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## Editorial

**Graham Connelly & Sarah Deeley**

Editors

### Welcome to the Autumn 2024 issue of the Scottish Journal of Residential Care.

Welcome to the autumn 2024 issue of the *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care* (SJRCC). We introduce this issue by saying a big 'thank you' from the editorial team to our readers, at home and, increasingly, internationally. It is clear that being recently listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) is already bringing our small, Scotland-based journal to a much wider world audience, and, in turn, authors from more countries are entrusting us with their precious research and commentary by submitting articles for review. While on the theme of 'thanks', we also record our appreciation of the members of our international editorial board, and other volunteers, who give their time and expertise to review articles and offer advice to authors.

A sobering statistic caught our eye recently in the UNICEF (2024) annual report: the agency provided services to children during 2023 caught up in 412 emergencies in 107 countries. Threats to children's rights to basic necessities, to love, and to education, are ever-present, particularly where there is conflict, natural disasters or those caused by climate change, and poverty. It is easy to be disheartened by metrics which go in the wrong direction – such as the recent increase in the number of children not in school – but as journal editors we never fail to be impressed by the innovative work of child and youth workers, represented in the research outlined in the articles we receive for review.

As we go to press (in November 2024), the editorial team will be meeting delegates at the Transforming Lives conference hosted by Kibble Education and Care Centre in our home city of Glasgow. Journal work is inevitably mostly desk-bound, so we are pleased to have the opportunity to network and to advocate for the continuing relevance of research reports, review articles and book reviews to support the child and youth care community.

#### Long form articles

This issue includes three full-length peer-reviewed papers, from authors in South Africa, England, and Scotland.



Sydney Guinchard from *The Why Not? Trust for care experienced young people* discusses the barriers care experienced parents can face when accessing support and the rationale behind the development of 'The Village', an online community for care experienced parents in Scotland. Based on a thematic analysis of the experiences of 22 parents supported by The Village, Sydney identifies the usefulness of the model and highlights benefits within key themes of relationships, parenting and entitlements.

Xolani Shabangu, Raisuyah Bhagwan and Fathima Dewan from Durban University of Technology explore the daily life experiences of adolescents at a residential care setting in the eThekweni region of KwaZulu-Natal, in South Africa. Using qualitative research methodology, involving 26 participants, the authors identified the emotions associated with growing up in care, and the young people's satisfactions and dissatisfactions with their care, reflecting on the implications for improvement of child care facilities and the wellbeing of children and young people in South Africa.

Sarah Elgie, Alexandra Cometson, Frances Sales and Katherine Proudman from the Keys Group, providers of residential care based in England, consider residential home carers' experiences of drill music being listened to by young people. This genre of music has attracted controversy, with concerns identified in focus groups of carers in 11 residential homes, including concerns about the promotion of gang culture. The authors highlight the attractions of this genre of music to many young people, for example by 'understanding ... why the lyrics often speak to children in care' and make recommendations for safer use guidance and suggestions for services that can best support children and young people engaged with drill music.

## Short articles

We also publish six short papers, many of which this time have a Scotland practice focus.

Maddie Howley, a residential practitioner in a local authority children's home in Yorkshire, England, considers the use of rewards and rewards systems connected to behavioural targets for children and young people in residential child care and outlines the difficulties associated with incentives and rewards systems in these settings.

Brandi Lee Lough Dennell, Robert Porter and Micky Anderson, researchers at CELCIS, the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection, at the University of Strathclyde in Scotland, present the key issues arising for social work practice, challenges and suggested next steps, following their 30-month mixed-methods study of the use of Section 25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, the statute which governs how children in need of care and protection are cared for on a non-compulsory basis. Crucially, the research team found that the use of Section 25 arrangements was even higher than previously understood.



They call for a new shared vision of the role and purpose of Section 25 arrangements in Scotland.

Mary Morris and Anthony O'Malley from The Care Inspectorate, the body responsible for inspecting and regulating care establishments in Scotland, outline the organisation's revised approach to assessing services and the rationale underpinning this. The authors outline the main changes made to the framework concerned with assessing how well services support children and young people's wellbeing, and the influence of feedback on these changes. The changes focused on aiming to make the process of inspection more transparent for services.

Rachel Stewart of Wellbeing Scotland, a charity which supports individuals who have been affected by childhood abuse, explores existing research on advocacy services and other effective services for adult survivors of childhood abuse. Rachel outlines identified effective service responses, and she proposes implications for practice, including the importance of empowering survivors of child abuse to make informed decisions.

Charlotte Wilson, also of The Care Inspectorate in Scotland, reflects on the complexities and unexpected challenges experienced with engagement during a doctoral research project focused on the impact of Scottish secure care experience on the identity constructions of autistic young people. Charlotte shares learning from each aspect of the experience, both specific to engagement with autistic or neurodiverse young people, and to the secure sector and residential child care more broadly.

Angela Macauley, a teacher at Glasgow Virtual School, a support service for care experienced school students in Scotland, writes about her evaluation of the experience of a small number of students participating in outdoor education through Forest School. She reports positive impact on the young people's wellbeing, resilience and self-confidence.

## **Book reviews**

We believe that our book review section is much appreciated, but we invite our readers to let us know what they think of book reviews, how they use them – and of course, we'd love you to suggest books we should review, particularly books which may not be on our radar where we are based in Scotland. Normally, we provide reviews of new books, but it has previously been suggested we should review 'classic' texts. Please do let us have your suggestions.

In this issue, we publish reviews of four books, and we record our particular thanks to the reviewers.



'Free Loaves on Fridays: The Care System as told by people who actually get it', edited by Rebekah Pierre (Unbound, 2024), is reviewed by Jim Goddard, Chair of The Care Leavers Association.

'Foster', by Claire Keegan (Faber & Faber, 2022) is reviewed by Samantha Fiander, Communications and Engagement Lead at CELCIS.

'The Enlightened Social Worker: An Introduction to Rights-Focused Practice', by Donald Forrester (Bristol University Press, 2024), is reviewed by Aleksandra Jadwiszczok, Justice Social Worker at North Lanarkshire Council.

'The State of It: Stories from the Frontline of a Broken Care System', by Chris Wild (John Blake Publishing Ltd, 2021), is reviewed by Khutso Ranato-Dunbar, Doctoral Researcher at the University of Strathclyde.

## Obituary

It is with great sadness that we record the passing of a titan of the child and youth care sector - and reader of and contributor to - this journal, Frank Ainsworth. Our colleague and editorial board member, Leon Fulcher, has contributed a lovely obituary of his friend and collaborator. We miss you too Frank.

## Next issue

We will be back with the spring 2025 issue. If you are engaged in research which would be of interest to our readership, please consider submitting a paper. If you have an idea for a short article, or a book that should be reviewed, we will also be delighted to hear from you at [sjrcc@strath.ac.uk](mailto:sjrcc@strath.ac.uk).

## References

United Nations Children's Fund (2024). *UNICEF annual report 2023*.  
<https://www.unicef.org/reports/unicef-annual-report-2023#download>

## About the authors

Dr Graham Connelly is editor-in chief of SJRCC, and an honorary senior research fellow at CELCIS and in the department of social work and social policy at the University of Strathclyde.

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