



**Date: Wednesday 23 November**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **New institute to shape brighter future for vulnerable children**

A new institute, based at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, will help to shape a brighter future for children who face difficult circumstances in Scotland and beyond.

The Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures (known as 'Inspiring Children's Futures') is a joint venture between the University, CELCS (the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland) and the Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice. The Institute will be a world-leader, with a collective vision of ensuring that children and young people have what they need to reach their full potential; particularly children who experience adversity.

Plans for the new Institute will be revealed this evening (Wednesday 23 November) by the University's Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Jim McDonald, during the annual Kilbrandon Lecture. In his announcement, he will name the Institute's new Executive Director as Jennifer Davidson, Executive Director of CELCS.

Inspiring Children's Futures will bring together leading academics, policy-makers and practitioners in this critically important field. Together, the partners will combine their own knowledge and experience with those of children and young people themselves, with the aim of securing a better future for children. This will involve embarking on research projects, running events to encourage best practice, and developing a network of colleagues to share and exchange fresh thinking and ideas.

Protecting children, providing care and support, accessing justice and creating the conditions for children's wellbeing are global issues. Inspiring Children's Futures will therefore be global in reach and will encourage collaboration and networking from colleagues in the UK and internationally. It will draw on a range of partners, including Autism Network Scotland.

Professor Sir Jim McDonald, Principal of the University, said: "CELCS and the Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice are well-known for work that brings about positive change for some of the most vulnerable people in society. The new Institute will deliver closer collaboration between the centres and academics across the University, helping us to be more ambitious – and accelerate the pace of change - for young people in Scotland and overseas.

“As co-founders of Scotland’s first Children’s University and a member of the international movement of Age-Friendly universities, we want to ensure that our founding vision of ‘useful learning’ supports the youngest members of society. Today’s announcement underlines Strathclyde’s ongoing commitment to making powerful and lasting changes to the lives of children and young people in the global communities we serve.”

Jennifer Davidson, Executive Director at CELCIS, comments: “Our drive and ambition, like that of our partners, is to make sure that every child can reach their full potential and have best possible life chances. We strongly believe the new Institute will help make this ambition a reality for many children and young people who have experienced adversity.

“We are based in Scotland, which is a great place to learn, given the unique responses that this small nation has developed in relation to vulnerable children and young people. But what is equally important is that we are global in our reach – we want to partner with colleagues overseas as sharing learning is critically important to us. We are keen to work with the wide range of those who share our vision and who have a valuable contribution to make towards this new partnership.”

Claire Lightowler, Director for the Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice, comments: “The new Institute is a significant development for both the University of Strathclyde and the sector. The partnership opens up doors for our combined work to spread wider and further and with greater impact.”

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

Media enquiries:

Mike Findlay, CELCIS, Communications Manager

T: 0141 444 8512

E: [mike.findlay@strath.ac.uk](mailto:mike.findlay@strath.ac.uk)

Kat Hannah, University of Strathclyde, Corporate Communications Manager

T: 0141 548 4123

E: [kat.hannah@strath.ac.uk](mailto:kat.hannah@strath.ac.uk)

Charlotte Morris, Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice, Communications Officer

T: 0141 444 8705

E: [charlotte.morris@stath.ac.uk](mailto:charlotte.morris@stath.ac.uk)

[The University of Strathclyde](#) is a leading international technological university which is recognised for strong research links with business and industry, commitment to enterprise and skills development, and knowledge sharing with the private and public sectors. The University was named UK University of the Year in the 2012 Times Higher Education (THE) Awards. In the 2013 THE Awards, the University was named Entrepreneurial University of the Year.

[CELCIS](#), based at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, is committed to making positive and lasting improvements in the wellbeing of Scotland's children living in and on the edges of care. Taking a multi-agency, collaborative approach towards making lasting change, CELCIS works alongside leaders, managers and practitioners to break down barriers and forge new paths in order to change thinking and ways of working with everyone whose work touches the lives of vulnerable children and families.

[The Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice](#) (CYCJ) supports improvement in youth justice, contributing to the realisation of better lives for individuals and communities. We are involved in developing, supporting and understanding youth justice in Scotland and beyond. We work in collaboration with practitioners, managers, policy-makers, researchers and those whose lives have been affected by youth justice.

CYCJ is funded by the Scottish Government and hosted by the School of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Strathclyde.