

Media Release

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Visible, valued and validated How do we ensure the best outcomes for Scotland's children?

As we begin a second decade of devolved government, a major conference will look at the impact of devolution on Scotland's children and young people through initiatives such as Single Outcome Agreements – and consider what still needs to be done to make sure every child and young person is visible, valued and validated in a successful Scotland.

Life in the fast lane: the road to better outcomes, held by Children in Scotland in collaboration with South Lanarkshire Council on 5–6 November, brings together senior practitioners and policy-makers to identify the key areas of policy and practice that will make a substantial and noticeable difference to the life chances and opportunities of children, young people and their families in the next decade.

The conference has a special focus on whether Single Outcome Agreements are currently achieving their aims for children and families, but will also look at other issues including partnership working; child poverty and health; working across boundaries; and embedding children's rights in policy and practice. A workshop programme will share good practice across South Lanarkshire, including work with looked-after children; hard-to-reach families; engaging fathers; and young people's health.

In an addition to the programme, Susan Deacon, Professor of Social Change at Queen Margaret University, joins speakers including Minister for Children and Early Years Adam Ingram, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People Tam Baillie, Secretary General of Eurochild Jana Hainsworth and Chief Executive of the Children's Rights Alliance in Ireland Jillian van Turnhout.

Children and Early Years Minister Adam Ingram said:

“As adults we should remember that growing up isn't easy, having to adapt to changing circumstances and all the uncertainty that can bring. That's why the help and support provided by everyone involved in children's services – and indeed the whole of society – is so vital to young people's development. The children of today will be the adults of tomorrow and, if they are to play their part fully in a more successful Scotland, we must give them every chance to take the opportunities that come their way in life and fulfil their potential.”

Children in Scotland Chief Executive Bronwen Cohen said:

“There continue to be more questions than answers about what we need to do practically to achieve better outcomes for all children and the best support for their families. The

conference will look at how a range of policy and practice initiatives, for example involvement in the arts or consultation in decision-making, can increase the opportunities available to children and contribute to the process of making a tangible difference to their lives.”

Councillor Mary Smith, who chairs South Lanarkshire’s Education Committee, said: “We are all determined to ‘get it right for every child’ – and we have much to celebrate in South Lanarkshire in terms of our work with children and their families. We hope that by hosting this year’s Children in Scotland annual conference we will have an opportunity to share our practice and listen to the experiences of others.”

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. Under the Concordat agreed between the Scottish government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) following the last Scottish elections, each of Scotland’s 32 local authorities is required to draw up Single Outcome Agreements in line with the national performance framework ‘Scotland Performs’, to describe and monitor tangible progress at local level towards 15 National Outcomes – which include “Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed”.
3. For more information on the conference programme visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk/life.

For further information, please contact Tracey Francis on 0131 222 2419, or by email at 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