

Shelter Scotland nears campaign target

Scotland's politicians have promised that everyone will have the right to a home by 2012.

Shelter Scotland launched its 'home is ...' campaign to urge politicians to keep this promise by asking people from all over Scotland to say what home means to them and the importance of having a home.

Shelter Scotland believes that for political commitment to turn the right to have a home into the reality of actually having a home, there must be a significant increase in funding for new houses.

The national housing and homelessness charity want to collect 5,000 quotes - and have around 4,500 already - but need further support to reach their target.

Quotes from people around Scotland feature the concepts of safe, secure and a private place, which shows that a home is not just about four walls but much more about a place where you "feel" safe and secure.

Shelter Scotland asks for our help this winter by asking us to tell them what home means to us - please contact the campaign at: www.shelter.org.uk/homeis

At the same time, *Shelter* continues its Advice online. Especially in winter, housing problems can seem catastrophic. Issues such as rent arrears, bad living conditions and antisocial neighbours can have a huge impact on people's mental and

physical health, causing stress, anxiety and misery.

But *Shelter's* Advice online website, www.shelter.org.uk/adviceonline, can help.

Advice online contains comprehensive, straightforward information on a wide range of housing related topics, from finding a place to live to paying the rent, from making a homeless application to preventing eviction or repossession.

And because housing problems don't occur in isolation, Advice online can help people cope with related problems such as relationship breakdown and neighbourhood issues.

It offers checklists and sample letters to download and print off and signposts users to further sources of specialist help and advice.

'Coming across Advice online was like the weight of the world being lifted from my shoulders...' (Jane, commenting on Advice Online).

16- to 25-year-olds can turn to Know your Rights, www.shelter.org.uk/knowyourrights, *Shelter's* online advice service for young people.

Know your Rights offers a great range of information about leaving home and finding a place, benefits and budgeting, housing rights, and how to avoid the pitfalls of renting, from dodgy landlords and flatmates from hell to small furry things living

in the kitchen bin.

Shelter's free housing advice helpline is 0808 800 4444

Editorial

We start by wishing VHS members and all our readers a very happy New Year 2007.

This year promises to be an exciting one, with the Scottish Parliament and Council Elections rapidly approaching, renewed government commitment to community health work with the launch of the Task Group's recommendations and greater participation in health services for equality and diversity groups, bringing in particular greater equity of access for those with disabilities.

At this season of the year, we are reminded of the added impact that winter brings to people who are homeless and those with mental health difficulties. We have therefore included contributions from Shelter Scotland and SAMH.

At the same time, we are featuring an update on parliamentary processes where VHS has been making an impact and bringing you advance notice of three exciting events in February and March - the next in our series of development days for the network of voluntary and community sector members of CHPS and our major forthcoming conference on the role of social enterprise in health improvement.

Helen Tyrrell and the VHS team

Homelessness and health this winter

People who sleep rough have a much harder time during the winter than the rest of us do.

Older homeless people struggle with the long-term effects of life on the streets, chronic alcohol abuse and cigarettes.

The biggest problem for younger people is heroin - 9 out of 10 young homeless people are injecting - as well as alcohol and tobacco.

For both groups, prolonged and excessive substance use takes its toll on the liver, kidneys, lungs, heart, skin and emotional well-being.

A bout of 'flu simply adds to the other health hazards of life on the streets, such as pneumonia, diabetes, asthma, hepatitis B and C, chronic skin and foot problems.

Blood clots and ulcers from injecting heroin and 'blue' toes from alcohol-related circulation problems can lead to infection and even gangrene and amputation.

The life expectancy of rough sleepers is 42 years (average national life expectancy is 74 for men and 79 for women).

They are 35 times more likely than the general population to kill themselves and four times more likely to die from accidents, assaults, murder, drug or alcohol poisoning (Source: Crisis, 1996).

Estimates of the numbers of rough sleepers vary dramatically. Local authority one-night head counts indicating falling numbers notoriously underestimate totals and are affected by factors such as the weather and the skill of researchers in locating 'skippers' (places where people bed down).

