

## Media Release

**EMBARGOED FOR 6/11/09**

## **New Children's Sector Forum launched Sector-wide think tank to look at public policy and its impact on children**

A new Forum launched today (6 November) at Children in Scotland's annual conference in East Kilbride brings organisations across the children's sector together to work for improved child wellbeing and lasting benefits for young people, with its first task being to develop a children's sector manifesto for Scotland ahead of the UK, Scottish parliament and local council elections in 2010 and 2011.

Minister for Children and Early Years Adam Ingram will join MSPs Robin Harper (Green Party) and Robert Brown (Scottish Liberal Democrats), the co-conveners of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Children and Young People, at the launch meeting which will be chaired by BBC Scotland journalist Sally McNair. The meeting will look at the 'grey areas' where legislation and practice is caught between the realities of shared or split responsibilities of the UK and Scottish governments.

The Forum is set to become a major source of policy analysis and strategic development for Children in Scotland members from the statutory, voluntary and private sectors, with the opportunity to consider the full range of children's policy matters and hear from invited key policymakers and officials. Including the views of children and young people will also be a Forum priority.

Children in Scotland's Director of Policy Jonathan Sher said:

"Statutory, voluntary and private sector members have rarely had the opportunity to share experience, knowledge and ideas about how best to work together to improve children's lives and life chances. This Forum will fill a gap for the entire children's sector."

Councillor Helen Wright, Shadow Convener (Social Work) for Dundee City Council, said:

"It is important to invest money in early years: if you can make a difference when children are young you can create good citizens. The Forum is a big job and a brave thing for Children in Scotland to take on. It's a step in the right direction: organisations need to come together for better discussion and to move forward more effectively."

Director of Barnardo's Scotland Martin Crewe said:

"The Forum will be a valuable addition for debating matters that affect Scotland's children. Its key strength will be bringing together a diversity of views from statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations."

## **Notes to Editors**

1. *Life in the fast lane: the road to better outcomes for children and young people* is being held on 5 – 6 November 2009 at Macdonald Crutherland House, East Kilbride. The conference is being held by Children in Scotland in collaboration with South Lanarkshire Council.
2. The Children's Sector Forum will meet four times a year, including one meeting at Children in Scotland's annual conference. Between meetings work will take place through a virtual policy forum network. The Forum is likely to be particularly valuable to organisations that do not have their own policy units, and for local authorities examining how best to fulfil their policy roles under the Concordat between the Scottish government and CoSLA.
3. Representatives of any Children in Scotland member organisation may attend Forum meetings. For information on joining the Forum, contact Sara Collier at [scollier@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:scollier@childreninscotland.org.uk) or call 0131 222 2412.
4. Children in Scotland's manifesto for the 2007 election, *Better lives for Scotland's children and young people*, is available from Children in Scotland (call Hannah Goodrum on 0131 222 2431) or on the Children in Scotland website at [www.childreninscotland.org.uk/docs/policy/manifesto2007.pdf](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/docs/policy/manifesto2007.pdf).
5. For more information on the conference programme visit [www.childreninscotland.org.uk/life](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/life).

For further information, please contact Tracey Francis on 0131 222 2419, or by email at [tfrancis@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto: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](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk)