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REACH

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The CELCIS magazine – the Centre for
Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland



Focus on:
**Looked
after at
home and
kinship care**

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I'm delighted you're reading our latest issue of Reach magazine. While you're here why not have a look through our feature on

'children looked after at home' and kinship care. Over half of all of our looked after children in Scotland are in one of these placements, and yet, services for children who are looked after at home can be often inconsistent, limited or patchy.

There's so little research in this area too, so we want to raise awareness of the problems and to bring about a more concentrated and consistent approach to helping these young people and their families.

We've used a mixture of evidence, news, case studies and opinion to highlight the issues and showcase some of the fantastic work going on in Scotland. You can also catch up on our latest work in the 'CELCIS news' section, where we've showcased a very small part of the work we're involved in across the country and beyond.

There's so much great work going on in Scotland at the moment to change the lives of our children and young people in care, their families, and those on the edges of care. And, we'll continue to work hand-in-hand with many of you to not just improve statistics, but to improve the chances of success for vulnerable children. From early

years through to care leavers, the CELCIS team is absolutely committed to making a difference, an effective and sustainable difference.

We've a lot to be proud of here in Scotland, and we've also a long way to go. We'll keep sharing examples of good practice and the latest research and of course, working hand-in-hand, alongside many of you.

Jennifer Davidson
Director

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Children looked after at home and kinship care – the opportunities and challenges ahead

Ben Farrugia, Policy Lead, CELCIS

As you read this, over a quarter of Scotland's 'looked after children' are living with one or both of their biological parents (looked after at home). At least another quarter are living with a relative or friend of the family (kinship care). Taken together, the two groups make up over half of Scotland's looked after population (as of July 2014, this was 8,325 of a total 15,580). These are children and young people living with their families and in their communities, with their wellbeing monitored and safeguarded by a corporate parent (the organisation or person who has special responsibilities to care experienced and looked after children and young people).

It's not what we normally think of as 'care'

Being looked after at home or in kinship isn't 'care' as we normally think of it. Many of these children and young people wouldn't consider themselves to be 'looked after' and, unlike foster carers and residential care staff, those providing the care (parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, etc.) are not required to have a theoretical and practical understanding of the job because they don't see it as one. In most parts of the country these two groups are not covered by the local looked after children's health services, and social work involvement can be limited to a visit every couple of months. This stands in contrast to the complex web of supervision, reviews, services and entitlements that shape the experiences of other looked after children.

Serious challenges

We believe that it is time to consider this arrangement through an informed professional debate. While the educational, employment and housing outcomes of all looked after children continue to be a major concern, statistics and research published over recent years have highlighted the serious challenges faced by children looked after at home and those in kinship care. Is our looked after system organised and resourced in the right way to tackle these challenges? Do we understand what these families need in

order to improve, not just safeguard, the child or young person's wellbeing?

The system we need

It's because of these questions and many more that we've decided to focus this edition of Reach on young people looked after at home and in kinship care. We hope this encourages people to think about what our system of care needs to achieve, to think about what is needed for looked after children and young people to reach their full potential – those who continue to live with their parents or wider family, as well as the thousands of other children and young people who, while not formally 'looked after', face many of the same issues.

The Scottish Government's strategy for the care system, [Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People](#), is built around early and effective engagement with families, supporting them to ensure children have the very best start in life, and that difficulties are prevented from arising or escalating.

On 18th April 2016 we brought together strategic leaders from across Scotland's public services to consider these questions, and we encourage you to get in touch to let us know your views. Together we can work out what we need to get better at to turn our aspirations into reality.



The importance of kinship care

Dr Louise Hill, Policy Implementation Lead, CELCIS

Across Scotland there are many children who live with family and friends at some point during their childhoods. This may be due to parental imprisonment, parental drug and alcohol problems, parental mental health issues, bereavement, parental illness or parental absence, as well as due to experiencing neglect and abuse. During these times, grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings, family friends and others can provide the love, nurture and stability that children need. When children are cared for, feel loved and have a sense of belonging they can thrive. We also know that children who face adversity in their lives can 'bounce back', demonstrating incredible resilience when the right people provide the right support at the right time.

The numbers

It is difficult to know how many children live with kinship carers. Research carried out by the University of Bristol, using census data, found 15,400 children in Scotland lived with a relative. For many of these children, kinship arrangements are private family matters and there may be very little, if any, involvement from social work services, which makes it very difficult to measure. However, for those children where there is social work involvement, we know there's been a significant increase in kinship care being chosen as a first choice of placement over the last ten years. At 31st July 2015, there were 4,158 children living with friends and family; this represented just over a quarter (27%) of all looked after children in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2016).

Why has kinship care grown?

There are a number of reasons why there has been a growth in kinship care. In [getting it right for every child in kinship and foster care](#), the Scottish Government set out their guiding principles:

Unless there are clear reasons why placement within the family would not be in the child's best interests, care within the wider family and community circle will be the first option for the child (Scottish Government, 2007).

There has been research showing the value that many children place on living with relatives or family friends, providing they are safe and cared for. Although it can be difficult at times, children living with wider kin can often maintain positive relationships with their birth parents, other siblings, friends and wider family networks. And we know these relationships really matter to children.

Legislation

The Scottish Parliament recognises the value of kinship care and a commitment to early intervention, and passed legislation to enhance the support available to kinship carers and children subject to a kinship care order. This removed the need for some children to become formally 'looked after'.

[The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) introduces the provision of a kinship care order and sets out the duties of local authorities to help kinship carers who are seeking, have obtained or are holders of a kinship care order, and to help children and young people who are subjects of such an order.



