

<b>item:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>report:</b>	CYP40/09

## **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS SERVICES**

### **By Innis Mitchell**

#### **Summary**

This report sets out proposals to establish a new Children's Rights Service for Highland's looked after children with *Who Cares? Scotland*.

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Highland Council post of Children's Rights Officer was deleted in July 2009.
- 1.2 Previously the Highland Council Children's Rights Officer worked in partnership with the Who Cares? Scotland worker based in Highland. (Who Cares? Scotland is an entirely independent voluntary sector provider.)
- 1.3 Jointly they provided a children's rights service for all Looked After Children in Highland, including those placed out of authority area, mainly in residential schools and secure accommodation.

#### **2. Current Situation**

- 2.1 With the ending of the Highland Council post action has been taken, pending a full review, to ensure continuity of service through consolidation of the role of the Who Cares? Scotland worker based in Highland.
- 2.2 Preliminary negotiations have taken place to reconfigure the children's rights service in Highland with Who Cares? Scotland being the single provider. These negotiations are based on an understanding that service agreements would be within the current allocated budget of £55k.
- 2.3 Who Cares? Scotland provides a service in 30 of the 31 Scottish Local Authorities and in 20 of these they are the sole provider.
- 2.4 Who Cares? Scotland is a voluntary organisation which works locally and nationally with local authorities to:
  - Give individual advocacy and support to young people;

- Consult with and listen to young people's views;
- Campaign for change;
- Help policy makers to consider young people's views
- Bring together young people with experience of care.

2.5 Who Cares? Scotland is a national organisation with a core management group and a network of regional officers throughout Scotland. Contracting the full children's rights service for Looked After Children in Highland from Who Cares? Scotland is seen to have a number of benefits:

- Access to all appropriate service provision will be from a single point;
- Support for Looked After Children placed out of authority will be available locally from other Who Cares? regional officers if required.
- Who Cares? Scotland has appointed dedicated workers to a number of key institutions such as Quarriers and Kibble School, etc.
- Appropriate management support is readily available to the Highland based worker from the national organisation.

2.6 Who Cares? Scotland can provide management support for strategic planning and development of service within Highland.

### **Recommendation**

The Joint Committee is asked to agree that *Who Cares?* is asked to provide a one-stop children's rights service for Highland's looked after children, and that discussions are progressed to provide an outline contractual agreement. When this is achieved Who Cares? Scotland should be requested to make a presentation at an appropriate JCCYP meeting to consider final approval.

### **Innis Mitchell**

Children's Planning Officer