A recent Edinburgh count revealed only 8 individuals whereas *Streetwork*'s data showed up as many as 127 rough sleepers.

However, working with voluntary sector and local authority partners, *Streetwork* has successfully reduced the number of long-term (average 15 years) rough sleepers with chronic health problems in Edinburgh from 69 to around 15.

In Glasgow, numbers are much higher, with around 85 long-term rough sleepers remaining.



Streetwork is out on the streets every night of the year, in all weathers.

In the city centre we look for the most vulnerable and give them crisis support, making sure they are safe and helping them to access emergency accommodation.

In the housing estates, we educate young people to help them stay off drugs, away from crime, and to make better choices about sexual health. We guide every individual towards better health, education, training and job opportunities.

Tam Hendry, Chief Executive

Streetwork UK is a charity which works on the streets with some of the most vulnerable and excluded people

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Edinburgh EH1 3QB
Tel: 0131 476 3666
Fax: 0131 476 4007
Email: mail@streetwork.org.uk

Delivering a Healthy Scotland: Meeting the Challenge

The First Minister launched the report **Delivering a Healthy Scotland: Meeting the Challenge** (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/11/29141927/0>) in December 2006.

The Report provides details of the whole-government approach to health improvement in Scotland and highlights the crucial role of health improvement in achieving success and outcomes across the Executive's key policies, and those of its partners.

At the launch, the First Minister announced plans for an annual public review of the state of the nation's health.



The Health Department is developing a mechanism to engage more fully with its key partners and stakeholders to develop an ongoing dialogue around a regular 'health check' for Scotland.

Your views on the Report and on the engagement and review process leading up the development of the second Report would be very welcome.

Please direct any comments by Friday 2nd February 2007 to Laura Ross in the Health Improvement Strategy Division, St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG or laura.ross@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Mental Health problems estimated to have cost £8.6 billion in 2004 / 2005

The Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) recently commissioned the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health (SCMH) to produce an analysis of the costs of mental health problems in Scotland.

The report, "*What's it worth?*" places 'human costs', representing the impact on quality of life, using QALY measurements, at £4.7 billion and lost productivity e.g. due to people with mental health problems not being able to work, at £2.4 billion.

Costs of services providing help for those with mental health problems, e.g. NHS Scotland, the voluntary and community sectors and local authorities are estimated to amount to 17.5% of the total at £1.5 billion in 2004 - 2005.

The total social and economic cost to Scotland was therefore valued at £8.6 billion. This equates to more than the total spent by NHS Scotland on all health conditions during 2004 - 2005 which was £7.7 billion.

Estimates such as these can help to inform debate and decision-making about priorities within the NHS and social services, especially when presented alongside comparable information on other causes of poor health.

Following this report SAMH have published their "*Agenda for Action*" aimed at politicians, prospective parliamentary candidates and their advisors for the 2007 elections.

This publication, created in partnership with the SAMH membership, calls for action on four fundamental areas; Rights, Resilience, Recovery and Resources.

By focusing efforts on these four areas SAMH believes that continued improvements to the mental health and well-being of people in Scotland can be made.

"*What's it worth?*" can be downloaded from: <http://www.samh.org.uk/assets/files/112.pdf>
"*Agenda for Action*" can be downloaded from: <http://www.samh.org.uk/assets/files/113.pdf>

Forthcoming events & awareness days

January

22 - 26: **Cancertalk** - information, support and resources to talk about cancer with children and young people

February

Feb 1 - Mar 31: **WellBeing of Women Gynaecological Cancer Awareness Campaign**
12 - 18: **Contraceptive Awareness Week** - raises awareness of the different methods of contraception and issues affecting contraceptive choice

March

11 - 17: **Obesity Awareness Week** - to raise awareness of the growing obesity epidemic in the UK
14: **No Smoking Day**
19 - 25: **Prostate Cancer Awareness Week** - aims to raise the profile of prostate cancer among the general public and in the media.

