can at last bring our service to them, to their own area."

The Rock Trust was set up in 1991 by Edinburgh's churches to offer accommodation and support to homeless young people 16-21, and to raise public awareness of homelessness. Its supported accommodation service provides personal and practical support to young single people.

The Trust also provides supported flats for vulnerable young women aged 16-21 who are pregnant or who have a young

baby. Admission is subject to a community care assessment being carried out. Encouragement to pursue educational, training or employment opportunities is an integral part of the project.

And its volunteer befriending scheme, Keystone, matches up volunteers with young people up to 25 in their first tenancies, to help tackle the isolation some can feel.

Time spent with the young person is generally activity-based, with the young person meeting their own costs.

For further information contact Evelyn Freeman on 0131 557 4059. ▀

The views and the involvement of service users are seen as crucial to the effective working of Cornerstone's Resource and Housing Advice Centre. Based at 34 Commercial Road, Leven, the service is run by the Levenmouth Homeless Trust for homeless people and those in housing need aged 16+.

Service users are encouraged to participate in how the service is run, contribute to the operating policies of the Centre, and sit on the Centre's management committee.

Direct access flats to replace shelter

On offer is a drop-in service, a wide range of activities, and workers available for advice and support, a low cost cafe, laundry and shower facilities, towels and toiletries.

RSI funding will enable Cornerstone to develop emergency and temporary accommodation to replace its night shelter. The bid was made in partnership with Fife Special HA and

Fife Council. A block of flats is being converted to provide 24 hr provision in 5 flats with 3 people sharing each. The sixth flat is a base for waking cover with two staff on duty.

The service will offer emergency direct access for people with complex needs using three emergency, six medium term, and 6 long term beds.

Newcomers will get pri-

ority, with other beds allocated after an assessment of vulnerability has been carried out.

Residents will have regular meetings in the project, with time to talk without staff present, so that their views can be channelled back.

Everyone will have the opportunity to be assessed for their suitability to move on to permanent accommodation and will be offered intensive support using local specialist agency input.

Contact Mary Miller, Manager, 01333 592640. ▀

Good practice guide

COMMUNITY Learning Scotland has produced a *Report and Good Practice Guide* to working with young adult tenants. It is based on the principles of joint working, particularly between housing and community education workers, and involvement of young people.

It outlines training modules developed through bringing professionals and young people together to discuss the issues facing young tenants, identify training themes and then produce and pilot training modules with different combinations of professionals.

It stresses the benefits of working together and the resources, common ground and shared agendas that exist. £5 from CLS, Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12. Contact Roddy Ferguson 0131 313 2488, or by e-mail on info@cls.dircon.co.uk.

Publications

A WEALTH of research evidence on single homelessness in Britain has been reviewed for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Three reports have been published, giving an overview of

noticeboard

National SpeakOut Week

SIGN UP up to Groundswell's National SpeakOut Week from 11 – 18 September and be a part of something much bigger. A Speakout can be as big or little as you want. Groundswell will help support you, providing materials, ideas and resources to make your event a success. Their SpeakOut Recipe Book & Video has everything you need to know to create your own local SpeakOut! Contact Groundswell at 5-15 Cromer Street, London, WC1H 8LS, tel 020 7713 2880, email groundswell@home-all.org.uk.

single homelessness research; research summaries; and a bibliography. From Marston Book Services, 01235 465500. JRF's web site is at www.jrf.org.uk.

New Deal

BY JUNE 1, 25,200 young people in Scotland had gone into jobs from New Deal. 18,600 were in sustained employment and 6,600 had jobs lasting under 13 weeks. There were 54,100 starts on New Deal. Of these, 40,100 people left the scheme. And of the 14,000 participants in New Deal 18-24 in Scotland, 6,700 were on the Gateway, 4,900 were on Options and

2,400 were on Follow Through.

Nine hundred were on the Subsidised Employment option; 1,900 on the full-time Education and Training option; 1,100 on the Voluntary Sector option; and 1,100 on the Environmental Task Force option.

On the web

SHELTER Scotland is now online with a site aimed at supporters, school students, the media and academics. It has homelessness information, responses to consultation papers, briefings and publications. Visit www.shelterscotland.org.uk.

Mentoring

EDINBURGH City Council's Education Department have helped produce a training resource pack aimed at tackling social exclusion by training volunteers to mentor homeless people. The Mentor Training Pack has been put together by the Edinburgh Homeless Project, a partnership between the Council, Bridges Project and ECSH. Details from Morag McDonald, 0131 469 3201, e-mail morag.mcdonald@educ.edin.gov.uk

Prison project

A HOUSING advice and accommodation project will serve six prisons: Aberdeen, Castle Huntly, Inverness, Noranside, Perth and Peterhead. Funded by RSI money and run by Shelter Scotland, it will be based in Aberdeen and offer advice on HB and tenancy matters, plus training and support for prison staff.

Conference

SCSH's AGM & Conference 2000 is in Stirling from 31 Aug – 1 Sept. Sessions include youth issues, floating support, homelessness and women, supporting people, and rent deposit schemes. Tel 0131 226 4382. ▶

Housing bill consultation launched

The Scottish Parliament has opened consultation on the proposed contents of the Housing Bill, expected this autumn. Here are some of its proposals. You can get a free copy of the document by writing to Housing Division, Scottish Executive, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ, tel 0131 556 8400. All responses must be received by 29 September.

New Single Tenancy: Previously called the single social tenancy. The single tenancy will replace all existing secure and assured tenancies with councils, housing associations and co-ops, other registered social landlords, and Scottish Homes. It will be modelled on the current secure tenancy, but landlords will be encouraged to enhance the tenancy agreement with additional contractual rights.

The changeover to single tenancies will take place on a specific date to be set by the Parliament.

special briefing

There will be no loss of tenant's rights. However, landlords will be able to recover the tenancy where a tenant has been persistently in rent arrears without good reason. And there will be strengthened rights for landlords to transfer tenants committing nuisance.

Short Single Tenancy: This new tenancy type will be similar to existing short assured tenancies. Social landlords would be able to offer them in three specific situations:

- as probationary tenancies for those previously evicted for anti social behaviour in the previous three years.
- in temporary accommodation pro-

- vided for homeless people
- in shorter term supported accommodation.

Any tenant offered a short single tenancy who feels they should have been given a full single tenancy can appeal to the Sheriff Court.

Homelessness: Packages will be devised for homeless people as part of quality-controlled advice and assistance measures.

A person will be defined as homeless if it is likely they will become homeless within two calendar months (28 days at the moment).

Temporary accommodation for homeless people *not* in priority need will be provided while advice and assistance is underway.

Right to notice: The minimum notice period in overnight or emergency hostels is "likely to be a few days".

Housing lists: Everyone will have the right to register on a housing waiting list. ▶