

## Media Release

2 May 2011

### Scotland's children forgotten by politicians

Children's issues – including childcare, primary schooling and healthy lifestyles – are being sidelined in the election campaign, with parties across the board not even mentioning them when asked for their top priorities for a BBC survey, Children in Scotland has learned.

This despite the impact on Scotland's economic recovery of the triple whammy Scottish parents now face, with falling numbers of preschool places coinciding with a rising birth rate; spiralling childcare costs; and a reduction in the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. In Scotland a quarter of households with children aged 5 and under, and a fifth of households with children aged 6 and over, now live in poverty.

Children in Scotland calls on all candidates to prioritise measures that will give all Scotland's youngsters a better chance in life, support parents, and save money now and in the long term.

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

"We commend the parties for their commitments to young people struggling to find work. But targeting one group won't be enough to bring about the long term change Scotland needs to make sure all our children and young people are able to reach their potential. It's worrying that none of the political parties are prepared to make something so fundamental to the lives and wellbeing of children and their families a top priority."

#### **Notes to Editors (NB all figures from *The costs of childcare in Scotland: a special report*, available from Children in Scotland)**

1. The number of registered childcare centres and the number of centres providing preschool education in Scotland has gone down by over 3% since 2008. At the same time the number of children under 5 has risen by approximately 5%.
2. Childcare costs and charging structures are inconsistent across Scotland, with costs per week for 25 hours care ranging from £58 to £107 in private and local authority nurseries, and £80 to £110 for childminders. Rural areas mostly offer cheaper prices, but fewer choices. Parents of children with disabilities have least choice of services, with 48% not offered a choice for their child.
3. From this month, the childcare element of Working Tax Credit will cover only 70% of childcare costs for low income working families rather than 80%, as previously.
4. The May issue of *Children in Scotland* magazine, published this week, examines the party manifestos from a children's sector perspective and pulls together exactly what each is offering to Scotland's children and young people.

5. **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).

**For further information contact Tracey Francis by email at [tfrancis@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:tfrancis@childreninscotland.org.uk) / tel 0131 222 2419 / 07554 333169**