



*Stow College students aspire to great heights for Quarriers homeless project*

## Having a say

**E**qual Voices is a unique project of music, multi-media and the Web, which aims to ensure black minority ethnic youth have their say.

A new Youth Forum will be set up as part of this dynamic programme which is taking place in communities, schools and public venues.

This one-year project is being co-ordinated jointly by Fife Racial Equality Council and Sonic Arts Workshop.

### Connecting

Equal Voices is financially supported by the Home Office Race Equality Unit as part of the Connecting Communities Programme.

The team plan to initiate new partnership working with statutory and voluntary services. Development Workers will identify, build contacts and work with black youths aged 16–25 to set up and support a black minority ethnic youth forum.

Further details from Fife Racial Equality Council, 2 Acorn Court Glenrothes, Fife KY7 5LZ, tel: 01592 61021, or e-mail: [selmar@fiferec.freemove.co.uk](mailto:selmar@fiferec.freemove.co.uk).

**inside**

East Lothian  
special feature

Page 3

## Stow aids Quarriers homeless project

**F**ive students from Stow College who are studying for an HND in Leisure Management encouraged, persuaded and bribed their friends to take part in a Sponsored Abseil at the Glasgow Climbing Centre, raising £1,000 for Quarriers Stopover Project.

As part of the Events Management unit of their course

the students had to plan and run an event and offered to organise a day out for some of the young people in the Stopover Project.

In order to raise the money for this they "roped" in over twenty friends and colleagues to abseil down the church spire at the Climbing Centre.

Quarriers' Stopover Project provides emergency accommo-

modation for 14 homeless young people aged 16 to 25 years and works with them over a period of ten weeks to help them plan for their future. Stopover has no funds to enable them to organise activities or outings for the young people who live there and as well as organising the day trip the students hope to have enough money left over to start an activities fund for the project. ▶

# Capacity Building offers support

## Grant aid for professional advice

**D**o you recognise a need for your organisation to be able to get expert advice to improve the service you give to the community?

Do you want to plan your organisation more effectively to improve the help you give to those who need you most?

Do you have issues which you cannot address due to lack of expertise or resources?

Does your organisation need professional help? Then read on.

Following a year-long pilot involving forty Scottish charities Lloyds TSB Foundation in Scotland have now launched Capacity Building, a grant making process where they may be able to provide charitable organisations with funding to access a panel of independent consultants.

The consultants are experienced in the voluntary sector and can help organisations to tackle many of today's issues affecting charities. We quote below what Lloyds TSB are offering organisations whose bids for grant aid are successful.

The panel of consultants have skills in areas such as:

- Financial Management – Help with financial planning. Working alongside a management committee to create financial reporting and budgeting systems that will help the committee members

to manage the organisation more effectively.

- Fundraising planning – Building up the organisation's knowledge of how to develop a strategy for fund-raising that is linked closely to your objectives.
- Good governance – Helping the organisation identify what defines good practice and how you can apply this in measuring the quality of what you do.
- Information Technology – Giving support in getting up to date with technology and what it can offer the organisation.
- Marketing – Developing the organisation's understanding of its image and profile. Helping you make your organisation more widely known.
- Strategic Planning – Helping develop the organisation's capacity to think and plan ahead. Support in changing the organisation's processes and establishing new ones.
- Staff Development – Supporting organisations in developing and helping staff to adapt to change or to new developments.

If you would like to apply or would like to find out more about how a Capacity Building Grant can help your organisation you should contact Geoff Wir, Programme Co-ordinator. Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland on 0131 225 4555. ▶

## Homeless people now able to vote

**A** new law which came into force on 16 February 2001 means that for the first time homeless people can vote in any election, whether it is local or national. Anyone aged 18 or over and who is a British, Irish or Commonwealth citizen living in the UK can vote. All that is needed is an address where the person can collect their post, such as a bed and breakfast, a hostel, a drop-in centre, a cafe or even the local Council offices.

Registration forms are available from the Assessor's office at your local council, or by ringing 08456 062062. If you have internet access you can also download the application form from the website at [www.rollingregistration.co.uk](http://www.rollingregistration.co.uk)

If the homeless person has an address, however temporary, they can fill in the registration form.