[The Kinship Care Assistance \(Scotland\) Order 2016](#) sets out the details of the new duties for local authorities, including:

- the types of kinship care assistance that can be provided for different qualifying persons
- a requirement to notify applicants about a decision relating to assistance
- information that must be published by local authorities relating to their provision of kinship care assistance, application process for assistance, assessment criteria and rate of allowances

Local authority support

Kinship care assistance must be provided by local authorities in such a way as to safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of an eligible child. A child is deemed to be eligible for assistance if the local authority considers them to be at risk of becoming looked after, or if the child was previously looked after. Local authorities are also under a duty to provide information and advice to adults seeking or holding a kinship care order for an eligible child, as well as for children subject to a kinship care order or formerly subject to a kinship care order. Following a legal aid application, local authorities must also provide financial support (if required) towards an individual applying for a kinship care order.

The financial impact

Research has highlighted the significant financial impact on kinship carers in caring for children and the disproportionate number of kinship families who live in poverty across Scotland (Selwyn et al, 2013). Under the new legislation, kinship carers who hold a kinship care order for a child that the local authority considered to be 'at risk of

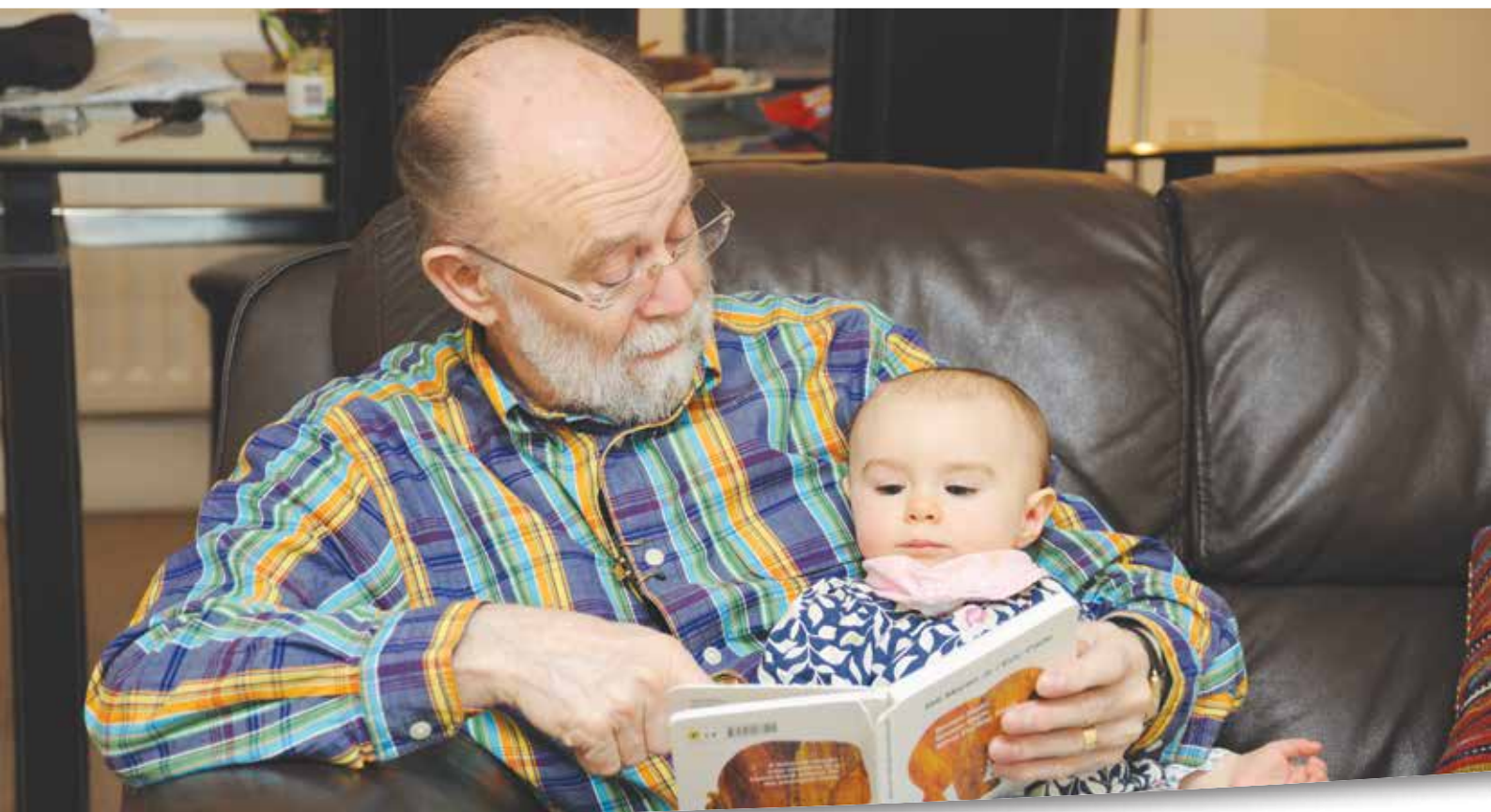
becoming looked after' (for example, if the kinship carer had not agreed to care for the child, they would have been accommodated in foster care or residential care) are eligible for a financial allowance subject to assessment criteria. To ensure fairness, this allowance should be the same amount of money the family would receive if the child was formerly looked after in a kinship care placement.

Recognising that all families can experience challenging times and should be able to access support is at the heart of Getting it right for every child. Providing timely support before compulsory measures are required is what kinship care orders and associated kinship care assistance aspire to do.

This is a real opportunity to support children and their families who are facing adversity, and ensure we are giving them the best opportunities to grow up safe and secure.

The Scottish Government will publish National Guidance on the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014: Part 13 – Support for Kinship Care by Summer 2016.

"This is a real opportunity to support children and their families who are facing adversity, and ensure we are giving them the best opportunities to grow up safe and secure."



No young person is beyond help

Includem's Michael Shanks explains how their intensive support package helped Jade to deal with her past and look ahead to her future.

By now we should all be on board with getting it right for every child, yet for a significant proportion of young people growing up in Scotland, we're still not getting it right. Those who are looked after at home continue to have some of the worst outcomes of all young people.