April

8 - 14: **Mental Health Action Week**
16 - 22: **Parkinson's Awareness Week**

Scottish Elections - call for stronger partnership with the voluntary and community sector

With the Scottish elections fast approaching VHS calls on all Scottish political parties and all prospective members of the Scottish Parliament to advocate for:

- ◆ Greater choice of services for local people
- ◆ Fairer access to opportunities for a healthier life, taking into account the needs of diverse and hard-to-reach communities

- ◆ Stronger partnership working between government and the voluntary and community sector, adhering to the principles of The Scottish Compact
- ◆ Sufficient government resources to be allocated and dedicated to primary and community-based health services
- ◆ New channels for local people to have a greater say in how health services are planned and delivered
- ◆ Fairer access to local services which can improve health, in

particular through Community Health Partnerships

- ◆ Greater and more sustainable resources for building the infrastructure and capacity of the voluntary and community sector to maximise its contribution to health.

The full VHS manifesto is available to download at: <http://www.vhscotland.org.uk/library/vhs/VHSmanifesto.pdf>

Please use the manifesto to lobby political parties and PSCs.

SAMH Services for people who are homeless

The Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) works to support people who experience mental health problems, homelessness, addictions and other forms of social exclusion.

At this time of year in particular many more are in danger of being socially excluded and we highlight some of the services SAMH runs in Glasgow.

Community Directions

Community Directions is a supported living service, which forms a key strand of the hostel closure programme in Glasgow.

It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week and provides supported accommodation for people who have chosen to continue drinking; people who often face exclusion from other services.

The service works on the principle that even if someone is not willing to follow an abstinence programme, it doesn't mean that they don't need, or won't benefit from, lifestyle support.

Community Directions provides information and opportunities for people to enrol on a detox programme, but the decision is always theirs.

And findings show that people can maintain a tenancy, do the housework and feed themselves, whilst still drinking.

Community Directions is about balance. It works in partnership with people to identify their needs and aspirations, alongside what needs to change to sustain their health and well-being.

Contact: west.office@samh.org.uk

Connect

Connect, a SAMH assertive outreach service, prioritises people who drift in and out of the system, who other agencies have found it very difficult to engage with. People using the service may be homeless, sleeping rough, experiencing mental health problems or addictions, fleeing from an abusive situation, or any combination of these.

Connect links people with other agencies who can offer help and support, including SAMH's own network of services, and helps them to develop a support package which suits the needs of the individual.

It promotes collaboration, partnership and integration between individuals, professions and agencies, to ensure that we all work together to make a positive difference to people's lives.

Contact: west.office@samh.org.uk

Outreach

Outreach, a Glasgow-wide SAMH service, is designed for people with mental health problems who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.

The service aims to eliminate the risk of further homelessness and to provide a support package to promote recovery and enable each individual to build stability, safety and security within a sustainable home.

Staff have developed close relationships with Community Mental Health teams, social work area teams and the Diversion

Assessment and Resettlement team, to work with people who are being discharged from Parkhead hospital and are homeless.

Outreach strives to ensure that its services for homeless people provides the level of support required to enable people to move towards their own recovery. Contact: west.office@samh.org.uk

Contact SAMH on 0141 568 7000, enquire@samh.org.uk or visit www.samh.org.uk

Evaluation Support Scotland workshop programme for 2007

Evaluation Support Scotland's Core Course Programme is a series of interactive workshops for staff or volunteers from voluntary organisations.

They help participants gain greater understanding of the evaluation process and apply it to their organisation or area of work.

By focusing on different aspects of evaluation, the workshops offer a structured approach to enable participants get to grips with evaluation.

Available courses include:

- ◆ What are my outcomes?
- ◆ Collecting information to report on outcomes
- ◆ Using visual approaches to evaluate your project
- ◆ Getting the best from external consultants

If you would like a booking form please email Jennifer at info@evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk or phone 0870 850 1378

Scottish Parliament holds debate on funding for community health work

On 8th November, Mark Ballard MSP of the Green Party led on a parliamentary members' debate on funding for community health work in Scotland.

