

Blind School delays building plans

Last month The Royal Blind Board of Trustees made the very difficult decision to postpone the development of a new residential building at the Craigmillar Park Campus of The Royal Blind School. The decision was taken in the light of the current economic climate and with the Scottish Government's Doran review of provision for children with complex needs due to report in 18 months' time.

Richard Hellewell, Chief Executive of Royal Blind said: "I would like to thank all our supporters who have donated to this project. These funds have enabled us to complete the planning and design work for the new residential building so that it is ready to proceed when the time and circumstances are right.

"We initiated the building project before the economic recession and it remains difficult to forecast all its effects. Until the financial climate changes and we know the outcome of the Scottish Government Review and the impact it will have on our services, we are postponing the project. In the mean time we are looking at making some shorter term improvements within our existing buildings."

The charity is hoping that one of the outcomes of the Doran review will be a shift in the decision making process of referrals to the school, which could have a significant impact on the school's future. We would like to see the current, sometimes potentially adversarial, local authority referrals system replaced with an independent system that would allow a panel of experts to select the placement that best meets the needs of the individual child.