At Includem, we believe no young person is beyond help. Our targeted, personalised, 24/7 service is designed to provide the right support to help them and their families address their underlying needs, leading to better outcomes for all.

One young person – Jade – helps to explain our programme. Jade was referred to us at age 15 to reduce her risk taking behaviour and to support her to stay with an aunt.

Jade was removed from the care of her parents at a young age and moved between a variety of different placements before staying with an aunt at the time of referral. It was this placement that was at risk of breaking down due to her aggressive and abusive behaviour. On top of this, Jade was not engaging well at school or with other services, including those around her physical and sexual health.

Over a nine-month period, we supported Jade to deal with attachment issues caused by early trauma. We understand that relationships are key and we helped her to understand the effect of her alcohol misuse on her behaviour, in particular on her sexually risk-taking behaviour.

Through our work, we supported Jade at times of most risk – often at weekends and late evenings. We focused on rebuilding family relationships, overcoming complex situations and de-escalating crisis points. We used this contact to support work on education and training, managing emotions and – crucially – encouraging Jade to link into mainstream services, particularly around her physical and sexual health. We supported her to not only attend appointments, but to actively engage with these services.

Jade's case emphasises the targeted, personalised approach that's required to tackle the underlying problems which can lead to relationship and placement

breakdown. Young people looked after at home should never be placed on a supervision order without appropriate services – to do this is simply setting them up to fail. However, home supervision with a real support framework in place and a detailed plan to deal with the reasons for the order can lead to the best possible outcomes for young people.



"Jade's case emphasises the targeted, personalised approach that's required to tackle the underlying problems which can lead to relationship and placement breakdown"

Sibling contact

Laura Porter, Learning and Development Solicitor at Clan Childlaw, discusses the need for siblings to keep in contact, despite their placement.

There are currently more than 15,000 looked after children in Scotland. Many are separated from their brothers and sisters by being placed in separate foster placements or residential units, or because one sibling is in a care placement and the other is still at home. For children and young people whose lives have already been chaotic, maintaining bonds with siblings can be hugely important.

The benefits of sibling contact

The benefits of sibling contact are widely recognised, and include:

- emotional lifelong bond of love and friendship
- support overcoming trauma and adversity
- shared experience
- identity

But children and young people often struggle to keep in touch with family members after they're taken into care. There's a legal duty on local authorities to promote relationships and direct contact regularly between looked after children and their parents, as long as it's in the best interests of the child, but there's no equivalent legal duty for promoting contact between siblings. Contact with parents is often prioritised over sibling contact, even though many young people consider their relationship with their siblings one of the most important issues.

Guideline 17 of the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children acknowledges the importance of sibling relationships, stating that siblings with existing bonds should not be separated by placements in alternative care unless there is a clear risk of abuse, or it's in the best interests of the child. We should make every effort for siblings to remain in contact, unless this is against their wishes or interests.

Clearly, there will be situations where sibling contact is not in the best interests of a child or young person. So, it's essential that robust assessments are carried out before recommendations and decisions are made.



Tools to make the right decision

In our publication [Promoting Sibling Contact for Looked After Children](#) we set out the current legal framework and tools to help with making assessments and decisions on promoting sibling contact. There's now a real appetite and enthusiasm among practitioners to tackle this issue of sibling contact.

Further reading

Christine Jones of University of Strathclyde has written a journal article on [Sibling relationships in adoptive and fostering families: a review of the international research literature](#). It presents an overview of the current state of knowledge regarding sibling relationships of fostered and adopted children, as well as gaps and limitations. It can be accessed at:

For more information, contact Clan Childlaw on 0808 129 0522 or email info@clanchildlaw.org

Overseen but often overlooked

This article and the one below focus on this recent study commissioned by Barnardo's Scotland and carried out by CELCIS. We hear from both organisations as they discuss the reports. Here, Dr Vicki Welch, Senior Research Fellow at CELCIS, talks about why the research is important.

Around four decades ago, Scotland took a careful look at the needs of vulnerable children and families – then did something bold.

In the wake of the [Kilbrandon report](#), Scotland set up Children's Hearings with lay panel members, considering issues related to both youth justice and child protection. The panel could make a number of decisions to promote the child's wellbeing. One option was to allow children to remain living at home at the same time as being subject to compulsory measures of support and supervision.

Now more than a quarter (4,000) of all looked after children are currently 'looked after at home', with numbers falling slightly as the number of children looked after in kinship care has increased.

Our systems are unique

Professionals and policy makers in other countries often ask about Scotland's unique systems, including the benefits of being looked after at home. They are interested to know how home supervision impacts on children and families, and they want to know whether it could address some of the difficulties that authorities in their countries face in ensuring that children flourish at home with their birth parents.

Forty years on and we have very little evidence to share. For example, only a handful of academic studies have tried to ascertain when this intervention works and for whom. Equally, few studies investigate the needs of these children and their families, or describe good practice. The little research that does exist tells us that, although they are a diverse group, children on home supervision have some of the worst outcomes in Scotland; it also tells us that we need more research.

Filling the gap

Therefore, we were delighted to have the opportunity for a study that starts to fill the gap. Our research was not without its challenges. We heard worrying stories and saw rays of hope; we met young people who were able to tell us about what would make a difference to them; we met enthusiastic providers who were upset that they were not able to do more to change lives.

We produced three reports, the first summarises existing knowledge – what we know about these children, what we do not know, and knowledge about other groups that might help us begin to understand some of their needs. The second report presents information from young people and service providers about the type and extent of support needs these children and their families have. The third document reports what we learned about current service provision, what was on offer and how many children get this support. There is also a fourth document – an annex that contains detailed service examples where providers of five different types of support share their learning. [You can find all of these documents on our website.](#)

Adding the detail

Our study adds detail to the earlier work. It confirms that the needs of this group are often different from other looked after children, but can be as severe, complex or difficult to address. Despite this, we found that many systems give children on home supervision a lower level of priority when it comes to support or intervention.

On a brighter note, we found that when children did get support, it could be helpful. Good support recognised the child's needs and those of their family. It helped

to promote their stability and relational permanence, both within the family and often through lasting and meaningful connections with services.

It's just the beginning

The research was possible because of the valuable help we received from managers, practitioners and young people across the sector. This is just the beginning – getting one study 'out there' doesn't answer all the questions – and we will keep working with our enthusiastic partners to help make a positive difference for children and young people, using evidence from this study and other work.

We aim to continue learning and to use the information to best support these children and families.



Overseen but often overlooked

Children and young people 'looked after at home' in Scotland

Believe in
children
Barnardo's
Scotland

Mark Ballard, Head of Policy at Barnardo's Scotland, talks about the research and how little attention has been paid to children looked after at home.

Children and young people looked after at home make up a large proportion of all looked after children in Scotland, and they often experience some of the worst outcomes of all care leavers in a range of measures, such as educational attainment. However, there's a dearth of research into this type of care placement and, despite the numbers of children and young people involved, there's been a lack of specific attention to the needs of this group in policy and practice materials.

It was, therefore, no surprise that, when in 2013 we asked our staff at Barnardo's Scotland to identify groups of children with the greatest unmet need, children looked after at home was a group consistently identified. The message was that the support these children get is often inadequate and that living at home with their families can be inappropriate.

A marginalised group

So, we commissioned CELCIS to carry out research that would look at the needs of these children in more depth. The research showed that while these young people may well be overseen by the state, their needs are often overlooked. All too often they are a marginalised group within the care system. There can be a particular perception that these young people are only eligible for relatively light touch support, even where the level of need is equivalent to a child or young person in another care setting.

Lack of support

We recognise, of course, that we are in a time of change for children's services, especially services for looked after children, as the Children and Young People

(Scotland) Act 2014 is rolled out. But, even after taking these recent developments into consideration, it is clear from the research that more still needs to be done to address the current lack of support for children looked after at home.

We hope the reports will help to open up a debate about the needs of children looked after at home, and about the efficacy of the current system of looking after these children.

A strategy for change

We therefore welcomed the specific section on the needs of this group in '[Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People](#)', the Scottish Government's 'looked after' strategy. Echoing the language of the research carried out by CELCIS for Barnardo's, it committed the

Scottish Government to "Ensuring that children are only looked after at home where this is the best option for them, and there is a clear plan and services in place to meet their needs." The strategy also envisages greater use of early and intensive support for children on the edge of care to reduce the need for these kinds of placements. While we all would, of course, want to see better early support, we look forward to working with CELCIS and other partners to find a way to make sure any new systems or practice learn from this evidence.

It has been a very positive experience working with CELCIS in this way – we were able to secure high quality research and powerful insights, and – most importantly – the partnership has already helped secure new proposals from the Scottish Government for action.



[Barnardo's Scotland report is available on their website](#)

Kinship carers need tailored support

Ben Thurman, Policy and Research Officer at Mentor Scotland, introduces a new intervention aimed at helping kinship carers understand attachment.

Attachment theory is now firmly embedded in a wide variety of children's services, and it is built into the training and guidance given to prospective foster carers and adoptive parents. This helps in understanding what's needed to manage the complex lives of children who may have experienced trauma, abuse and neglect.

Kinship carers often miss out

Mentor published [research into kinship care families](#) and it brought up a wide range of issues, from financial difficulties to family conflict. One of the most consistent appeals, however, was for practical advice on managing the 'challenging behaviour' and 'emotional difficulties' that can manifest as a result of children's early experiences.

Unlike foster and adoptive carers, who routinely receive structured information and training in preparation for caring for children with complex needs, kinship carers are too often asked to look after children who have comparable needs without any access to advice or support.

The Scottish Government funded study also highlighted the problems with bundling kinship carers into programmes with other parents and carers, where they often feel uncomfortable sharing details about personal family situations.

Developing a programme

We knew we wanted to develop an intervention tailored specifically to kinship carers that centred on attachment, trauma and resilience. What we perhaps didn't fully appreciate was the complexity of

designing an intervention on such a difficult subject that also met the needs of such a wide range of people.

We approached CELCIS to co-develop this resource with us and we consulted kinship carers and practitioners to find the best way to deliver information and support, as well as to get feedback on initial ideas. This exercise uncovered both the diversity of people classed as kinship carers and the fine balance involved in delivering a short intervention that meets the needs of families with hectic lives, while still allowing sufficient time to have a meaningful and beneficial impact.

Sharing and learning

As a result, we're now moving towards a relationship-based model that relies on the skill and empathy of the facilitator to engage with different groups of kinship carers, with flexibility and a range of tools to meet their varying needs. The facilitator will encourage kinship carers to share and learn from each other. This will enhance the learning

experience and strengthen the group dynamic. By focusing on carers' shared experiences, we hope to foster strong relationships that can evolve into ongoing peer support – something which kinship carers value, as they are often disconnected from traditional support networks.

Mentor will pilot the programme soon and, while we anticipate more learning and further tweaks, we hope that we're on the way to developing a model of support that will give kinship carers the information and support they need, and an understanding of attachment that will help them care for children throughout Scotland.



Health matters for looked after children and young people in kinship care

Anne Wilson, Development Officer at Action for Sick Children Scotland (ASCS), is collecting case studies and questions from kinship carers to use in a new resource. She explains here why this work is important.

It's been widely recognised that health outcomes for looked after children tend to be much poorer than for children not in care. Insecure attachment, trauma, neglect and various forms of abuse all take their toll and affect a child's health and emotional wellbeing. There may also be problems associated with:

- unattended health needs
- missing medical appointments and immunisations
- missing health records

Official statistics show that around 27% of looked after children are in kinship care, although practitioners generally accept that this figure is considerably higher; it may be as high as 17,000 if we include informal arrangements.

