



Residential
Child Care

Engagement
Sessions
One Year On

The residential child care community in Scotland is comprised of a workforce which is inspired, inspiring, and determined to develop and improve for the benefit of children and young people.

In 2023, as we reflected on what children and the workforce told us they need, against the backdrop of the impact of a global pandemic, the cost of living crisis, and the ambitious aims of The Promise of the Independent Care Review, we wanted to take the opportunity to look at the aspirations, challenges and priorities for residential child care in Scotland. What emerged from these early conversations was an exploration of what was needed to allow us to understand the challenges and aspirations held and experienced by the residential child care workforce.

Over the past 12 months, CELCIS has hosted a series of engagement sessions with a focus on working together effectively with the workforce across the residential child care community.

What did we hear across those sessions?

One element we considered in the initial sessions was what the characteristics of good practice are in residential child care. The word that dominated the four sessions was '**stickability**'. An immediate reflection was that this is not a word commonly found in qualifications or job descriptions. Some of the other characteristics discussed were:



humour playfulness
critical use creativity team work
of self self-awareness
empathy resilience

A key part of these sessions was responding to the challenge to complete the statement, 'Wouldn't it be good if...'

Three dominant themes emerged:

Firstly, there is a strong appetite within the residential child care community to have the opportunity to connect and share more regularly and creatively.

There is also a clear desire for more opportunities for the workforce to continue to be invested through learning and practice development.

Finally, there is a strong desire to establish an innovative space which could consider future developments and challenges.

In light of these conversations we carried out further analysis of the [content from the sessions](#) and considered it in light of both [The Promise](#) and the [CSR research](#).

Share	Learn	Innovate
'opportunities to share with and learn from peers'	'culture that supports and encourages learning'	'imagine what this dedicated workforce could achieve'
'grow and share together'	'time and space to really embed the learning'	'to transform the structural, systemic and cultural issues'
'to act in a way that feels natural'	'loving relationships, having fun, an understanding of self'	'a higher collective ambition that enables loving, supportive and nurturing relationships'

In June 2024, we hosted a further round of engagement sessions with the residential child care workforce and used this as a platform to further explore the themes of [Sharing](#), [Learning](#) and [Innovating](#) by asking the following questions:

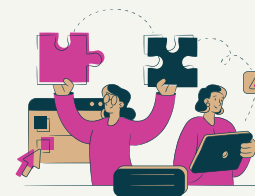
What is required to share practice and experience?

What is required to support our learning?

What will enable us to be innovative?

Culture and spaces

Reflecting on what we heard, the key emerging areas are:



Shared spaces

- A variety of forums and platforms open to everyone involved in residential care for young people.
- More thematic collaboration. A bit like the [Scottish Physical Restraint Action Group \(SPRAG\)](#), but extended into other areas of shared practice development.
- Networking opportunities for cross-professional connecting and learning.
- Importance of face-to-face contact as well as online.
- Importance of regular reflective spaces.



Adaptive leadership

- Adaptive and confident leadership. Listening and acting on the views of staff.
- How do we move forward together? Set the bar high for all new staff coming in. Work out what is important? Change the culture-leadership by role modelling.
- Listening to what people want to try and supporting them to do it.
- Develop opportunities for discussion and feedback... in a variety of ways.
- Mentor staff to implement an idea. Celebrate and learn from failures and successes.

A good leader sets the right goals, gets things moving, and helps us to discover that we already know what to do.

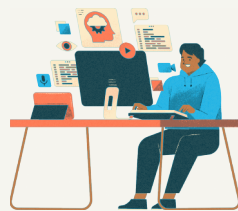
Donella Meadows
Educator and Author

Sharing experience and knowledge



- Disseminate good practice, particularly that which cuts through barriers.
- Highlight the importance of disseminating innovative practice in accessible forms.
- There should be greater sharing of good practice between local authority and private residential care providers.
- Sharing and adopting each others successful ideas.
- Use a variety of methods to share good practice, challenges and lessons learnt, without always relying on academic articles.

Embedding learning



- Protect time and support the workforce to undertake training, to reflect on what has been learnt and to implement learning into daily practice.
- Distinct and comprehensive structure that reflects the residential child care role.
- Enhance the quality of induction training programmes.
- Develop induction process with a clear 'why' we do what we do and how we support each other, with a focus on relationship building for new staff.
- Increase shared learning between organisations.

Community driven change,
supported by CELCIS



Centre for excellence
for Children's Care and Protection

For further information get in touch
at celcis.learning@strath.ac.uk.

So, now our questions are:

What would it look like to create a space where the work force could build on our conversation so far?

How can the residential child care community continue to create spaces which nurture and elevate innovative thinking and reflective practice?

All sessions were designed to be participative, with a significant amount of time spent on developing the framing of the questions we asked and the tools we used, which included how we used digital platforms to allow for better data capture.

“Change doesn't happen quickly. By definition, if it is deep change, if it is significant change, it's not quick. It takes time, it takes patience, it takes people who are passionate for the long term. But we do need to find ways to build momentum.”

Peter Senge

Founder
Society for Organizational Learning