

NEWS RELEASE

Stay or Go?

-- A New Guide for Parents of Teenagers Thinking about Leaving Home

Embargo: 12.01am Thursday 8th November, 2007

Stay or Go? a guide for parents of teenagers who are thinking about leaving home is being launched today at a major homelessness conference,¹ where it will be presented to Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing.

The guide will help parents and their children talk about the harsh realities of leaving home. It gives them up to date practical information about housing options, legal rights and sources of advice and support.²

Living with young people who are making a bid for independence can be a challenging time for families. Yet many parents don't know about the modern realities of leaving home or where to go for help and support. The guide will help parents and teenagers decide when is the right time to make the move, how to prepare, how to cope after they have left home and what to do if things go wrong.

Young people can get advice about housing and leaving home from **www.leavinghome.info**³ and elsewhere⁴ but the new guide is the first aimed at their parents and families:

"Leaving home is challenging time for any young person. And for some—an alarming 1 in 30 sixteen and seventeen year old Scots—it can lead to presenting to the local council as homeless.⁵ So we need to do everything we can to help families deal with this issue."
Matt Elton, Head of Youth Unit, Scottish Council for Single Homeless.⁶

The guide is the latest resource from the Scottish Council for Single Homeless aimed at preventing housing crisis and homelessness in young people. It was developed in close consultation with parents, young people and the professionals who work with them. Throughout, the guide offers reassurance through quotes and stories from parents and young people, reminding parents that they're not alone in facing the challenges of family life:

"I didn't know where my head was (when I was 16) so I just didn't tell my mum and dad anything. If I'd have just spoken to them then maybe it would have been different."
'Lana', aged 20.

Viki Phillipps from Edinburgh's Amber Mediation Project⁷ is an expert in working with parents and young people who have left home at a young age and helped out in the creation of the guide. She says:

"We find that many parents don't know what kind of help is available or they find it difficult to ask for advice. The Parents Guide introduces parents to sources of support, such as mediation, that can help relationships with young people living at home or build bridges with those who have already left."

North Lanarkshire and Argyll & Bute Councils were key partners in the development of the guide—and have their own local versions—and the production was sponsored by LinkLiving.⁸

Samples / Images

Sample copies / electronic images available on request.

Contact Matt Elton: 0131 226 4382 (or 07917 806 713) / matt@scsh.org.uk

Media contacts

1 Main media contact:

Matt Elton, Head of Youth Unit, Scottish Council for Single Homeless
0131 226 4382 (or 07917 806 713) / matt@scsh.org.uk

2. Contact for Amber Mediation:

Viki Phillipps, Mediation Support Co-ordinator
0131 475 2493 / viki@cyrenians.org.uk

Notes

1. The National Homelessness Conference takes place on the 8th and 9th November 2007 at the Apex International, Edinburgh and is organised by the Scottish Council for Single Homeless. It will bring together delegates from across Scotland to discuss ways to prevent homelessness and tackle it effectively where it does occur.
2. The guide will be purchased and distributed by local authorities, advice centres, etc. for distribution to the public. Copies can also be purchased direct from the Scottish Council for Single Homeless (SCSH) at £2.00 a copy + P&P. Order on-line at: www.scsh.org.uk
3. The website www.leavinghome.info is packed with accessible and youth-friendly information about the whole process of leaving home, housing and avoiding homelessness. The Scottish Council for Single Homeless also produces **Streets Ahead: the guide to leaving home and housing for young people in Scotland** and the award winning **My Space My Place a guide for young people living independently**.
4. Young people and anyone with concerns about housing or homelessness can get free impartial advice from Shelter by calling the free phone number: 0808 800 4444.
5. 4488 sixteen and seventeen year olds were recorded as presenting as homeless in 06-07. Figures from Statistical Bulletin: Housing Series: HSG/2007/6: Operation of the Homeless Persons legislation in Scotland: national and local authority analyses 2006-2007 www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/10/30092316/0
6. Scottish Council for Single Homeless (SCSH) is the national membership organisation for individuals and organisations working with homeless people. SCSH has produced the **Stay or Go?** alongside a range of specialist agencies and with input from parents and young people. www.scsh.org.uk
7. Amber Mediation is a project run by Edinburgh Cyrenians that helps young people and their families who are having trouble getting along, some of whom may be at risk of homelessness. Contact: Viki Phillipps, Mediation Support Co-ordinator, 0131 475 2493 viki@cyrenians.org.uk
8. LinkLiving works to make a positive difference to the lives of people affected by social exclusion. Person centred services in Edinburgh, Midlothian, Falkirk and Fife support people with vulnerabilities including homelessness, mental health issues and learning disabilities. Part of the Link Group: www.linkliving.org.uk

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