



MEDIA RELEASE – 8 March 2007

Proposals for cultural entitlements for children and young people ‘too weak’

The Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill does not do enough to ensure children benefit from cultural experiences.

Children in Scotland welcomes the Scottish Executive’s proposals for cultural entitlements to be established and delivered by local authorities, but doesn’t believe the proposals are strong enough for children and young people. Entitlements should be supported by the use of specially trained arts professionals and improved initial education for those working in children’s services, especially to benefit children in rural areas where access to the arts can be limited by costs and by poor transport.

Bronwen Cohen, chief executive of Children in Scotland, said: “The Scottish Executive could explore the idea of providing entitlements specifically for children and young people, for whole nursery classes, in the form of cultural vouchers, and facilitated through schemes such as the Young Scot card. It is important that local authorities think about entitlements not just as visits to museums and galleries but as the opportunity to participate in cultural activities in the classroom and local community”.

A new Children in Scotland report *Arts for all? Developing cultural entitlements for children in rural Scotland*, outlines the need for more artists to be equipped to work with children and for those working in children’s services to have improved initial education.

Bronwen Cohen said: “We believe that to increase participation in culture it needs to be embedded into education from early childhood.”

“Arts for all?” highlights the fact that other European countries such as Denmark, Norway and Sweden believe culture to be an integral part of the curriculum, and ensure the professional training of those working with children has a large arts component.

Bronwen Cohen said: “Our report shows local authorities are making good use of professional self-employed artists, but the Culture Bill can help us rethink the initial education of all those working in children’s services to ensure the arts are central to professional practice. This is an opportunity to develop the concept of a Scottish pedagogue, emulating the best that Nordic initial education has to offer and adapting it to our needs.”

The deadline for responses to the Scottish Executive’s Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill is 31 March. Children in Scotland is seeking the views of its members ahead of a providing a full consultation response and has published a briefing for its members (attached).

The draft Culture (Scotland) Bill, published in December last year, proposes “cultural entitlements” be defined by local authorities.

