

PRESS RELEASE

WAVERLEY CARE MARKS WORLD AIDS DAY 2008

Over 1000 children and young people in Scotland are affected by HIV and in need of support, care and understanding, the Children's Commissioner will say this Monday (1 December) in a speech to mark World AIDS Day (WAD).

The speech, part of Waverley Care's annual event 'Celebrate, Reflect, Remember' will focus on this year's WAD theme of Respect and Protect. Waverley Care, Scotland's leading HIV charity, is also focusing this year on children and young people.

Twenty years after the first World AIDS Day, fear, stigma and discrimination are still such that children and young people living with HIV in Scotland must keep their link with the condition a secret. Around 50 children in Scotland are HIV positive and it is estimated that at least 1000 are affected by it (either one or both of their parents have the condition).

David Johnson, Waverley Care's Director, said, "We believe everyone should respect the human rights of children and young people already affected by HIV and protect children and young people from future HIV infection. It is the right of everyone living with HIV that they should be able to live without the burden of secrecy and silence that is attached to the condition."

According to UNAIDS, there are two million children under the age of 15 living with HIV worldwide and there were 370,000 new infections last year.

Kathleen Marshall, Scotland's Commissioner for Children & Young People, said, "Worldwide, HIV is without doubt one of the greatest health crises of our times, and it is crucial that we remember the most vulnerable of those affected, children and young people. Here in Scotland, hundreds of children may be living with shame, stigma, fear and uncertainty, and tackling this through education and awareness-raising must be prioritised if they are to have a happy and healthy childhood."

The theme of children and young people for World AIDS Day will also see Waverley Care launch a CD to raise funds for projects both in Scotland and Malawi. 'Momma Africa' features volunteers,

service users and staff from the charity singing joyful songs from their childhoods in Africa. The CD is available to buy online at www.waverleycare.org/shop.

Other events on World AIDS Day include a massed chorus performance of Fauré's Requiem at St Cuthbert's church, Lothian Road, Edinburgh at 8pm. The concert will feature the National Youth Choir of Scotland's Edinburgh Choir performing the world première of Ken Johnston's new work 'Jubilate Deo'.

'Celebrate, Reflect, Remember' with Kathleen Marshall is being held at St John's Church, Lothian Road, Edinburgh starting at 6pm and is open to the public. 'Secrets' an exhibition of work from Waverley Care's Children and Young People's service will be on show at St John's from Monday 1st – Friday 6th December.

ENDS

For further information, please contact: Alison Flintham, Waverley Care, 0131 226 2206 or 07810 878581 (fund@waverleycare.org)

PLEASE NOTE - On behalf of our service users we ask journalists to avoid words such as "victim" and "sufferers". Where possible, please use the words "people living with HIV" or "people with HIV". Thank you.

Notes to Editors

Waverley Care (Scottish Charity No. SC036500) is Scotland's largest charity providing care and support to people who are living with HIV and Hepatitis C through the following services:

- **Short-term Residential Intensive Support**
- **Support Services for all, including specialist services for**
 - Africans
 - Children & Young People
 - Gay Men
 - People affected by Drug Misuse
 - Women
- **Community Support & Outreach Services including**
 - Advocacy and Information
 - Arts Project
 - Befriending / Buddying
 - Spiritual and Pastoral Care
 - Complementary Therapies
 - Counselling
 - Crusaid Hardship Fund Administration
 - Health Promotion
- **Prevention & Awareness Raising**