This had been sparked off by concerns expressed to CHEX about shortfalls and terminations in funding by community health projects in the west of Scotland.

At the same time, Voluntary Health Scotland carried out an enquiry of members' funding concerns via the VHS website.

18 MSPs attended from across all parties, as well as over 30 community and voluntary groups.

Both CHEX and VHS produced background briefings describing the experience of their network members and calling for action.

Opening, Mark Ballard said that despite the prominence given in policy rhetoric to community projects in addressing Scotland's health, the community health sector was under immense financial strain, with 79% of voluntary health providers struggling with shortfalls or seriously concerned about their future finance.

Continuing, Mark Ballard said that it was still impossible to hold NHS Boards and local authorities to account for how much of the money allocated

to them reached community organisations.

He called for a national strategy on community health, which would give the sector the standing that it deserves and require NHS Boards and local authorities to produce clear statements on how they intended to support community and voluntary sector health work.

Patrick Harvie MSP said that it would not be an overstatement to call the present situation a national funding crisis and Carolyn Leckie MSP urged the Minister to liaise with the Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform and the Health Minister on the issue, as it clearly spanned departmental portfolios.

Since the debate, CHEX, Voluntary Health Scotland and the UK Public Health Association in Scotland have been working with Mark Ballard to determine the best way forward.



Suggestions under consideration are a seminar for MSPs on community and voluntary sector health issues and possibly the establishment of a cross-party group.

Meantime, we urge VHS members and the wider voluntary and community sector to contact their current and prospective MSPs and party manifesto teams to add to the evidence and debate.

The full members' debate can be found at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/officialReports/meetingsParliament/or-06/sor1108-02.htm#Col29003>

Forthcoming VHS Conference - From Social Economy to Social Enterprise: in the Business of Improving Health

Voluntary Health Scotland hosts this important conference which examines the growing importance of social enterprise in improving health. It takes place on Tuesday 27th February at the Scottish Storytelling Centre, the Royal Mile, Edinburgh.

The newly published *Healthy Communities: a shared challenge* harnesses for the first time at both strategic and local levels the unique contribution of communities and community action to Scotland's health improvement agenda.

The forthcoming *Social Enterprise Strategy for Scotland* shows up the need to strengthen the profile of social enterprise in the NHS. In the context of improving health, social enterprise has a major part to play, strengthening community capacity and building social capital.

The event will open with a ministerial address and contributors include: Antonia Swinson CEO Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition, Colin Campbell Network Development Manager Senscot, Stephen Maxwell Associate Director SCVO, Andrew Lyon International Futures Forum and Communities Scotland (speaker tbc).

If you work in the social economy sector, are engaged in Community Health or Community Planning Partnerships or in community business with an interest in health improvement, this Conference is for you.

To register for the Conference please visit the VHS website at <http://www.vhscotland.org.uk/events/conf.html> or call 0131 557 6845

Launch of new Health Rights Information Scotland website

Health Rights Information Scotland (HRIS) has recently launched a new website.

The site acts as a single point of access to a wide range of information for people about their health rights.

It includes a range of new features, such as a search function, and news and events updates.



The site also provides support materials and useful links for health professionals and others involved in producing patient information. The website has been tested by a range of users to ensure that it is accessible to as many people as possible.

There is also a feedback form on the website so that users can continue to make any comments or suggestions.

Health Rights Information Scotland is funded by the Scottish Executive Health Department and is based at the Scottish Consumer Council. We focus on patients' rights, and produce information for patients that can be used throughout Scotland.

Leaflets in the series are:

- ◆ *The NHS and You*
- ◆ *Confidentiality - it's your right: How the NHS protects your personal health information*
- ◆ *How to see your health records*
- ◆ *Making a complaint about the NHS; and*
- ◆ *Consent - it's your decision*

(a version of this leaflet for under 16s, called *Consent - your rights*, is also available)

You should be able to find these leaflets in places that provide NHS care, for example, GP surgeries, hospitals and pharmacies.

