



PRESS RELEASE

Fathers' Footsteps

Immediate release

The impact of the forthcoming Gender Equality Duty on fathers and their children will be the focus of a round table event today (Wednesday 8 November).

The discussion, organised by Children in Scotland's 'Children, Fathers and Fatherhood' Project, will be shaped by 30 professionals from Scotland's education and health sectors, as well as representatives of children's and parents' organisations.

The Gender Equality Duty (GED), due to come into effect in England, Scotland and Wales in April 2007, will oblige all public bodies to take gender into account in terms of employment, policy making and service provision.

Attendees will be invited to discuss the following:

1. The best and worst about the present situation
2. Their vision for what could and should happen as a result of the GED
3. The obstacles to that vision being realised
4. Key strategies needed to achieve the Gender Equality vision

The outcome will help set the agenda for a conference on the Gender Duty's implications to be held at the Edinburgh Marriott on Monday 11 June next year.

Today's event will also launch of the *Fathers' Footsteps Calendar 2007*, published by Children in Scotland, featuring poems about fatherhood – all of which are illustrated by Scottish schoolchildren.

Scottish actor, Gary Lewis, best known for his role as the father in the film *Billy Elliot*, wrote in the foreword for the *Calendar*: "For some children, the absence of a caring father figure can be a cause of great difficulties as they grow up. And for some fathers, unjustifiable barriers placed between them and their children can cause great anguish... For many children there would be a better chance of something

approaching a happy ending if support was given to caring and committed mothers and fathers.”

Stephen Harvey, the project co-ordinator, said: “The Gender Equality Duty will require public bodies to consider the different needs and expectations of men and women in their policymaking, service delivery and employment practices. This could have a significant impact on the way that services relate to dads.

“The poems in the *Calendar* present a wide range of father-child relationships and illustrate why strong father-child relationships are so important. The negative effects of the loss of, or lack of contact with, positive father figures have been clearly evidenced in recent studies. Good father-child relationships benefit not only children and fathers, but also mothers, families, communities and society as a whole.”

Members of the press are invited to attend the event at the Royal Scots Club, Edinburgh. There will be two discussion sessions:

2. p.m. – The Gender Equality Duty and Fathers

3. p.m. – The Gender Equality Duty and Children

4.30 p.m. – *Calendar* Launch

If you would like to attend, contact Nicola Pay on 0131 2222448

Notes for editors:

Children, Fathers and Fatherhood is a three-year Scottish Executive-funded project, managed by Children in Scotland in partnership with EOC Scotland and Fathers Direct, that aims to raise awareness of issues affecting children in their relationships with their fathers and to enable all fathers to develop their fatherhood skills. Web: <http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk/fathers>

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 provisions are of the best possible quality and able to meet the demands of a diverse society.

***NOTE:** Project co-ordinator, Stephen Harvey, would like to trace the author of one of the poems that appears in the *Fathers' Footsteps Calendar 2007*. ‘Supermen Are Always Lonely People’, by Jim Morrison, was featured in *Chapman* literary magazine in 1978. All attempts to trace him have proved unsuccessful. If you know this particular Jim Morrison -- or know how to find him – then please get in touch with Stephen Harvey, Children in Scotland Tel: 0131 222 2446. Email: sharvey@childreninScotland.org.uk