



growing **up**
growing **together**
growing

strong

The
10 steps
to **Growing Strong**
in **Scotland**



NCH's commitments

As part of our Growing Strong campaign, we commit to:

- ensuring our services build children's inner strength and emotional wellbeing
- developing and promoting new ways of building inner strength and emotional wellbeing for the most vulnerable children and young people
- increasing knowledge of what helps children to grow strong and putting pressure on everyone who can affect children's lives to put that knowledge into practice
- developing new campaign calls as our research programme progresses
- campaigning for services that reach the most vulnerable children in time to prevent their problems from worsening
- working with other charities to build children's inner strength and wellbeing
- giving children and young people themselves a chance to speak out about what helps them to grow strong

Registered charity no. 1097940/company no. 4764232
A charity registered in Scotland no. SC038092.
Produced by NCH/Creative Services 11/2007. 07/08 0466

Join our campaign

You can support our Growing Strong campaign by:

- signing up and get the latest news about our Growing Strong campaign
- making a donation to help us improve the emotional wellbeing of the UK's most vulnerable children

NCH Scotland helps the most vulnerable children and young people in Scotland break through injustice, deprivation and inequality, so they can achieve their full potential.

NCH Scotland office
City Park
368 Alexandra Parade
Glasgow G31 3AU
Telephone: 0141 550 9010
Fax: 0141 550 9088

www.nch.org.uk

Photographs by:
NCH/André Lichtenberg/
Pejman Faratin
Some NCH photographs
are posed by models



growing**strong**

the children's charity

NCH has launched our campaign, Growing Strong, to highlight the huge impact emotional wellbeing has on children and young people's futures. We want to ensure that every child and young person has the self-esteem, resilience and social skills they need to succeed in life. We want the most disadvantaged children and young people in the UK to have the inner strength to overcome the difficulties they face. "NCH is one of the leading children's charities in Scotland, working in partnership to run more than 65 services for more than 7,000 of Scotland's most vulnerable children, young people and their families. Across the UK it runs nearly 500 services."

What is emotional wellbeing?

Emotional wellbeing means having the inner strength, resilience and self-esteem to cope with life's problems, and to make the most of life's opportunities.

Children do not grow strong on their own. They need support from families, friends, schools and public services. They need opportunities to talk about their emotions with the people who influence their lives. They need structured activities that can help them learn and grow. They need positive images, positive role models and positive aspirations.

Children do not grow strong on their own. They need support from families, friends, schools and public services.

The impact on society

The poor emotional wellbeing of children in the UK has a negative impact on them, their families and on the whole of society. Without good emotional wellbeing, children and young people cannot meet life's challenges successfully.

Poor emotional wellbeing is an important factor behind current social problems in the UK. In particular, it affects social mobility. Policies to tackle social exclusion, deprivation or lack of social mobility will not succeed if we don't address the issue of emotional wellbeing.



growing**strong**

the children's charity

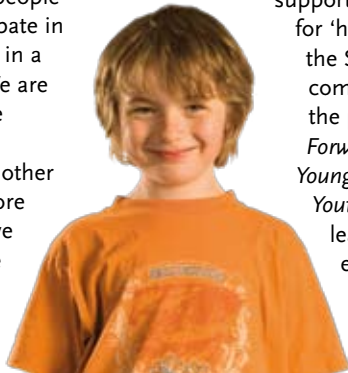
The most vulnerable children in society

Children are most vulnerable at times of change – moving from primary to secondary school, becoming teenagers, going through disruptions in their family life, and dealing with death or serious illness in the family. With the right support, children and young people can get through these difficult times. Without it, these setbacks could become serious – particularly if they are already vulnerable. Many of the children and young people we work with, including looked-after and accommodated children and young people, young carers, children affected by parental drug and alcohol abuse, young people with disabilities, young asylum seekers and refugees, and young offenders or those at risk of offending, fall into this category.

What needs to change

1 *In our Growing Strong campaign, we are calling for any organisation that provides services that affect children to promote emotional wellbeing.* This includes schools, local authorities, the police and the NHS, as well as private and voluntary sector organisations. There is currently good work being done, but too often aspirations are not being turned into reality.

