

**Media Release**  
**26.10.07**



***Children in Scotland's annual conference,  
Healthy happy and wise: Working together  
for the wellbeing of Scotland's children***

**Children in Scotland's annual conference will be held on 1 and 2 November at MacDonald Cardrona Hotel, Peebles, in association with Scottish Borders Council.**

Speakers include **Professor Lord Robert Winston**, the renowned fertility expert and presenter of the BBC series *Child of Our Time*, **Fiona Hyslop MSP**, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, and **Professor Jonathan Bradshaw**, co-author of the Unicef report card 7: *An Overview of child wellbeing in rich countries* (published February 2007).

The conference will assess the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland, bringing together delegates to reflect on how to develop happier and healthier childhoods.

Bronwen Cohen, chief executive of Children in Scotland, said: "This conference is an important opportunity to focus on the real priorities for children in the context of a changed political environment in Scotland, and a chance to explore how we could redirect resources."

"Delegates will be considering how the wellbeing of Scotland's children can be improved and ways in which children and young people can be active participants in this process, as demonstrated by some of the projects run by the Scottish Borders Council which will be presented at the conference, such as Dialogue Youth and Youth Chex."

"A key issue will be the need to invest more in younger children. Investment in the early years is an investment in children's lifelong learning, health and wellbeing. This investment, combined with new kinds of services such as nature kindergartens, can help Scotland not only to develop a nation of lifelong learners but to address some of the serious problems we are experiencing with childhood obesity, health and attitudes to exercise and food."

"These approaches could help Scotland's position the next time Unicef reports

on child wellbeing.”

Kathleen Marshall, Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People, said: “This is a very appropriate time to focus on the importance of empathy in child wellbeing. Research published recently by my office showed a disturbing picture of the attitudes and fears that are getting in the way of healthy and happy interaction between children and adults. Fear of being accused of harming a child is a major inhibitor. As a society, we have to reflect deeply on this and to find ways to remove these barriers in order to set the context for a safe, active and happy childhood.”

Other speakers at the conference include Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, and Professor Jonathan Bradshaw, co-author of the Unicef report card 7: *An Overview of child wellbeing in rich countries* (published February 2007).

Workshops led by Scottish Borders Council will explore children and young people’s involvement in developing services, and the difference professionals can make when they work across professional sectors.

Glenn Rodger, director of education and lifelong learning from Scottish Borders Council said: “We are delighted to welcome Children in Scotland to the Scottish Borders to host their annual conference. We fully support the work of Children in Scotland and work closely with them. I am sure that everyone attending the conference will welcome the opportunity to reflect on how we can better work together for the welfare of Scotland’s children.”

Key figures from Scotland, Italy, Ireland, the United States and England will contribute perspectives on the importance of community support for learning from the early years to adulthood – and how supporting families is vital.

Early childhood education specialist Aldo Fortunati will highlight the town of San Miniato in Italy, which has a holistic early years education system that emphasizes the importance of families and professionals working together.

*Healthy, happy and wise: working together for the wellbeing of Scotland’s children*, 1 and 2 November, MacDonald Cardrona Hotel, Peebles.

For more information visit [www.childreninscotland.org.uk/hhw](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/hhw)

***An updated version of this release, with information on Professor Lord Winston’s presentation, will be issued on Tuesday 30 October.***

***Lord Winston will be available to speak to journalists attending the conference on Thursday 1 November.***

**Contact: Chris Small**

**Email: [csmall@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:csmall@childreninscotland.org.uk)**

**Tel: 0131 222 2419**

**Notes for editors:**

Children in Scotland is Scotland's national children's agency, bringing together voluntary, statutory and professional organisations and individuals to improve the lives of Scotland's children and their families.