Given that secure attachment is such a fundamental building block in establishing positive mental health and emotional wellbeing, it stands to reason that placing a child in the care of family or close friends is often the preferred option.

Over the last 3–4 years, ASCS has delivered a range of workshops to kinship carers across Central Scotland on health related issues, through kinship care support groups and groups within local authorities. The topics range from children and young people's healthcare rights, consent and confidentiality, mental health and emotional wellbeing, to dental and hospital play.

It will, perhaps, come as no surprise that by far the most popular session is mental health and emotional wellbeing. In this session carers are able to explore feelings of loss and bereavement associated with their new caring role – such as loss for their birth child, loss of their

Case Study 1 – Who has the right to stay?

In a Neonatal Unit, a baby – already in the care of his grandmother – was left alone after the grandmother was sent away (only one person was allowed to stay by the bed). The birth mother stayed but left shortly afterwards, the baby woke up and there was no one there to comfort him.

Case study 2 – What can I do if my birth son or daughter does not want me to know about their health conditions which may adversely affect my grandchild – for example, inherited conditions such as schizophrenia?

[**Watch this DVD clip of a GP interview to find out more**](#)

own freedom and the expected grandparent role (they are now the parent), and sadness at what their grandchild has lost. What emerges – despite this often profound sense of loss – is a stoicism, resilience and resolve to carry on and make good.

ASCS is collecting specific case studies and questions from kinship carers on healthcare experiences with their children, and we'll use these in a new resource, including FAQs and a DVD featuring these experiences.

For more information or to take part in Health matters for looked after children and young people in kinship care, please contact: Anne Wilson, Development Officer, Action for Sick Children Scotland on 0131 553 6553





"It's important to involve parents and families in a child's education when they are looked after at home."

It doesn't have to be this way

Linda O'Neill, Education Lead at CELCIS, discusses what needs to happen to close the attainment gap for children looked after at home.

We know, and have known for a number of years, that young people who are looked after don't do as well in school as the general population. Their attendance is lower, they're more likely to be excluded and they do not achieve the same level of qualifications. In fact, 80% of looked after children leave school at the earliest opportunity, compared to only 30% of their peers. Although it's getting better, the gap is still too wide.

There's a huge difference in educational engagement and attainment between those who are looked after and their peers. But, even more crucially, there is a huge gap between those who are looked after away from home and those looked after at home.

Tariff scores

In Scotland, attainment is measured using an average tariff score, where points are given for each grade and each qualification – from 120 for an A grade at Advanced Higher level, to 1 point for an Access 2 level. The higher the tariff score, the higher the overall level of qualification.

The average tariff score for a pupil at the end of 4th year is 154. If you're looked after away from home, you're likely to get less than half of this score. But, children looked after at home are likely to get a score of 43 – that's 3½ times lower than the average tariff score – their attendance will be 9% lower and they'll be 10 times more likely to be excluded.

With these figures before us it's not hard to see why children looked after at home are at such a disadvantage.

But it doesn't need to be this way

It's not just about turning up for school, it's about what happens when children are there. Recent

research suggests that young people who are looked after at home are a unique group, and their support needs are just as, if not more, significant than those looked after away from home. We need to shape our education and wider services to meet the unique needs of this group of young people.

We're working with the education sector to improve the understanding of their needs and empower practitioners to use their skills and abilities to meaningfully engage with young people and their families.

Identifying underlying problems for young people who are looked after at home is one aspect of this work. This group of young people have often experienced trauma and neglect, which can lead to both low resilience and poor attachment. This can manifest in the classroom through behaviour often seen as challenging and disruptive. We're helping teachers to recognise these characteristics and encourage innovative teaching practices to improve children's ability to engage in classroom learning.

"Young people who are looked after don't do as well in school as the general population"

Where they spend their childhood

We also know that stability of placement is vitally important. Young people do better when they know what home they are going to spend their childhood in; this can mean permanence in the family home, but this unique group often suffer from 'drift at home', making 'relational permanence' (lifelong connections) even more important.

Having a consistent, trusted adult in school provides emotional security and reduces poverty of aspiration,

which is often associated with young people who are looked after. Research tells us that looked after children have the same aspirations as all other children, so having an adult that knows them well and can help them strive to achieve their aspirations can make a big difference.

The children's planning process and the role of the designated manager is at the heart of this work. If a change of school is absolutely necessary in a child's life, it's crucial they feel prepared, included and supported in this process by the significant people in their educational lives.

Involving families

It's also important to involve parents and families in a child's education when they are looked after at home. We know there's a consistent link between parent and carer involvement and a child's attainment at school, but we don't yet have enough understanding about why. CELCIS is currently involved in a project

with a local authority to enhance parental involvement and begin to understand what can increase attainment for vulnerable children. We plan to share the findings with the wider sector, so that managers and practitioners can shape and improve services for looked after children based on evidence.

By working together, we have the ability to close the attainment gap for looked after children; we believe that every child and young person in Scotland deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Corporate parenting news

Lizzie Morton from our Policy Team updates us on the help available for Corporate Parents.

In our last issue, CELCIS warmly welcomed 120 new corporate parents – the organisations, public bodies and individuals responsible for care experienced and looked after children and young people. We recognise the crucial role corporate parents will play in improving their lives under Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

New resources

As we pass the first anniversary of the commencement of the corporate parenting duties, we know the journey ahead will be challenging and complex; that's why we've published a series of implementation notes, developed with support from corporate parents themselves. This set of six notes will help support corporate parents to understand their duties and responsibilities, and explore ways of bringing these to life. These resources are designed to give practical help at every stage of the process, by identifying solutions to the very real challenges faced by corporate parents.

We've updated the corporate parenting pages of our website with useful information and links to key resources. We want to inspire and support corporate parents with their planning. Also, as part of the website

update, we're developing a directory to strengthen Scotland's national corporate parenting network. When complete, this will allow corporate parents from all named organisations to search contacts of their counterparts, so they can get in touch to share ideas and practice, and explore opportunities to collaborate.

