

# Education support project, Scotland

Project dates: 2007–2010

This project will work with homeless children in Scotland to minimise the disruption to their education.

Nearly 10,000 families with children were homeless in Scotland in 2005/6. Their education is severely disrupted as families are moved between temporary housing, sometimes far from school. They are often out of school or struggling to keep up because of their circumstances at home.

This project will work directly with children to ensure they are able to attend school and do their homework, and to make sure they get any extra support they need to learn and achieve in school.

We aim to minimise the number of times children have to change school when they become homeless, and we will organise transport when needed so that children can get to school. The project will also help develop peer support for children within schools, and provide volunteers to help struggling parents get their children to school in the mornings.



Photos: Andrea Testoni

We aim to support 560 children to get school places, to attend and achieve at school.

## Project summary

- Nearly 10,000 families with children were homeless in Scotland in 2005/6.
- They are often out of school, or struggling to keep up with classwork and homework.
- These children lag behind their classmates due to the severe disruption to their education.
- This project aims to minimise the number of times homeless children have to change school.
- Four full-time education liaison workers will support children at home and in school so that they learn and achieve.

Shelter Keys to the Future



*School is often the only constant in children's lives, and never underestimate the power of peers. You need your pals. Now, if you've been in eight schools in two or three years, you don't have a best pal. You're lucky if you have a pal at all.*

Liz Whyte, Head Teacher,  
Royston Primary School, Edinburgh

## Support for children at school and at home

### We will:

- recruit four education liaison workers who will work at existing Shelter Families Projects in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Blantyre and Dumfries
- help children with homework
- advocate on behalf of children to ensure they receive the support from school that they need to thrive
- provide home care support directly to children so that families struggling with stressful and difficult circumstances can get them to school in the mornings.

## Keeping up with lessons and homework

We want to make sure that homeless children of school age get all the support they need at home and at school to improve their education.

Our four education liaison workers will provide direct help to children aged five to 16 whose families are in temporary accommodation or who have recently been resettled in permanent accommodation. These are children who have experienced or will face a change of school. They may be struggling to attend school, to keep up with lessons and with homework.

The education liaison workers will assess each child to find out why they are failing to attend school or having problems, and create a detailed plan of action. If the child's parent needs support in getting the child to school in the mornings, trained volunteers will provide this. If they need transport,

the worker will try to access the local authority's transport fund. If the child has other support needs the project worker will work with the school and the education department to ensure they assess the child. The aim is to address each child's education support needs so they can prosper.

## A co-ordinated effort

The project will encourage schools, education departments, housing departments and social workers to work together to make the situation as positive as it can be for children in temporary accommodation. It is hoped that the legacy of this project will be co-operative working to ensure that all children can enjoy both a settled education and a settled home life.

Initially children will be from families already working with child support workers within the current Shelter Families Projects and who may already have other support needs. We aim to expand the service to help other homeless children.



## What we hope to achieve over three years...

- minimise the number of times homeless children change school
- reduce the isolation homeless children experience
- better school attendance and achievement among homeless children
- better information sharing and co-ordination between housing and education departments.

## ...and how

- we will support 560 children to stay in school and learn
- 245 of these children will get homework support
- we will provide extra support at home to 95 children
- we will take a lead role in making sure different agencies working with homeless children share information and work together to benefit each child
- the project will be independently evaluated, creating a model that others can use to support the education of homeless children.

**We will support children's education, giving them the chance of a better future.**