

## Media Release

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### **Current challenges a driving force for change to children's services**

#### **Children's services can keep improving, conference will hear**

Increased pressure on services and reduced resources could be the turning point in pushing forward changes that will benefit Scotland's children and young people, Children in Scotland's annual conference will hear on 3 and 4 November in Edinburgh.

Thinking creatively about how to use facilities such as schools and community areas, work in partnership, and share resources, will create services better able to support individual children and families and respond to the needs of local communities.

*Meeting of minds: Working together to build better lives for children*, in collaboration with City of Edinburgh Council, includes a round-table discussion for delegates working with children, young people and their families across Scotland to debate practical ways of integrating services to fulfil multiple agendas and involve parents, children and other service users.

Speakers will include Gillian Tee, Director for Children and Young People at City of Edinburgh Council; Claire Baker MSP, Shadow Minister for Education and Deputy Convener of the Education and Culture Committee; Ian Davidson, Deputy Director of the Scottish Government's Local Government Division; Jacquie Pepper, Senior Inspector at the Care Inspectorate; and Andrew Dixon, Chief Executive of Creative Scotland.

Workshops and study visits will share good practice across Edinburgh, including a partnership approach to early intervention for children with learning disabilities, and visits to centres developing innovative ways of working with families and communities.

Bronwen Cohen, Children in Scotland's chief executive, said:

"We need to see more impact from the time and money we invest in children and young people, and their families – especially when resources are coming under increasing pressure. Funding in some areas is being made available for targeted projects, but not for the integrated universal approaches that have been shown to do the most good. It's time we became more creative in how we manage and deliver services, to make sure we are getting the maximum benefit for all children and families."

Gillian Tee, Director of Children and Families at City of Edinburgh Council, said:

“Hosting this year’s conference gives us the opportunity to showcase and raise the profile of some of the fantastic work being carried out across the range of our services. Like us, Children in Scotland covers the whole spectrum of children’s services and, over the years, their conferences have been a platform for debate which has had a big influence on policy and practice in our sector.”

Andrew Dixon, chief executive of Creative Scotland, said:

“Creativity is an essential skill for learning, life and work; it builds confidence and communication skills, talents that are crucial to the country’s economic future. Creative Scotland works with partners at grassroots, local and national levels to ensure creativity has a central place in the lives, education and wellbeing of our young people, with initiatives like our developing national youth arts strategy building on existing networks to create more opportunities for creative development.”

### **Notes to Editors**

1. *Meeting of minds: Working together to build better lives for children* will take place on 3–4 November 2011 at the Hilton Grosvenor Hotel, Edinburgh. The conference is being held by Children in Scotland in collaboration with City of Edinburgh Council.
2. **Children in Scotland** is the longstanding national agency for the whole of the children’s sector, reaching over 250,000 individuals through our extensive membership of more than 450 statutory agencies, voluntary sector organisations, professional associations and community groups. For further information visit [www.childreninscotland.org.uk](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk).

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