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Election Fever

The Future's Green, Red, Blue or Yellow? The Future is? The Decision is all yours!

The Scottish Parliament and local elections are upon us once more with voting taking place on Thursday 3 May. The eyes of the whole of the UK are upon us, more so than is usual for these types of elections. This high nationwide interest is being generated because the pre-election poll results have suggested that there could be an election upset of historical proportions.

To help you decide where to put your cross, here is a little snapshot (paying particular attention to the provision of childcare) of the things the individual parties are promising to do for children and families. The details of candidates standing at this year's local government and Scottish Parliament elections 2007 can be found at

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Council/Elections/CEC_elections_2007_-_nominations

LABOUR - (the current ruling party in the Scottish Executive and Edinburgh Council)
They say if they are re-elected as the ruling party in the Scottish Parliament that they will: provide free school meals for an extra 100,000 children, double the successful new-build Homestake scheme (to allow more people on modest incomes to get on to the property ladder) and continue on their course to meet their target of ending child poverty by 2020.

SNP

The SNP says that families would benefit from its plans to scrap council tax and cut the overall amount to be paid in local taxation by £450m. They say they will support working parents by promoting home and flexi-working, including increasing by 50%, free nursery education for 3 to 5 year-olds. They have also pledged to keep schools open longer to help facilitate after-school care provision.

CONSERVATIVE

The Conservatives have said that they would like parents to have greater flexibility available to them when accessing nursery education and childcare for their children. They say this should help encourage employers to make salary-sacrifice childcare vouchers available to employees.

LIB DEM

The Liberal Democrats say that they would provide a free playgroup place for every two-year-old cut class sizes and provide affordable childcare before and after school. They say they would endeavour to provide appropriate activities for young people, invest in local communities and give protection to greenspace in an effort to enhance the environment in which families live.

GREEN

The Green party say they would invest in early intervention to try and support vulnerable families before they reach a crisis point (to include parenting skills, nutrition and home support for education). They would integrate children's services and develop a 10-year strategy for early years with child health to be a national priority and provide a strategy for safe-play spaces.

SSP

The Scottish Socialist Party says they would provide free public transport (which would remove travel costs for families). They would scrap the council tax and replace it with an income-based Scottish Service Tax which they say would benefit 75% of the population. They also promise: free childcare, extended maternity/ paternity provision and 100,000 affordable homes for rent.

SOLIDARITY

The solidarity party say they would provide more public-sector quality childcare.

On the subject of elections

You wanna be elected?

A new Councillors Commission on the role of local councillors is examining the incentives and barriers to a wider range of people standing as candidates. It is inviting public participation in the process, with an online forum focusing on a different question each month, from April until September. There are some interesting contributions already at <http://forum.communities.gov.uk/councillorscommission>.

Voting - Exercising your democratic right (closing date 25/05/07)

A second round of its Partnership Grants Scheme was launched by the Electoral Commission on 10/04/07. The scheme will provide grants of up to £100,000 for organisations whose work involves trying to get more people involved in democracy. At the moment the emphasis they have is targeting young people who are not in formal education, people from ethnic minority communities and people with disabilities. See <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/your-vote/partnershipgrants.cfm>

Resources

Flexibility

As we previously reported on 06/04/07, the right to request flexible working has been extended to carers of adults, in addition to parents (and their partners) of children aged under 6 (or under 18 if the child is disabled). The Employment Advice Body ACAS has updated its advice leaflet accordingly entitled 'The right to apply for flexible working, a short guide for employers, working parents and carers'. It can be downloaded at <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=803>. Carers UK, has also produced a 5-part online document to test organisations to help them check if they are ready to apply the new rules. This can be found at:

<http://www.carersuk.org/Employersforcarers/AssessmentToolforbusiness>. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) guidance on the new legislation can be found at: <http://www.dti.gov.uk/employment/employment-legislation/employment-guidance/page35663.html>

Rattling the Tin

In the light of concerns that there may be unnecessary caution about what charities are allowed to do, The Charity Commission has produced a new question and answer supplement to its guidance on campaigning. This can be found at

<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/supportingcharities/campaignqa.asp>. With national elections in Scotland and Wales and local elections across England in May, this also points to separate guidance for such election periods this can be found at <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/supportingcharities/elect.asp>.

Charities References in Documents (Scotland)

Under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act, regulations on how charities must refer to themselves in most printed material came into effect on 01/04/07. Charities registered with OSCR must show their registered number, registered name and any other name by which they are commonly known plus (if the name doesn't include 'charity' or 'charitable') an approved reference to charitable status. See the Charities References in Documents (Scotland) Regulations 2007 at

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2007/20070203.htm>. The Office of Scottish Charity Regulator also refers to requirements around charity constitution changes this can be viewed at: <http://www.oscr.org.uk/NewsItem.aspx?ID=c3a227b3-fd65-4a27-a93d-bee690fee2e8>.

Gift Aid on Admissions

Detailed HM Revenue and Customs guidance notes, about Gift Aid on donations that attract a right of admission to view charity property, have been revised and expanded to assist charities to apply "relaxed benefit rules" correctly.

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities/news.htm>.

Seen and Heard

To promote the Seen and Heard award for young people BT has launched a MySpace page, which can be found at: www.myspace.com/seenandheardawards

Postage Rates Change

Please note that Royal Mail prices changed on 2nd April - see <http://www.royalmail.com> for detailed changes information.

SaneMail

Sane, the Mental Health Charity, has developed an email support service aimed specifically at young people affected by mental health problems. This new email support service, which is funded by The Vodafone UK Foundation., will run alongside the national mental health helpline.

For further information email: sanemail@sane.org.uk or see www.sane.org.uk/public_html/SANE_Services/SANEmail.shtm

Booktime for all five and 11-year-olds

Gordon Brown's Pre-Budget Report in November 2006 announced that every five-year-old starting primary school and every 11-year-old starting secondary school should receive a free book. For five-year-olds, the offer will be delivered through Booktime packs. The pack will also include a Family Reading Adventure activity card produced by the NLT For more information on Booktime visit www.booktime.pearson.com

It's Good to Volunteer

The Department for Education and Skills has funded a new DVD called 'No Limits', produced by the Media Trust which was launched by Barnardo's. It has been designed to encourage "hard to reach" young people (for example, those with disabilities, who are from Black and Minority Ethnic communities or are unemployed) to get involved in volunteering. For more information go to:

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/work_with_us/volunteering/dvd.htm

Social Innovation Network

SIX (Social Innovation Exchange) is a new global network of networks that aim to promote social innovation. The partnership web site can be found at:

<http://www.socialinnovationexchange.org>, it also includes the Young Foundation, Cisco, Global Ideas Bank and School for Social Entrepreneurs.

Overcoming Barriers to Growth of Social Enterprise

The independent think-tank "The Smith Institute" has produced (with help from the Social Enterprise Coalition and others) a document entitled 'Social Enterprise Futures' which examines how barriers to the growth and development of the social enterprise sector could be overcome. The document can be downloaded at:

http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/cms/documents/Smith_Institute_Social_Enterprise.pdf

European Union Information Online

FreePint, the information professional's online newsletter, has a feature on 'Finding Facts: The European Union after 50 Years', which has a full round-up of the main and less well known EU web sites which can contain some useful material.

<http://www.freepint.com/issues/220307.htm>

My Life

This Children's Society website aims to help under-18s have their say on what is important to them, what problems they face and what could be done to improve their lives. The site can be accessed at: <http://sites.childrenssociety.org.uk/mylife/home.aspx>

Teen Life Check

This Department of Health online questionnaire has been designed to provide a quick, quiz-style way for young people aged 11-14 to check out their current levels of health and well-being. It covers physical activity, smoking, drinking, drugs, sexual health, bullying, friendships and emotional health and can be accessed at: www.teenhealthcheck.co.uk

Funding

Diana Award

The Diana award schemes main intention is to recognise young people's contributions to society and it is specifically for 12-18-year olds but there is also a specific award available for efforts made to stop bullying. To find out more go to: www.diana-award.org.uk

Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Trust (closing date 31/05/07)

Application to the Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Trust are now open, for information and criteria please go to www.evoc.org.uk Applications can be obtained from the Trust Administrator:- Janette Scappaticcio on Tel: 0131 555 9109 or by Emailing: janette.scappaticcio@evoc.org.uk

Social Enterprise Awards (closing date 01/06/07)

This year's Enterprising Solutions Awards (supported by the Office of the Third Sector) have now been launched. These are national awards for social enterprises that have proven themselves to be dynamic, innovative and original. The overall winner is to receive a cash prize of £10,000 and a year's free membership to the Social Enterprise Coalition and 3 other finalists and the winner of the New Social Enterprise Award will receive £5,000 each. To find out more about the awards go to: <http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/CMS/page.aspx?SP=2072>

Red is the colour of my true love's nose! (closing date 08/06/07)

The Comic Relief's Red Nose Programme is Comic Relief's largest grant making programme and it focuses on supporting community based projects that work with young people, older people, and people with mental health problems, refugee and asylum seekers as well as tackling domestic violence and deprivation. Grants can be awarded for up to three years and its main grants programme makes awards of above £5,000. Organisations can also apply for funding at any time through its small grants programme which makes awards of up to £5,000 for projects that support older people, tackle mental health problems and deprivation. For more information on the programmes see: <http://www.comicrelief.com/apply-for-a-grant/uk/>

Youth Work Facilities Improvement Fund (closing date 06/07/07)

The Youth Work Facilities Improvement Fund (funding for it comes from the Scottish Executive) will be taking applications from the beginning of May 07. At the moment t

Local Grants for Community Projects

The City of Edinburgh Council has allocated £50,000, through the Parks and Gardens Capital Programme to be distributed to projects that intend to improve the appearance, facilities or conservation value of a local park or open space. Grants of up to £5,000 will be available to Community groups who are hoping to improve the environment in, for example: their local park, woodland or green space. For further information contact: Karen Hay, Level C.3 Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh. EH8 8BG. Tel: 0131 469-5196 or Email: Karen.hay@edinburgh.gov.uk

Innovate Programme Announced

The criteria and guidelines for the INNOVATE programme (total budget of £100,000) for the year 2007/08 are now available. The Innovate programme awards run by The National Forum for Financial Inclusion (TRANSACT) and the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) are available to help support projects that develop new ideas to facilitate and promote financial inclusion. This year the focus of the programme will be on tackling financial exclusion amongst social housing tenants, and for those who experience homelessness. It

is expected that TRANSACT will build a portfolio of around 3-6 projects and applications forms are available at:

<http://www.transact.org.uk/page.asp?section=000100010002>

It Could be You!

The Big Lottery Fund Scotland (BLFS) is trying out a new innovative way of giving out funds at this year's annual voluntary sector Gathering. This will be a live grant-making scheme and some organisations will be leaving, up to £10,000 better off! Organisations will have to make a public bid to attendees at the Gathering, who will then be given the opportunity to vote (using an electronic voting device) on which bids they thought were the most worthy. If this trial proves a success then it may be rolled out at other events. There is the £200,000 in the BLFS pot, which could be seen as a good enough reason to visit this year's Gathering. Any organisation who is interested in applying for the live grant-making programme at the Gathering, should contact BLFS in advance for further information on the process (see <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/scotland>) but grant officers will also be available at the Gathering from the first day to provide help to groups who wish to apply. If you want to find out more call Alex Thomson or 0131 474 6152. The Lottery is also looking to recruit members of the public in each of Scotland's ITV regions to join its People's Millions Committees. The People's Millions give viewers the chance to vote by phone, text and online to decide which local groups receive Lottery grants up to £80,000. Anyone interested in becoming a Committee member can apply by visiting the National Lottery Website at: <http://peoplesmillions.national-lottery.co.uk> with the closing date for applications being 30/05/07.

Fund for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Young People

The Fund for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Young People is open to organisations from across the UK which supports projects and activities that encourage the integration of 11-18 year old refugees and asylum seekers within host communities. Funding is also available for capacity-building within organisations that represent these young people, and to enable organisations to develop best practice. Organisations of any size may apply for any amount provided the proposal meets the aims of the grants scheme (the average grant given out in the recent past has been around £19,000) further information see: www.phf.org.uk/page.asp?id=98

Planning Aid for Scotland - 16+ Young Planning Project

Young people, particularly those in the 16-25 age bracket are often under-represented within and sometimes excluded from the land-use planning system in their local communities. Planning Aid for Scotland is aiming to address this problem through their 16+ Planning Project, which will research, develop and trial approaches for engaging young people in the land use planning system. In particular, the project will seek to include young people from disadvantaged groups and areas, including isolated rural areas. For further information on the project contact: Petra Biberbach, Executive Director, Planning Aid for Scotland, tel: 0131 220 973, Email: Petra@planningaidscotland.org.uk There is also more information on their website at: www.planningaidscotland.org.uk

Getting Children and Young People Involved in improving communities

Children in Scotland, in association with Save the Children, are running a one-day workshop in Edinburgh on 06/06/07 which will look at encouraging the effective engagement of children and young people in community planning, development and regeneration. For further information on the workshop see:

http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk/html/tra_tshow.php?ref=975

Security software donations

The Charity Technology Exchange software donation programme run by Charity Technology Trust has two new donor partners. A pilot starts later this month for some Symantec software, including Norton's Firewall, AntiVirus and Internet Security products. Also new is Winfrasoft, providing VPN Quarantine and VPN Compliance solutions. There is

a CTX fee for administration costs.

http://www.ctxchange.org/ctx/about_ctx/news/default.asp.

Consultations/Surveys etc

Child sex abuse images (closing date 22/06/07)

Proposals to tighten the law on computer generated child abuse images were outlined on 02/04/07 by the Executive and the UK Government. This is a joint consultation covering the whole of the UK and three options are being offered: Amendment of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, creation of a new stand-alone offence of possession of any non-photographic visual indecency or leaving the law as it stands. The law as it currently stands makes it an offence to possess indecent photographs of children but it is however not illegal to possess computer generated images, animations, cartoons, and drawings depicting the sexual abuse of children. Evidence from various sources points to the availability of such images growing and technology has advanced to such a stage where photographs of real children being abused can be manipulated into a format which can at the moment be possessed legally. The UK Government are considering how the law can be tightened in this area, with their preferred option being, the creation of a new offence with a maximum penalty of three years in prison and an unlimited fine. During the consultation, careful consideration will be given to the threshold content of the images to ensure that legitimate works of art or items of historical interest are not included. For more information see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/04/Child>

Risks and major hazard installations (closing date 02/07/07)

A consultation document on societal risk around onshore major hazard installations (excluding nuclear) has been published by HSE on behalf of the government. Societal risk means the potential for serious accidents that could harm significant numbers of people on-site and off-site. For more information see:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd212.htm>.

Freedom of Information fees (closing date 21/06/07)

The consultation on proposals to amend fee regulations on Freedom of Information requests has opened for a second period with a supplementary paper. This invites views on the principle of amending the original 2004 Regulations, raising the possibility that the government might leave the current arrangements untouched, rather than introducing extra costs and restrictions. For more information see:

<http://www.dca.gov.uk/consult/dpr2007/cp2806.htm>.

Social Exclusion Task Force - Families At-Risk Review

The Social Exclusion Task Force, based in the UK Cabinet Office, is inviting contributions to its Families At-Risk Review. The call for evidence provides an opportunity for the general public to help identify key lessons from practice and research that will be used to inform the direction of the review, and improve outcomes for some of the most excluded children and families in society. You can contribute to it by completing a short electronic questionnaire which can be accessed at: <http://survey.cesi.org.uk/setf/MainPage.htm>

Youth Health Network (NHS Health Scotland)

The Young People's Programme at NHS Health Scotland is setting up an informal email network to establish two-way communication with youth practitioners who are interested in improving young people's health and well being. This informal network is an opportunity for the Young People's programme to keep you up to date with national health improvement and work around young people. It will also provide an opportunity to share your experiences with the programme and contribute to the programmes work, (where appropriate). To join the network, contact the programme manager at: nuala.healy@health.scot.nhs.uk to confirm your interest and provide full contact details and any specific areas of interest.

Call for physical activity case studies

The Physical Activity and Health Alliance are developing a series of evidence based briefing papers on various aspects of physical activity promotion. The one being written at the moment is looking at the affect of 'transitions' (e.g. from primary to secondary school or in age terms) on levels of young peoples physical activity. The paper will conclude with practical ideas on how to maintain levels of activity through these transitions and the Alliance are looking for case study/practical examples of interventions that reflect good practice in this area and they would be grateful to receive case studies to support the briefing papers, if you could help, please contact s.whitelaw@crichton.gla.ac.uk

Training

Scottish Child Law Centre Training Programme up to June 2007

The SCLC offers a programme of training events across Scotland, covering a range of child law and children's rights topics. Their training aims to boost practitioner's knowledge and understanding of child law and children's rights. Examples of courses being run in Edinburgh are: Going to Court as a Witness on 23/05/07 (for more information see: <http://www.sclc.org.uk/forinds.htm#witness>) and Rights of Children and Young People on 13/06/07 (see <http://www.sclc.org.uk/forinds.htm#rights>). For more information on the organisation and the courses it runs contact: Tel: 0131 667 6333 or go to their website at; www.sclc.org They also offer free legal advice for children with a free phone number for under eighteens. The number is 08003288970.

EVOC Training

Managing Absence - This practical one-day course on 10/05/07, 9.30am to 4.30pm provides a structured approach to dealing with long-term and persistent short-term absences from work, based on good practice and legal considerations.

Budgeting For Sustainability - This one-day course on 16/05/07, 9.30am to 4.30pm is aimed at people within organisations who support or are responsible for budgeting, the financial aspect of funding applications and reporting to the Board on finances.

How to Win Contracts and SLAs - This two-day course 17th and 29th of May, 9.30am to 4.30pm is aimed at managers and committee/board members in the voluntary sector with responsibility for tendering for and negotiating contracts and SLAs from the perspective of the provider.

Write Enough - The aim of this one day workshop on 23/05/07, 9.30am - 12.30pm is to support workers in their recording of face to face contact with service users - either one-to-one or with groups.

Better Graphics for Beginners - This highly participative 1-day course on 23/05/07, 10.00am - 4.00pm, is delivered by staff from Edinburgh Development Group who have experience of applying graphics to a range of work situations.

Person Centred Support Planning - this 2 day course on the 29th and 30th of May, 10.00am - 4.00pm would be of benefit to frontline staff and managers supporting frontline staff working in social care settings.

Effective Minute Taking - This half-day course on the 30/05/07, 9.30am - 12.30pm will help participants to identify the skills necessary for effective minute taking. Participants will learn how to set an effective agenda, identify what to include in the minutes, produce accurate and user-friendly minutes and have more confidence in their minute-taking skills.

Personal Safety for Lone Workers - This one-day course on the 30/05/07, 9.30am - 12.30pm will help participants explore the risks they may face in their day-to-day work and look at techniques to reduce them.

For more information on the above courses contact EVOC Learning, 14 Ashley Place, Edinburgh EH6 5PX, T 0131 555 9100, F 0131 555 9128, E learning@evoc.org.uk
www.evoc.org.uk/learning.

