

SUBMISSION FROM SHELTER SCOTLAND

During evidence to the *Having and Keeping a Home: steps to preventing homelessness among young people* inquiry at the Equal Opportunities Committee meeting on 12 June, a suggestion was made about providing mediation services and helping young people to stay in their own homes. Shelter Scotland is just about to launch a project at the beginning of July called the **Safe and Sound** project in the Tayside and Fife area. While we cannot offer any client stories at the moment, as the project is not up and running yet, we thought the service model might be of interest and also the research which led to the project being set up - we would be happy to have a chat with the committee at some point in the future once the project's been up and running for a while.

The Project is a joint development between Shelter Scotland and Relationships Scotland to tackle challenges faced by young people resulting from housing instability and family relationship breakdown. The project's priority will be to provide practical support for families and young people in resolving the disputes that accompany a breakdown of parental and/or family relationships and establishing communication between young people and their parents. The project will build bridges between generations to prevent a situation where a young person decides or is forced to leave home in an unplanned way. The project will also assist young people moving on to new accommodation by providing practical support in housing issues and tenancy sustainment.

Here's a brief overview of what the project's aims are:

- Prevent the negative impacts of unsettled family life that lead to youth homelessness
- Offer young people a safe route back home, where appropriate
- Support young people who need to move away, in setting up and maintaining tenancies
- Offer support to younger siblings in the family group, to build resilience and coping skills to lessen the chances of them becoming homeless in the future
- Through family mediation, help to improve communications and skills in conflict resolution within the family environment.

The main project beneficiaries are intended to be:

- Young people aged 14-24, who have run away from home or are at risk of doing so
- Under 14 year olds from the family group who may be at risk of running away in the future
- Families of the above, living in Dundee, Fife, Angus and Perth & Kinross

This project has been developed from research Shelter Scotland carried out in 2010/11, '*Running away and future homelessness - the missing link?*', which showed that: 'young people who run away are at particular risk of experiencing homelessness as a young person. The rate of running away among young homeless people is 84 per cent compared to 11 per cent for the general population'.

'Young people who repeatedly run away seem to be more likely to present as homeless later in life. For most, running away was more than a one-off incident with over a third running away two to five times and a fifth at least ten times. Over a third had also run away for four weeks or more. It is perhaps predictable that nearly half first ran when they were 14/15 years old, a time when we expect young people to be facing difficulties at home; however a fifth also first ran away when they were 11 or younger. Those that first ran at this age were also likely to be persistent runaways. Homeless young people who were forced to leave home before they were 16 appear to be at particular risk when they are younger – running away more and for longer periods of time.....'

'If we are to reduce the numbers of young people who subsequently become homeless then there is a clear need to both prevent running away and provide sufficient support for those who do run away'.

For further information from this research report, see attached link:

http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/running_away_and_future_homelessness_-_the_missing_link

For more information about the Safe and Sound project, see attached link:

http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/about_us/how_we_make_a_difference/housing_aid_and_advice/specialist_services_in_scotland/safe_and_sound_project

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