

Scottish Social Networks Toolkit

Yesterday (8TH November 2007) saw the launch of a new toolkit for successful project development at the Scottish Council Single Homelessness Conference.

The Toolkit is designed to make it easier for local authorities, voluntary organisations and others to develop successful mentoring, befriending and mediation projects which will help prevent homelessness. It was developed thanks to Scottish Government funding.

Nicola Sturgeon, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, said: “Strong social networks can play a key part in preventing homelessness and breaking the cycle of repeat homelessness.

“I am certain Scottish Social Networks’ Toolkit will prove to be an invaluable resource for public bodies and other organisations with an interest in helping homeless or newly-housed people stabilise their lives and rebuild their confidence.

“Feeling valued as part of a social network is essential for everyone’s wellbeing – and especially for people feeling isolated because of homelessness.”

Research has shown that a lack of positive social networks puts you at greater risk of homelessness and makes the transition out of homelessness more difficult than it already is. In addition it often leads to failure to sustain a new tenancy and repeat episodes of homelessness.

The Homelessness Task Force final report (2001) highlighted the importance of social networks and identified mentoring, befriending and mediation projects as key measures in building and rebuilding social networks and preventing homelessness.

By investigation of these projects, the Toolkit seeks to answer the question; “what makes a successful social networks project happen?” The research for the Toolkit identified the key triggers that enable these projects to be set up; the key features of successful projects and the risk factors.

“I want to thank everyone who gave their time to help develop the Toolkit. They shared their experiences openly and in the true spirit of partnership to develop new successful social networks projects and prevent homelessness” said Lesley Stenhouse, Scottish Social Networks Coordinator.

For more information or to order the Toolkit, please contact: **Lesley Stenhouse 0131 524 9869** info@scottishsocialnetworks.org

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