Sharing is caring

There's a lot we can learn from each other, and by sharing concerns and successes we can all make real progress in supporting our looked after children and care leavers. That's why we're organising more workshops for corporate parents to come together and discuss their action plans, and get our support to develop these further. We will also work with individual organisations, providing a critical eye to those who are working on their action plans, at whatever stage they're at.

If you're a corporate parent, we would love to hear from you. Get in touch with Lizzie Morton, Policy Implementation Associate, for more information, support and advice by emailing lizzie.morton@strath.ac.uk.

Pathways to success – 16+ at Home Service

Grant Gilroy, the Team Manager with the Barnardo's 16+ at Home Service based in Edinburgh, describes their experience in providing throughcare and aftercare support to looked after at home young people – one of many good practice examples throughout Scotland

Since 2012, Barnardo's 16+ Throughcare and Aftercare (TCAC) Service in Edinburgh has worked in partnership with City of Edinburgh Council to provide a throughcare and aftercare pathway's support and co-ordination service for looked after at home young people.

Our experience in supporting these young people has given us a first-hand insight into the challenges they face in the transition from children's services into adult systems. They are less prepared for and less able to navigate these transitions than their peers who have been accommodated away from home.

Evidence through research

As highlighted in two CELCIS reports – 'Home Supervision: Messages from Research' and the more recent 'Overseen but often overlooked':

"These young people are often from families experiencing a range of problems such as domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health problems and financial difficulties. They disproportionately come from disadvantaged backgrounds, often in single parent households with no adults in employment and have experienced trauma, abuse and rejection. Their educational outcomes are poor and they can struggle to find or sustain employment or training. They are more likely to experience physical and mental health problems, are more likely to misuse alcohol, struggle to maintain relationships, more likely to be young parents, and are often socially isolated."

In other words, these young people are extremely vulnerable and are often struggling.

At Home Service

Barnardo's initially developed the At Home Service because of the shortfall in TCAC provision and the reduction of their statutory rights to practical and emotional support. We were also concerned that the spotlight had shifted further away from how to help them move on in their lives.

Young people need their voices heard, and together we all need to consider their best interests.

As these young people move from Social Work care, we must remember that they will benefit from good quality co-ordinated, consistent and persistent throughcare and aftercare support. Access to this support is vital, providing the gateway to resources and opportunities which will offset the early disadvantages they've

experienced. For corporate parents and organisations working with and for children, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 corporate parenting guidance is clear about equality of access to aftercare services. All our staff, the referring and partner workers, and – most importantly – the young people, know the significant difference our support has made to their lives.

The Scottish Government, through their recently launched [Looked After Children and Young People Strategy](#), outline their plans. As an organisation providing frontline services to these young people, we know there's a need for open discussion and critical analysis about what the implementation of this strategy would mean for looked after at home young people in the future.





"This course was fantastic! I will go on in my foster care career looking after these vulnerable children with the excellent new knowledge I've received from this course"

Margaret Cameron, course participant

Online course attracts almost 35,000

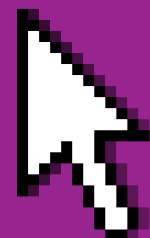
Our ***Caring for Vulnerable Children*** course finishes its fourth run soon and its success has blown us all away.

The course is a Massive Open Online Course (or MOOC). This means it's free, interactive, runs online and is aimed at an unlimited number of participants.

More than 34,500 people from at least 145 countries signed up to take part over the first three runs of the course, and it doesn't seem to be slowing down. We've had a staggering 127,550 comments posted, with 60% of learners posting – the average is 38% – and this means it has the most successful social interactions of any run of any FutureLearn course.

During the six weeks of the course we follow the journey of Billy, a 12-year-old boy, and the risks and vulnerabilities in his life. Participants on the course really responded to Billy and his situation, with many commenting that it had reduced them to tears – it's done the same to many of our CELCIS colleagues too! In fact, Billy's story is so successful it has just won the Courseware and Curriculum In-house Production Award at the 12th Annual Learning on Screen Awards, the UK's only celebration of film and media production in education.

The fourth run of the course is just finishing, but keep an eye on the CELCIS website for details of the next run of Caring for Vulnerable Children.



"Doing this course has helped me in my work as an early year's practitioner and has made me want to find out more, I feel sad that it's over."

Gemma Watkins, course participant

Our Modern Apprentice tackles bullying at a national level

CELCIS worked with the Children and Young People's Commissioner and Youthlink Scotland, and together we formed a young experts group for anti-bullying. The team of seven young experts were asked to create and direct a programme of consultation with children and young people across Scotland. The Scottish Government was keen to use the consultation to inform its approach to anti-bullying. Our Modern Apprentice, Kimberley Calderhead, was part of the group, and here she tells us about her experiences.

When a colleague approached me and asked if I would consider being part of the young experts group I jumped at the chance. I saw it as a fabulous opportunity for me, and a chance to be part of and get involved in such a big and interesting project.

As part of the group, I worked with the other young experts to create activities and tools that we could use in the consultation with children and young people, as well as creating a framework to check the progress on the National Approach to Anti-Bullying.

There were four meetings, all in Edinburgh at the Young Scots Centre, over a period of a few months. In the meetings, I was intrigued by the different views that we all had, so the meetings were really lively. We also talked about what we thought should be included in a PowerPoint presentation we were to create to analyse and understand the entire key points from the discussion. This would be used by those carrying out the main survey with the young people.

My part of the consultation was to discuss what questions we could ask the young people and make sure it all made sense. We came up with ten different questions and made sure they were answerable for the age range that we had picked (from 5 to 21 years old). The survey reached far more young people than we originally thought, possibly because it was young people targeting young people.

A few months later, we were told that Alasdair Allan MSP, Minister for Education at the Scottish Parliament, was delighted with the anti-bullying approach that we had come up with

and wanted to meet us personally in the Parliament.

