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## Mentors for children in care

### National scheme to boost attainment and wellbeing.

Leading children's charities have added their support to a national scheme to pair young people in care with mentors.

Minister for Children and Young People Aileen Campbell announced that Inspiring Scotland will lead the development of a Scotland-wide model that will build on existing local mentoring and befriending projects.

The programme provides sustainable funding to schemes to reflect a young person's need to have at least one long term relationship with a positive adult role-model. The disruption children face coming into the care system can make this difficult to achieve within a family setting.

The Minister said:

"A secure, supportive and trusted relationship can make a world of difference to a care experienced young person with evidence showing it can build resilience, help overcome adverse childhood experiences and boost attainment.

"We are seeing positive results from a number of small programmes and Inspiring Scotland will now be able to take that work to create a model to spread this good work across the country. This National Mentoring Scheme has the potential to change the lives of children and young people who have had to overcome great adversity in their lives and to make a real difference to them now and throughout their lives."

Helen Chambers, Inspiring Scotland, Head of Strategy, said:

"We are delighted to have been chosen to lead the development of the National Mentoring Scheme. We recognise the critical importance of improving the outcomes of looked after children at home, and believe that the synergies we can bring to this area through the way that we build capacity of the voluntary sector will add significant value to the Scottish Government's aims for the scheme."

Iain Forbes of the Scottish Mentoring Network said:

"It's really positive news that the Scottish Government is launching this major initiative to provide vital one-to-one mentoring support to care experienced young people. I know the National Mentoring Scheme will be warmly welcomed by our many members who are working hard to help improve the outcomes for this significant group of young people who genuinely need as much support as they can get.

"We look forward to working with the Scottish Government, Inspiring Scotland and other partners to ensure this scheme is successful."

Garry McGregor, of Children and Young People's Services, Befriending Networks, said:

"This is great news and an example of the commitment to the 'every' in Scotland's Getting It Right for Every Child approach to supporting families. We look forward to continuing to work with the National Mentoring Scheme and supporting our befriending service members across Scotland, who are keen to be part of this innovative development to help looked after children achieve their full potential."

Notes to Editors:

Education Secretary Angela Constance announced £500,000 for the early development phase of the scheme in February 2015. Inspiring Scotland was appointed to manage the programme following a competitive tendering process.

The National Mentoring Scheme is a working title. Children and young people will be involved in developing a brand and the mentoring.scot website during 2016 before its operational launch.

Detailed scheme criteria will be published in due course. The scheme's initial priority is to support children looked after at home (under compulsory supervision) aged from eight to 14. Data suggest this group experience the worst outcomes of almost any set of children subject to regular statistical collection. Once established, a mentoring relationship will continue if a child ceases to be looked after.

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