

Edinburgh MSP tables motion on charity chief's retirement

✖ EADIE CONGRATULATES RETIRING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF CHILDREN 1st

MSP for Edinburgh Southern Jim Eadie has today tabled a motion in the Scottish Parliament congratulating Anne Houston on her achievements as the Chief Executive of local children's charity CHILDREN 1st.

Ms Houston officially retired at the end of June, having worked as the Chief Executive of the charity, which is aimed at promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people within their families, since 2007.

Under Ms Houston's leadership, CHILDREN 1st has supported and contributed to the agenda on public sector reform and the shift towards preventative spending in service provision.

In a statement, Jim Eadie said: –“Over the past three decades, Anne Houston has played a remarkable part in the promotion and development of safety and wellbeing for children and young people in Scotland. In doing so she has worked with various third sector organisations as well as the Scottish Government.

“I hope Anne will enjoy her retirement and I wish her successor Alison Todd every success as the new Chief Executive.”

✖ Anne Todd is the new CEO of the charity. She has called for more to be done to prevent violence against children.

Alison, who takes over the helm of Scotland's leading child welfare charity from Anne Houston, has pledged to follow her predecessor in speaking out on behalf of the children, young people and families that CHILDREN 1ST works with.

She said: “For 130 years as the RSSPCC and now as CHILDREN 1ST we have campaigned for all children to grow up free from the fear of abuse and violence. Much has improved, but if we really want to ‘make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up’ we must be prepared to change and develop our services, and to create a society that truly values children.

“CHILDREN 1ST believes it’s everyone’s responsibility to protect children, and we work with communities and professionals so that they can feel confident and empowered to make this a reality. Ultimately everyone should know what action they can take to protect children.

“It is incredible to think that we accept that the smallest and most vulnerable members of our society are the only ones whose assault is considered ‘justifiable.’ Scotland, as part of the UK, is one of only four countries in Europe still to commit to a ban on child physical punishment, and in the last year it has been called upon to do so by three separate UN committees.

“Parents tell us they feel guilty, stressed and ashamed when they have hit their children. We need to support and encourage parents to be the best they can be, which we know is also what parents want.”