

Media Release

11/03/2011

A strengthened workforce is key to young people achieving their potential

Developing the children's workforce is central to helping children and their families achieve their potential, a Children in Scotland workforce development conference will hear.

Building on the findings from the organisation's *Working it Out* and *Working for Inclusion* programmes, the '**Improving practice, improving lives: securing better outcomes for children, young people and families**' event will consider the challenges involved in developing a children's sector workforce in Scotland which has the capacity to support not only children, but also their families and communities, and empower them in the fight against child poverty, promote social inclusion and improve outcomes for all.

The event will see the launch of the Workforce Development Consultation by Minister for Children and Young People Adam Ingram, and delegates will also hear a keynote address from Cabinet Secretary Nicola Sturgeon, on the Scottish Government's vision for tackling poverty and improving outcomes for children and young people.

Adam Ingram, Minister for Children and Early Years, said: "The children's workforce spans health, education, social services, justice and community services and there are thousands of dedicated people working with Scotland's children, young people and families every day. This consultation aims to identify the skills, knowledge and values that they should all have in common if they are to work better together and improve the outcomes for our children and their families."

Additional speakers at the event – which coincides with World Social Work Day to promote working together – include Michelle Miller, President of the Association of Directors of Social Work, who will discuss how to build social capital through communities, and Executive Director of Education at Fife Council, Kenneth Greer, who will examine the lessons learnt from the recent Donaldson Review of Teacher Education.

Speaking ahead of the event, Ken Greer said: "A child's early years are society's vital years: they hold the key to the future. After family, the greatest influence on a child's life chances is the quality of the team who work with that child and family. In his recent report on teacher education in Scotland, Graham Donaldson noted that 'High quality people achieve high quality outcomes for children'. If everyone is supported to achieve their professional potential, we are investing in all of our futures."

Chief Executive of Children in Scotland, Bronwen Cohen, will chair the event. She said: "The conference follows-up on debates we have facilitated across Scotland and Europe on

how workforce education, services and job roles can help to deliver transformational change, responding more effectively and holistically to the needs of children and families.”

Maureen McKenna, Executive Director of Education at Glasgow City Council, who will take part in a panel discussion between employers and practitioners at the event, said: “In this increasingly challenging financial climate the importance of high quality staff development is critical. We need to continue to invest in our staff, both teaching and support staff, finding creative and innovative ways to deliver staff development.”

“In Glasgow for a number of years, we have held Open Doors sessions where staff share good practice with colleagues for the price of a cup of tea for participants. In the last two years, we have had health and social work colleagues also hosting events to improve our partnership working.”

The event will also include debate on how best to increase workforce capacity and improve skill development in the sector, and will draw on experiences within Scotland and across Europe, including an international perspective on capacity building.

Notes to Editors

1. **The international Workforce Development Conference, ‘Improving practice, improving lives: securing better outcomes for children, young people and families’**, will take place in Glasgow, on 15 March. The event is supported by the Scottish Government.
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
3. **Working It Out: help shape the future of Scotland's children's sector workforce**, funded by the Scottish Government, looked at developing the children’s sector in Scotland. For more information visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk/workforce
4. **Working for Inclusion: the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion**, led by Children in Scotland, and funded by the Scottish Government and the European Commission, considered Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) systems, particularly the ECEC workforce, at local, national and European levels. The programme’s final report, *Working for Inclusion: how early childhood education and care (ECEC) and its workforce can help Europe’s youngest citizens*, is available from Children in Scotland. For more information visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi

For further information contact Lynn Gilmour

Email lgilmour@childreninscotland.org.uk / tel 0131 222 2443.