So, on 28 January, we all met outside Holyrood and had a bite to eat for lunch before meeting with the data analyst who processed all the data for the anti-bullying consultation, and we spoke about some of the answers that were given through the survey. There were a lot of back and forth discussions; some points we all agreed on but some we didn't – some of the young experts had very strong opinions! The Minister then joined us and we all spoke about the comments from the consultation and what we could have done differently. The Minister

was very interested and had loads of questions that he wanted to ask us all.

Since our day in the Parliament and the experience we got from being part of the group, we've had a lot of interest in our work; ChildLine, for example, has asked us to work with them on a project which I would love to be involved in. As part of the group, I've met and worked with lots of new people and experienced things I never thought I would get the chance to do.

Everything about the anti-bullying approach was positive and I would love to do it all over again in the future!



Improving transitions to secondary school for looked after children

We worked alongside North Lanarkshire Council with a secondary school and one of its feeder primaries. This formed part of an action research project which used Improvement Methodology and 'tests of change'. This work was designed to improve the experiences of looked after children as they transitioned from primary to secondary.

Changes were put in place, studied and adapted. Enhanced transition visits for the children were also organised and secondary school staff came to relevant meetings. These changes meant the children were much more ready for secondary school when the time came.

You'll find the full report in the Knowledge Bank on the CELCIS website.

"When you've got that bit of additional information it just means you know they would be better with that pupil support teacher or better not in that class with that group of children from that primary school...The more information you have the better you can plan."

New website

We launched a fantastic new website late last year and over 32,000 of you have visited it so far. It's packed with news, resources and information and has a number of new areas to explore.

If you haven't already had a chance you should check out our new blogs – sharing ideas and opinions on subjects as diverse as attachment, online learning and implementation science. Our Knowledge Bank, where we now store all of our resources, has gone down a treat; it's searchable and is stuffed full of CELCIS resources.

And, of course, our website still has all the old favourites – topical news, the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care, and all of our training and events.

If you've not yet had a look, why not pop over now to www.celcis.org and tell us what you think by emailing celcis.comms@strath.ac.uk.

Looked after children with uncertain immigration status

We've published a briefing setting out what it means for a looked after child to have an uncertain immigration status in Scotland, and how professionals can support them on their journey through education into employment.

It's aimed at those who work in a school, college or university, or other professions that come into contact with children with uncertain immigration status in Scotland, and brings clarity around the legislation.

Recent consultation with young people and professionals suggests that there's significant confusion about the support that they can access for post-16 education.

This briefing describes the different categories of immigration status and the issues and implications for professionals, as well as useful checklists and case studies.

You can also read a story on the implications of the Immigration Bill 2015–2016 and how it will affect looked after children in Scotland.

You can read both the briefing and the news story on our website at www.celcis.org.



Looked After and Learning – a fantastic toolkit for teachers

We've published a fantastic new resource for teachers, schools, local authorities and all those involved with looked after children in their classrooms and learning environments. 'Looked After and Learning' draws on decades of research and practice to highlight how to deliver a positive learning experience for every child, no matter what their background may be.

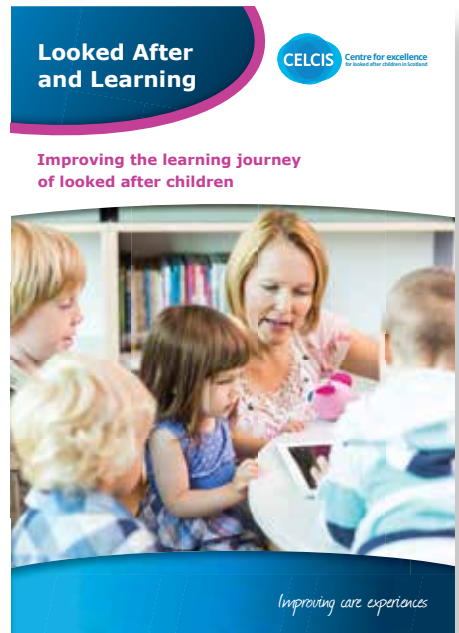
A child's school is central to securing their wellbeing. A positive learning experience – built on strong relationships, nurture and encouragement – protects against poor outcomes in adulthood, and

increases a young person's options and opportunities. Schools have an enormous role to play in raising the attainment of some of Scotland's most vulnerable children and the toolkit is here to help.

You'll be able to identify areas where you are working well, and others that perhaps need developed. We've included a self-evaluation tool to help with this.

It's been designed with educators in mind, so what are you waiting for?

[Download Looked After and Learning now from the CELCIS website.](#)



Inform: welfare implications for continuing care placements

The 2014 Act introduces 'Continuing Care' as a means of making sure that young people who are looked after and accommodated by a local authority can – if they wish – remain in their care placement, with the same support, after they cease to be formally looked after.

The introduction of Continuing Care raises questions about how a young person's status might impact on

their, or their carer's, entitlement to support from the UK benefits/tax credits system. There are various rules within the UK benefits/tax credits system which impact on care leavers aged 16 and 17, and on people who are caring for a looked after child or young person. However, a young person living in a Continuing Care placement will be neither a looked after child nor entitled to aftercare support

under Section 29 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. This leaves them in a unique position.

We've produced an Inform briefing to help explain why, and what the financial implications are for the young person and carer. We look at the implications Continuing Care placements have on UK benefit payments for young people and their carers.



Catch up on the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care

Have you ever thought of submitting a paper for the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care (SJRCC)?



We publish it [online](#) three times a year and it provides a forum for research, debate and innovative practice. There are papers about research, which are peer-reviewed, and also shorter articles on aspects of policy and practice.

There's a wide range of topics and they all relate to aspects of residential child care, including the interface between residential care and other areas, such as health and wellbeing, education and other care settings.

The Journal is published online and free to download.

Among the newer features are articles by doctoral candidates outlining their approach to research. The Journal also publishes transcripts of the annual Kilbrandon Lecture and the Care Leavers' Annual Lecture, organised by Who Cares? Scotland.