To find out more visit www.hris.org.uk, call 0141 226 5261 or email hris@scotconsumer.org.uk

Consultation on Public Health Legislation

Much public health legislation in Scotland dates back to the late 19th century. Scotland now faces new challenges: diseases such as SARS and avian 'flu emerging; old threats such as TB reappearing; HIV and hepatitis continuing to pose risks and new environmental threats, including bio-terrorism, growing.

The Scottish Executive has consulted on proposed future public health policy and new public health legislation. Voluntary Health Scotland has expressed concern that no voluntary organisation with a focus on public health was directly approached. We said that most often, it is those who are already disadvantaged who are disproportionately affected by public health threats.

Community groups and voluntary organisations frequently offer front-line support for local people and vulnerable groups expressing concerns about environmental nuisances such as rubbish tips and asbestos in buildings; about food safety issues such as e-coli and salmonella, occupational hazards in low paid jobs and infection control.

In their response, HIV Scotland has advocated for a Human Rights approach to be taken in any proposed legislation and has spoken out against the proposal to make HIV and STIs notifiable diseases, as this would contradict current policy and practice and undermine confidence and confidentiality.

The full document is at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resourcel/Doc/152453/0040999.pdf>

Further training and development day for CHP committee members

Following the success of last year's training and development day for voluntary and community sector members of CHPs, Voluntary Health Scotland is committed to further regular training and development days.

The next event will take place on 15th February 2007, 10am to 3.20pm at Falkirk Stadium. The theme for the event is the appraisal of voluntary sector involvement in CHPs.

This will include the launch of Voluntary Health Scotland's

Partnership Appraisal Checklist and will also focus on prioritising the network support plan for 2007.

Places for this free event are limited to fifty. However, each CHP will have one guaranteed place for a committee member to attend.

For more information or to register, see: <http://www.vhscotland.org.uk/events/train.html> or contact Bill Weir, Partnership Development Officer at bill.weir@vhscotland.org.uk or on 0131 652 5993

VHS gives evidence to Scottish Parliament on Direct Elections to NHS Boards Bill

Following the submission of written evidence in support of the general principles of the Bill, Voluntary Health Scotland was called to give oral evidence to the Health Committee on 31st October at Stage 1 of the Bill's progress.

In support of the Bill VHS said:

"With its membership, Voluntary Health Scotland has developed a vision for health throughout Scotland.

That vision involves local people being able to articulate their health needs and to take part meaningfully in developing solutions to meet those needs.

There is overwhelming evidence that people's experience of engaging with the health service is mixed.

It is often a case of too little, too late. At Voluntary Health Scotland we hear frequently from our 300-strong membership of failure to engage with service users, local people and voluntary groups at an early enough stage in proposed NHS developments and service changes.

Our experience has been backed up by the survey that the Scottish Executive commissioned.

We believe that accountability for the large sums of public

money that are spent must be to the people who contribute to public spending through taxation, as well as to those bodies that are responsible in statute for providing the services.

A practical reason for our support for the principles of the bill is that services that have been planned and developed in partnership with service users from the beginning are much more likely to be sensitive to need.

Greater user involvement is likely to foster the partnership culture that the NHS has developed to replace the contract relationship of previous administrations".

Arguments raised in opposition to the Bill included the politicisation of

Health Boards, the costs of carrying out elections and the presence of existing means of engaging with local people, through the Executive's Patient Focus Public Involvement programme and its associated *Informing, Engaging and Consulting the Public in Developing Health and Community Care Services and Policies.*

The Report of the First Stage of the Bill will be presented to the Health Committee on 10th January 2007 and a full parliamentary debate on the Bill will take place in February.

The oral evidence session can be found at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/health/or-06/he06-2302.htm#Col3153>

Skills for Health Improvement Conference

Voluntary Health Scotland, CHEX, SCVO and Skills for Health collectively host "Equipping the Community and Voluntary Sector for Health Improvement" on 20th March at The Lighthouse in Glasgow.