2 *We want these organisations to talk to children and young people about how the services they provide can help them to develop their emotional wellbeing.* In Scotland, children and young people have statutory rights to participate in decisions that affect their lives in a number of significant areas. We are committed to working with the Scottish government, local authorities, health boards and other key agencies to ensure that more children and young people have opportunities to exercise these rights. But as well as being



consulted, NCH also believes that children and young people need to be listened to, and to have someone to talk to about their emotions.

3 *We want the development of new services that help children cope during critical times in their childhood.* Children and young people are most vulnerable during times of change, such as moving from primary to secondary school, when a family member dies or there is a serious illness in the family. NCH wants age-appropriate services to be available to children and young people, especially during key transitions when they need support the most. This is particularly vital where the changes impact upon vulnerable and difficult to reach groups such as looked-after and accommodated children and young people, young carers, children affected by parental drug and alcohol abuse, young people with disabilities, young asylum seekers and refugees and young offenders or those at risk of offending.

4 *We want to improve every child and young person's access to structured activities each week.* Evidence suggests that structured activities provided by youth work providers, including local authorities and voluntary organisations, and by other organisations working with children and young people, can reduce the likelihood of drug and alcohol problems, of aggression and anti-social behaviour, and of becoming a teenage parent. They are also shown to improve mental health and emotional wellbeing. The Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People's recent consultation on policy issues to inform her work plan has also confirmed the strong support among young people themselves for 'having more to do'. We welcome the Scottish government's strong commitment to implementing the proposals outlined in *Moving Forward: A Strategy for Improving Young People's Chances through Youth Work*, and hope that this will lead to children and young people enjoying greater access to structured activities.

5 *We want local authorities to ensure that all children can access services and activities by addressing barriers such as lack of money or transport. In particular, more needs to be done to remove barriers for disabled children.* Lack of long-term funding and transport are often the biggest barriers to children and young people accessing services and activities. This is particularly the case in rural areas, and for children and young people with disabilities. The small size of many rural and remote communities makes service delivery more expensive, and creates a lack of choice for children and young people in relation to leisure and social activities and services.

6 *We want effective family support services that focus on early intervention and on prevention to be made available on a consistent basis.* We welcome the Scottish government's commitment to an increased emphasis upon intensive support based on early intervention and on prevention. The impact of the 'hidden harm' caused by parental drug and alcohol misuse is one of the factors underpinning the need for such services. We believe that services for the treatment and support of parents with drug and alcohol dependencies should recognise the needs of children and young people affected by parental drug and alcohol abuse, and ensure they receive support in coping with parental addiction. NCH Scotland will work with the Scottish government, local authorities and other agencies to ensure that support is made available to parents abusing drugs or alcohol to help them to address this abuse, and to reduce the number of children referred for statutory services.

7 *We want schools to help children develop emotional wellbeing and support those who particularly need emotional support.* Recognising that children's emotional wellbeing is critical to their learning, some schools have set up buddy schemes and circle time, and have trained staff to spot potential problems early, particularly in relation to bullying. NCH wants this to be standard practice in all schools.

8 *We want government to set targets that are based on positive measures of emotional wellbeing – not just the reduction of harmful behaviour.* We welcome the Scottish government's commitment on issues relating to emotional wellbeing, and hope to work with the government to build on this commitment and to ensure these issues are addressed. The Scottish government's commitments to improve outcomes for looked-after and accommodated children and young people, to reduce youth offending and not to demonise young people in trouble, and to empower families involved in anti-social behaviour to break the cycle of their behaviour, are all welcome.

9 *We want the media to portray children and young people in a positive way.* Thousands of children and young people make a real contribution to society, but the media portrays them as anti-social, out of control and threatening. Such treatment adversely affects how most children and young people feel about their lives. We need to have a positive portrayal of what it means to be young today, and we welcome the Scottish government's statements in this area.

10 *We want local authorities to develop their services for young children so that children can build resilience from an early age.* NCH Scotland welcomes the Scottish government's commitment to make resources available to increase the entitlement of three- to four-year-olds to free preschool education. We also recognise that preschool education is being provided by local authorities, the private sector and by the voluntary sector, and that much of this provision is of a high quality. We believe this should become the standard for all providers. We also welcome the Scottish government's commitment to developing an early years strategy, its introduction of a free school meals pilot project, and the importance it places on the need to develop services focusing on early intervention and on prevention to protect vulnerable younger children. NCH Scotland also wants to identify the best services that lead to positive outcomes and make sure this information is shared and implemented far more widely.