

Media Release

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Children call for better childhoods – here and now How we can develop children’s services in tough economic times

A good childhood now is the best preparation for adulthood and services should bear that in mind – according to 1000 Edinburgh children whose views informed the city’s Children’s Partnership strategy, and provided a key message at Children in Scotland’s annual conference in collaboration with South Lanarkshire Council last week.

Listening meaningfully to children and developing a shared vision for services and communities that has children and families at its centre could be the key to strengthening service provision in difficult economic times, delegates heard at *Life in the fast lane: the road to better outcomes for children and young people*.

Building a ‘one-team’ approach through partnership working could boost joined-up services and lead to cost savings, while increased regard for children’s rights provides a way to strengthen universal services so that essential provision reaches the families that need it most.

The arts were recognised as having an important contribution to make to the experience of a good childhood, with the potential to raise aspirations and confidence, improve skills, break down social inequalities and improve emotional health and wellbeing.

Speaking of the need to work together across boundaries and within families and communities, Susan Deacon, Professor of Social Change at Queen Margaret University, said:

“We should not lose sight of the human dimension. There may be limitations of process, but the power of partnership working, which is always desirable, is also essential. Ultimately, it is people and not process that make the difference – it’s not just about services. Kids need cuddles.”

Children in Scotland’s Chief Executive Bronwen Cohen said:

“Once again Children in Scotland’s annual conference has led national debate on children’s issues, focusing on how a devolved government has already, and can continue to, provide better experiences and outcomes for Scotland’s young people and their families. A concerted team effort between Government, local authorities, the wider workforce and within communities will ensure all children not only benefit from a positive future but enjoy education, wellbeing and the best chances now.”

Larry Forde, South Lanarkshire Council's Executive Director of Education, said:
"I am pleased to be able to share South Lanarkshire Council's experience over the last decade with delegates and highlight themes I believe will remain with us all as we strive to improve things for vulnerable children, as well as some of the areas I believe we must focus on as we work to deliver better outcomes for children in the months and years ahead."

Notes to Editors

1. *Life in the fast lane: the road to better outcomes for children and young people* was held on 5 – 6 November 2009 at Macdonald Crutherland House, East Kilbride by Children in Scotland in collaboration with South Lanarkshire Council.
2. A summary of the conference's key points is available from Children in Scotland. Please call Tracey Francis on 0131 222 2419 for further information.
3. Photograph shows, left to right: Children in Scotland Chief Executive Bronwen Cohen; chair of South Lanarkshire's Education Committee Councillor Mary Smith; and Executive Director of Education for South Lanarkshire Council Larry Forde.

For further information, please contact Tracey Francis on 0131 222 2419, or by email at tfrancis@childreninscotland.org.uk

Children in Scotland is the national agency for voluntary, statutory and professional organisations and individuals working with children and their families in Scotland. It exists to identify and promote the interests of children and their families and to ensure that relevant policies, services and provision are of the best possible quality and able to meet the demands of a diverse society. For further information visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk