

Because we all need friends and family.

**Positive social networks:**

- prevent homelessness
- promote mental health and well-being
- create inclusive communities - and make us feel good about ourselves

In this edition of the newsletter you will find:

- details of **a map of projects and interest in social networks**
- advance notice of **a trainers resource pack**
- an invitation to the **launch of a new café**
- an article on Scottish Churches Housing action's **'By My Side'** project
- information on **publications and research**

What do you want to see covered by this newsletter? If there is anything you would like included in the newsletter or a contribution you would like to make please email me to let me know [lesley.stenhouse@scottishsocialnetworks.org](mailto:lesley.stenhouse@scottishsocialnetworks.org). Newsletters are now at least quarterly. If there old newsletters you have missed you can find them on the website [www.scottishsocialnetworks.org](http://www.scottishsocialnetworks.org).

Cheers **Lesley** (Lesley Stenhouse, Forum Coordinator)

**As usual I'm looking for your help** but I hope that it will lead to something you will all find useful – a map of who is doing what and where. This is something that has come up again and again, people just don't know what is already there or who in their area is interested in developing or using a new service. The idea is to map all projects, organisations and individuals who have an interest in social networks and to make this information available on the website. Once the map is operational you will be able to visit the website to interrogate the database and access information on who is doing (or interested in) what and where.

The starting point is the database I've used to send out this newsletter, a list of people and organisations who have expressed interest in social networks. We are sending out emails on a phased basis to everyone – that includes you dear reader. This will let you see what information is currently held and will ask you to update it and to give a little extra information on any services you offer or are interested in. There is a small amount of space for you to add any additional information you would like to share – perhaps about a service you would like to publicise. Honestly it is very short and will take only 5 minutes of your time, maybe 10 minutes if you want to add extra information. When you get the email with a link to your details, please take the time to check that the information is correct, fill in any gaps, answer the questions about your services (as appropriate) and supply any additional information you would like us to have. If you have colleagues you think would like to be added to the database or if you want to update your own information straight away, please go to <http://www.scottishsocialnetworks.org/register.php>.

Another recurring theme when discussing training has been the need for **training** to raise awareness of the importance of social networks and to introduce resources which can be used by frontline staff and volunteers when working with clients. Funding for the vital first step, a trainer's pack for a one day social networks awareness training course has been secured. The initial pilot of the trainers' pack has proved very successful. It will be finalised, designed, printed and launched in May. The initial run of hard copies in a ring binder will be available free (although there may be a charge to cover the cost of post and packing) and it will also be posted on the website. Organisations can use this to deliver their own staff training. If they do not have the internal capability, both direct training and training of trainers will be available to be bought in. To register interest in receiving a free copy please email [info@scottishsocialnetworks.org](mailto:info@scottishsocialnetworks.org) with **Training Pack** in the title.

Scottish Churches  
Housing Action



no room for homelessness!

Scottish Churches Housing Action's 3-year 'By My Side' programme assists organisations to develop befriending and mentoring services for homeless people. The programme is in its final round and supports two existing projects per year. Dedicated staff time is provided to the partner organisation to develop a robust sustainable plan of action for local befriending projects to support homeless people.

**Diane Beckett, Development Manager**, oversees developments alongside developing practical local projects that assist homeless people throughout Scotland.

Gilven House, Glenrothes was the first organisation to take up 'By My Side' and this has paved the way for the development of a Befriending / Peer Support project which has already proved to be a very valuable addition to their services. Glasgow Rent Deposit & Support Scheme is developing a city-wide befriending/mentoring service, and East Ayrshire Churches Homelessness Action, based in Kilmarnock, is currently developing a partnership approach to establish a local befriending service. In Edinburgh, a feasibility study is soon to get under way on behalf of a local housing association on providing a befriending service to hostel dwellers and those at risk of homelessness. To find out more or discuss possibilities for your organisation, contact Diane Beckett: [diane@churches-housing.org](mailto:diane@churches-housing.org) or 0131 477 4500.



**The Rock Trust** is further expanding the focus on social networks in the work they are carrying out with young people. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> April they are launching their **new café** as part of the Underground project. The café will be offering healthy free food as well as a space where young people, aged 16-25 years, can relax and spend time with their peers. Behind the counter of the café young people will be

given the opportunity to become volunteers. Training including Elementary Food Hygiene Certificates and Health and Safety will be offered as well as Duke of Edinburgh Awards. The café will, however, be offering more to the young people than certificated courses. The café recruits volunteers from all ages and backgrounds which means that the young people will have the opportunity to practice social skills in a supported environment with those out with their peer group. As part of the support offered staff will be focusing on appropriate behaviours, social networks and social skills. These transferable skills will look great on a CV or application form, as well as increasing confidence.

If you would like to come along to see this great new space, and hear about the other services the Underground will be offering, please come along to the Launch. You can **drop in anytime between 1pm and 5pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April**. There will be head massage, DJ Decks, graffiti art and most importantly free food! Contact 0131 5574059

**Directgov** You may be interested in Tackling Youth Homelessness, Policy Briefing 18. This is issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government. <http://www.info4local.gov.uk/documents/publications/94486>



At the the Scottish Executive National Seminar on Prevention of Homelessness on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, Hal Pawson from the School of Built Environment at Herriot-Watt University presented "Evaluation of Homelessness Prevention Activities in Scotland" - research commissioned by the Scottish Executive <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/03/26095144/0>



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A project managed by the Rock Trust Charity No. SC018708



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