

Media Release

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Better opportunities and life chances for every child How best to turn policy into practice

Examples of practice that have a real impact on the lives of children, young people and their families are showcased at *Life in the fast lane: the road to better outcomes*, Children in Scotland's annual conference held with South Lanarkshire Council on 5–6 November.

The role of the arts in helping to improve life chances and opportunities for all children is the subject of a panel discussion chaired by Glasgow School of Art Director Seona Reid, while other sessions look at partnership working; children's rights; child poverty and health; and how to involve young people meaningfully in planning and decision-making.

A theatre presentation educating preschool children in drug awareness and a programme engaging fathers and male carers are among the workshops on offer, along with looking at the benefits of strong relationships between young children and their parents/carers in supporting early learning. Other workshops include examples of good practice in youth health; improving outcomes for looked-after children; and a volunteer programme working with hard-to-reach families.

Young people will join policy-makers and practitioners at a number of sessions and workshops to add their viewpoints to those of other conference contributors, including Minister for Children and Early Years Adam Ingram, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People Tam Baillie, Director of Barnardo's Scotland Martin Crewe and Secretary General of Eurochild Jana Hainsworth.

Panellist John Leighton, Director General of the National Galleries of Scotland, said: "There is no shortage of evidence that the arts have the potential to transform young people's lives. Exposure to culture and the arts can inspire confidence, nurture creativity and help young people to connect with their past, present and their future. We are fortunate to have an incredibly diverse cultural offer in this country and every child should have the opportunity to engage with this and feel part of it, regardless of their background."

Conference chair Bernard McLeary, Chief Executive at Learning and Teaching Scotland, said:

"It is hugely important for our children and young people that they are given the best possible opportunities in life and a fulfilling education is key to that. With Curriculum for Excellence, health and wellbeing is now the responsibility of all teachers and practitioners, ensuring that pupils develop the knowledge that they need for mental, emotional and physical wellbeing, as well as promoting confidence and positive attitudes. To offer all

young people the widest range of choices and chances, LTS is giving high priority to promoting the development of partnerships between school and youth workers.”

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. One of 15 National Outcomes set under the national performance framework ‘Scotland Performs’ is “Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed”. *Life in the fast lane* looks at progress being made towards achieving this outcome for all children, including a special focus on Single Outcome Agreements – the means by which each of Scotland’s 32 local authorities is required to describe and monitor tangible progress at local level towards the national objectives.
3. For more information on the conference programme visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk/life.

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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