### Declaration

Those sleeping rough, staying with a friend or in a hostel must fill in a "declaration of local connection". The form asks for name, age and nationality, where the person is sleeping or spending their time, whether the person will collect their own post or where to send the correspondence. Return the form to the electoral registration office at your local council. Some 17 year olds can register too, depending on when they will become 18. Ring 08456 062 062 to check.

The General Election has passed, but all homeless people should be encouraged to register. They will be able to vote a month from their registration date. ▶

# Fraud Bill becomes law

**T**he Social Security Fraud Bill received the Royal Assent on 11 May 2001. The main measures in the Act are:

- Powers to require information from private and public sector organisations about individuals suspected of benefit fraud;

- powers to withdraw or reduce benefit for people convicted twice of a benefit offence within three years;
- the option of a swift civil penalty as an alternative to court to target employers who collude in benefit fraud;
- tighter powers to prosecute people who deliberately conceal changes which affect benefit entitlement;

- improved co-operation between the DSS and local authorities in penalising fraud and in efficient information flows;
- and powers to swap information with benefits administrations overseas to combat trans-national fraud. ▶



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!

■ SPECIAL FEATURE

# East Lothian reviews its homelessness strategy

In response to a review of its Homelessness Service, East Lothian Council has drawn up a strategy, to be implemented by 2002. A significant number of homeless people approaching the Council for help are young and single. They generally need not just a place to stay but assistance in stabilising their lives and developing the skills to cope successfully on their own. Until now there has been little on offer to help manage this difficult period of their lives but over the next 12 months things, as they say, will get better.

Bridges Project is now based in Haddington where it also runs a drop-in and advice centre. Staff have travelled around introducing themselves to young people and the agencies which already provide services to them. Bridges is there to complement and work in partnership with existing groups while developing an outreach service for those who find it difficult to access services. A mobile information and advice service will also be provided.

## Assessments

The Council will build up a team to establish a system of integrated assessments for all 16–25 year olds who may be vulnerable and requiring access to services, particularly housing and support. The team will recruit staff, and build administrative systems and procedures to deal with the issues which young people present. Good working relationships and referral systems with agencies in the statutory and voluntary sectors will be critical. Bridges has brought together housing, social work and community education to put the foundations of a central assessment structure in place.

Two new projects will provide supported accommodation targeted on two distinct sets of young people with quite different levels of support needs. The first offers structured support for up to 18 months in an eight-bedded unit of accommodation where each young person has their own room. In an adjacent flat two young people can share living together as an independent unit before moving on to their own tenancies. Prospective residents will have to



*Cakes donated to the Bridges Project by Breezy's in Haddington*

agree to work alongside a key worker for the duration of their stay to develop skills and the confidence to move on. Transitional support will follow the young person into their accommodation for as long as they want it with people encouraged to keep in touch and come back for help whenever necessary. This project is being developed with Homes for Life New Housing Partnership, and NCH Scotland.

The second project is closer to direct access though referrals will come from the homelessness team initially. Not all young people are ready to accept programmed support in a structured environment. They need somewhere to "chill out" and think about their next move. Staff will offer general advice

and support and gently encourage them to give serious thought to their future.

Rules will be minimal. The young person will have 12 weeks to think things through then helped to move on in a planned way. When ready to accept more structured support this will be arranged. If not willing to make any commitment, advice and assistance will be offered but they may have to go back to fending for themselves. The chance to return will be kept open as long as spaces permit. East Lothian H A and Blue Triangle are the partner agencies.

The operational principles of user involvement and tolerance of young people making mistakes are important elements. There will be no permanent exclusions or summary evictions. Work with the young person will be at their own pace and support will be provided for as long as required.

These developments should be seen within a wider policy context of a range of support and accommodation determined by the needs of users.

Finally there is the ongoing work in schools, currently centred on Ross High in Tranent, but hopefully to be extended to the other secondary schools throughout East Lothian. ▶

◀ The principles of user involvement and tolerance of young people making mistakes are important elements. There will be no permanent exclusions or summary evictions. ▶

## Developing practice

A RECENT seminar organised by the Scottish Churches Housing Agency in Glasgow centred around the launch of their new handbook, *Developing our Practice – Good practice in resettling homeless people*. The day was aimed particularly at small voluntary organisations working in homelessness. For a copy of the handbook contact Alastair Cameron, Co-ordinator, Scottish Churches Housing Agency, 28 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3QH Tel: 0131 477 4500.

## On the net

FOR the latest thinking on legal issues in Scotland, visit the web site of the Scottish Legal Action Group's journal *SCOLAG* at [www.scolag.org.uk](http://www.scolag.org.uk)

## Microsoft

THE Microsoft Giving Programme provides free software and a fundraising ideas leaflet. Charities and non-profit organisations can use the software to either raise funds for themselves or contribute towards the efficient running of their charity.

Donations are available each year to charities and community groups. Microsoft are particular-

# noticeboard

## SYHN training: advance details

**Introduction to welfare benefits September, Glasgow**  
**Paying for accommodation September, Glasgow**  
**Dealing with challenging behaviour October, Edinburgh**  
**Beginners guide to housing law November, Stirling**  
**Young people with mild learning difficulties Dec, Glasgow**  
**Young people and mental health January, Edinburgh**  
**Working with young drug users February, Stirling**  
**Working with survivors of sexual abuse March, Glasgow**

ly interested in assisting projects that enhance access to technology for disadvantaged communities.

To apply for up to three software packages send a brief outline of your project or organisation and the software required plus your registered charity number to Microsoft Giving, Freepost SCO5171, Glasgow G3 7BR or email to [Microsoftgiving@microsoft-contact.co.uk](mailto:Microsoftgiving@microsoft-contact.co.uk).

## Learning accounts

THE first 100,000 people in Scotland to apply for an Individual Learning Account will re-

ceive £150 to spend on training or education activities. The first £25 of the cost of learning must be met by the person or their employers. Applicants must be at least 18 and living in Scotland. Even more – 80% of the cost up to £200 – is available for certain types of key skills learning eg courses in computing, IT, maths and English. Contact [learndirectscotland.com](http://learndirectscotland.com), on 0808 100 9000 or visit its website at [www.learndirectscotland.com](http://www.learndirectscotland.com)

## SS change

THE Social Security Department has been rebranded. The new Department for Work and

Pensions was formed on 8 June from parts of the former Department of Social Security, parts of the former Department for Education and Employment and the Employment Service. It will cover Jobcentre Plus, the recently created agency for people of working age.

It will also administer the Pathfinder projects, where entitlement to most benefits depends on attending and taking part in a work-focused interview.

Those not in Pathfinder areas will still be dealt with by the Benefits Agency and the Employment Service.

## Video pack

AN innovative video-based resource pack to teach decision-making skills to people with learning difficulties is available. *It's my decision* uses the stories of nine young people who wish to live independently, and illustrates how decisions can be made. Costing £82.19, it has a video, guidance booklet, session plans, photo cards, and copiable learner's workbook. Contact Pavilion, The Ironworks, Cheapside, Brighton BN1 4GD. [www.pavpub.com](http://www.pavpub.com). ▶

# Housing Bill changes announced

**N**ew measures contained in the Housing Bill, will give tenants stronger rights and a greater say in how their housing is provided and managed.

The Bill has now completed its passage through Parliament and should become law later this year.

Regulations will be made to cover the rights of people living in hostels, including a minimum period of notice to quit, with fines for non-compliance by hostel managers.

There are also plans to introduce measures to further control anti-social behaviour.

The new tenants' rights package which it contains includes a new single tenancy which is now called the Scottish Secure Tenancy. It will cover tenants of local authorities and registered social landlords, whose existing tenancy agreements will eventually be replaced by the SST.

The new legislation will also:

## special briefing

- provide the right to a written tenancy agreement;
- provide the right to four weeks' notice of increase in rent or charges;
- give tenants rights to manage their own homes;
- create a new single tenancy;
- give new rights to information, consultation and participation.

## Homeless help

Greater help for homeless people comes in the shape of a package for all those approaching councils for help because they face homelessness. Every homeless person in need will be

entitled to temporary accommodation while their circumstances are investigated. And people will be treated as under threat of homelessness if they are likely to become homeless within two months – previously 28 days.

Anyone found to be non-intentionally homeless and in priority need must be found permanent accommodation.

## Interim ASBOs

The Parliament has also pledged to legislate "at the earliest opportunity" to provide interim anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs). ASBOs are increasingly being seen as an alternative remedy to eviction. However the Government says that ASBOs can take time to grant and this may undermine their usefulness. They say that Interim ASBOs would resolve this issue. ▶