The conference aims to develop the skills and knowledge of the voluntary and community sector workforce in the health field and how they can be supported and further developed.



It will focus on the barriers to skills and knowledge improvement and how these can be addressed, highlight the wide range of support available to develop and improve skills and knowledge for people in the sector and explore the skills and knowledge needs of the workforce.

The event will feature Mark Ballard MSP as the keynote speaker and also includes the following speakers: Maggie Havergal (Skills for Health), Helen Tyrrell (Voluntary Health Scotland), Dave Allan (CHEX), Celia Carson (SCVO), Lizi Irvine (Napier University) and Dr Dorothy Ferguson (Glasgow Caledonian University).

The cost to small voluntary and community groups with an annual income under £100,000 is £20. For larger voluntary groups, £35 with all other organisations charged at £50. For more information contact Shamin Akhtar at shamin.akhtar@scvo.org.uk or telephone 0131 474 6156

Congratulations to REACH

Voluntary Health Scotland congratulates REACH Community Health Project on coming of age as a national organisation. Health Minister Andy Kerr launched REACH's two-year programme in Glasgow on 19th December.



The programme is funded by The Equalities Unit at the Scottish Executive.

REACH take a "triangulated" approach to health improvement action, with integrated service provision, training and research. Joining REACH, Rosie Rutherford will take the REACH programme into NHS Fife, Lothian and Highland areas.

At the Launch VHS welcomed REACH to the growing number of national voluntary sector health networks, describing REACH as a new national demonstration project.

Shehla Ihsan, Manager of REACH spoke of this new work as a "*bold and challenging plan*". Health Minister Andy Kerr praised the achievements of REACH at local level and was presented with a commemorative plaque as he launched the new project via a celebratory ribbon and cake-cutting.

For further information contact Shehla Ihsan at REACH by email admin@reachhealth.org.uk or Tel 0141 585 8022

Community-led Task Group Recommendations launched

Healthy Communities: A Shared Challenge - Final Report of the Community-led Supporting and Developing Healthy Communities Task Group

The final report of the Task Group on Community-led Health Improvement was launched at Motherwell Concert Hall on 12th December 2006.

The then Communities Minister, Malcolm Chisholm, expressed the ongoing commitment of the Scottish Executive to the unique contribution of communities and community action to health improvement.



Mary Castles of Lanarkshire Council who chaired the Task Group endorsed the sustained partnership working and energy put into the work by the 25 agencies and individuals involved.

The event featured a DVD of case studies of effective community health work and a Question Time-style panel with Linda Newlands of Edinburgh Community Food Initiative, Ruairaidh Macintyre of Islay Healthy Living Centre, Brenda Sowney of SEAL in Glasgow and Sheila McMahon of Dundee Healthy Living Initiative.

The four answered questions from

the floor with vivid examples of health work in their communities.

These two elements in particular made the more abstract work of the Task Group come alive effectively.

The 12 recommendations of the Task Group focus on:

- ◆ building and sustaining the evidence base for community-led health action,
- ◆ engaging the sector more effectively in planning and partnership opportunities and mechanisms,
- ◆ improving capacity-building and sustainability in the sector
- ◆ using the principles and standards of the Scottish Compact and Standards for Community Engagement to ensure fairness.

Ongoing commitment to volunteering and the role of intermediary bodies including VHS and CHEX is made.

At the Launch, Mr. Chisholm announced the formation of an implementation group to take forward the recommendations of the Task Group - Voluntary Health Scotland will be a member of the group.

Meantime we would like to encourage VHS members to put forward their views on the Recommendations and ways in which these can best be taken forward.

The full report can be accessed through the VHS website at http://www.vhscotland.org.uk/library/nhs/nhs_pub.html

For further information contact Helen Tyrrell on 0131 652 5992 or at helen.tyrrell@vhscotland.org.uk