



## **Pre- Budget Media Statement – on Early Years investment**

**16/11/2010**

### **Protect early and equal investment in Scotland's youngest children**

Invest in universal early years services now and build a stronger Scotland; this is the response by Children in Scotland to the Scottish Government's new research report, examining the financial impact of early years intervention in Scotland.

Welcoming the publication, which is timed to coincide with tomorrow's Budget in Scotland, Bronwen Cohen, Chief Executive of Children in Scotland supports the Government's case for investing now in order to save money in the future, and backs the findings of the research, which reiterate the short- and long-term savings, as well as the economic benefits, which early intervention offer.

However, the organisation, which led the EC and Scottish Government funded 'Working for Inclusion' programme to examine the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion across Europe, emphasises the importance of a high quality universal approach, not simply the targeting of resources to particular groups.

"While we support the Government's commitment to early years investment, particularly at this time of economic uncertainty, it is vital that this investment begins now, and is not targeted at specific groups of children, but available to all," Dr Cohen said.

"The additional help that some children require is best delivered in the context of a universally available and integrated services which not only offer an effective means of identifying children requiring additional help but can help

bring families with young children out of poverty.”

“The evidence published in the final ‘Working for Inclusion’ project report, to be launched in Brussels, in December, shows: *‘Targeting and separating disadvantaged children from their mainstream peers [this] results in negative effects on social learning, vocabulary and attitudes to diversity. By contrast, universal social provision with centres for all social classes together sensitises parents to exclusion issues and the importance of education.’*”

“It is crucial that all services; midwifery and health visitor services, for example, along with integrated systems of early education and childcare, are properly resourced. There must also be better co-ordination between all sectors involved in the provision of children’s and childcare services at ground level. These measures will ensure universal, and sustainable, support for our young people, and for their families who, with equal access to childcare, will be able to enter or re-enter the workforce and, in turn, support the Scottish economy.”

#### **Notes to Editors**

1. **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).
2. **The Working for Inclusion programme** has been a two year programme of research, funded by the European Commission under the EU Progress (Employment and Social Inclusion) programme with the support of the Scottish Government, led by Children in Scotland with partners and associate partners in nine other countries, to examine the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion. The final report and its implications will be discussed at a seminar to be held in the European Parliament in Brussels on 9 December.  
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