

Participation Partnership News

Volume 1, Issue 1

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Future issues of this newsletter will:

- Keep you updated on the work of the partnership
- Let you know about future events and opportunities
- Show-case good practice in the field of children and young people's participation in issues that affect their mental health and well-being.

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HeadsUpScotland

National Project for Children and Young People's Mental Health

Introducing the Partnership

HeadsUp Scotland, The National Project for Children and Young People's Mental Health, was established by the Scottish Executive in April 2004 to contribute to the range of activity already underway in Scotland to improve the mental health and well-being of children and young people. It is part of the National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being.

One of the main activities of HeadsUp Scotland is to ensure the involvement of children and young people in issues that affect their mental health and well-being. Anne Clarke, Director of HeadsUp Scotland asked Children in Scotland to lead a short-life working group to take forward this work on participation. This group produced a discussion paper entitled "The voice of children and young people about mental health" which explores what is necessary to ensure meaningful participation of children and

young people in decisions and services that impact on their mental health and well-being.

A partnership between Children in Scotland, Penumbra and Barnardos has been formed to take forward this work. The partnership has four main activities:

- A national development worker to promote and support the participation agenda
- A mapping/research project to look at the current level of participation
- A training programme on participation for staff working with children and young people
- A series of seminars and conferences exploring issues around young people's participation and mental health & well-being

This first partnership newsletter gives a brief outline of each activity and contact details for more information.

National Development Worker

Christina McMellon took up the post of National Development Worker, Young People's Participation in September 2005 and is based at and line managed by Penumbra.

Her role is to promote the meaningful participation agenda across the whole range of services that support and/or affect young people's mental health and well-being. This will include looking at ways to share learning from existing



good practice and supporting the development of new developments where there are identified gaps.

Subsequent newsletters will be used to showcase good practice and keep you updates on new initiatives.

For more information contact christina.mcmellon@penumbra.org.uk or call: 0131 475 2351.

Research to map children and young people's participation

A key element of the work of the Participation Partnership is research to map the extent of children and young people's participation in services that affect their mental health and well being. There is much good work taking place across Scotland on children and young people's participation and involvement. Many organisations have developed useful and innovative tools to assist professionals in involving children and young people in services. Involvement in the planning and evaluation of services is more limited. The aim of the research, to be carried out by Children in Scotland and starting in February 2006, is not only to establish the extent of children and young people's participation but also to review what organisational policies are in place, if

any, on participation. The Partnership's Action Plan identifies the need to develop mechanisms for instance to allow children and young people to be involved in Children's Service Planning. It is hoped that the research will identify current good practice in this area, opportunities to share this practice and further work to ensure that children and young people are equipped and supported to be involved.

For more information contact Eddie Follan at efollan@childreninscotland.org.uk or on 0131 228 8484



Participation Training:

As part of this partnership Barnardo's Scotland will offer various training and support opportunities for agencies working within the field of mental health and well being.

Barnardo's have developed a unique **interactive training resource** based upon the traditional "Snakes and Ladders" board game. The resource is extremely flexible and can be used in a range of environments and in many different ways. In this setting we will be using the resource to develop a

training programme that allows children and young people to share their real experiences with workers and key decision makers.

For more information contact jacqui.dunbar@barnardos.org.uk



GIVING CHILDREN BACK THEIR FUTURE

Participation Seminars

Twice a year, the participation partnership will co-ordinate a 'Participation Seminar', getting relevant professionals together to look at a different theme connected to young people's participation.

The first seminar, on March 2nd in Edinburgh's City Chambers, will look at issues around children and young people's participation in the process of developing Children's Services Plans.

October will see the participation partnership's first national conference, which will be targeted at both young people and professionals. More details to follow!

For more details on either the seminars or the conference please contact Christina McMellon on

christina.mcmellon@penumbra.org.uk

"Participation involves children, young people and adults working together to find solutions and initiate change"
The voice of children and young people about mental health: Discussion paper.