Special issues on 'love' (December 2016) and 'history' (December 2017) are in planning.

The Journal can be found at www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/sircc-journal/



"Special issues on 'love' (December 2016) and 'history' (December 2017) are in planning."

Successful permanence programme to expand

Our successful Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) programme will now be rolled out across Scotland, thanks to the Scottish Government's recent announcement of further support for this programme to benefit all Scotland's children needing stability.

The programme was established in 2014 to improve how local councils work with other agencies to place vulnerable children in stable, long-term care.

In partnership with Scottish Government, we will continue to develop our innovative and rigorous multi-agency approach to improving permanence for looked after children. We've tested this changed approach in three areas – Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Renfrewshire Councils – and the PACE programme recently started in East Renfrewshire. A further three areas – Dumfries and Galloway, North Lanarkshire and Shetland – are now involved.



A commitment to care leavers with the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant

We know that young people often struggle with the huge change from care to independence. It's often sudden, overwhelming and with no real back-up plan if it all goes wrong. Would you expect your own children to leave home this abruptly? No? Well, many of us don't think this is nearly good enough for the already vulnerable young people in care.

It's one of the reasons why an alliance of eight key stakeholders, supported by over 30 agencies, produced the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant.

The Covenant, launched last autumn, is the result of months of hard work, and its function is to support corporate parents to fulfill their duties under Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Part 10 of the Act focuses on aftercare support to care leavers as they move to adulthood, and moves the upper age that care leavers can ask for advice and support from 21 to 26.

Support for care leavers

The Act is positive and acknowledges that the transition to adulthood and independence doesn't just happen at 16, 18, or even 21 (the age which, until now, has governed access to services for care leavers). It's a great start to have this recognised in legislation.

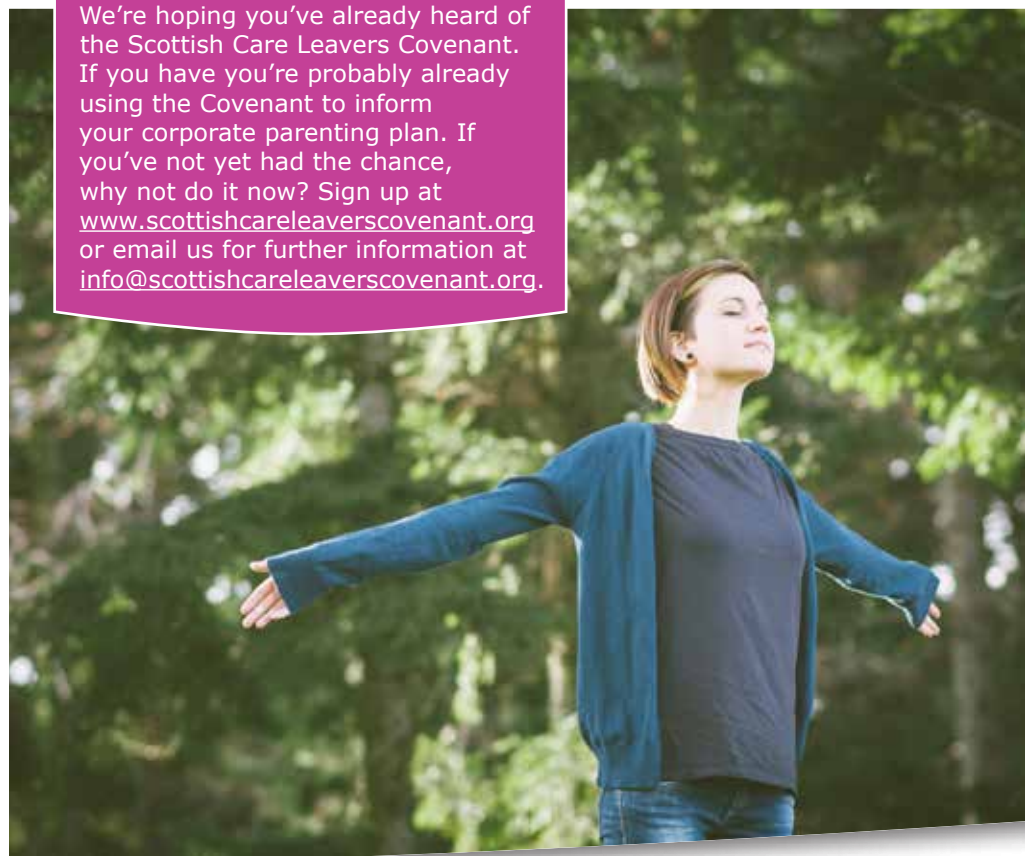
But it's just that – a start – and that's where the Covenant comes in. It details what needs done and offers an Agenda for Change – a framework of key actions for corporate parents. It's designed to bring consistency to practice across the country and close the gap between policy and implementation.



"Young people often struggle with the huge change from care to independence."

Sign up and join us

We're hoping you've already heard of the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant. If you have you're probably already using the Covenant to inform your corporate parenting plan. If you've not yet had the chance, why not do it now? Sign up at www.scottishcareleaverscovenant.org or email us for further information at info@scottishcareleaverscovenant.org.



SCOTTISH
CARE LEAVERS
COVENANT

New College Lanarkshire publishes three-year plan to improve support for care leavers

New College Lanarkshire recently became the first further education college in Scotland to publish its three-year Corporate Parenting Plan. They want to improve support to looked after young people and care leavers, and encourage more of them to take up (and remain on) college courses.

Their action plan – to be phased in by mid-2018 – sets out how they plan to foster a learning-friendly and supportive environment by creating a 'buddy' system to help care experienced young people adapt to college life.

With over 100 students identified as care experienced, the college is determined to play its part in improving lives for care leavers.



Adoption & Fostering Alliance Scotland

Adoption & Fostering Alliance Scotland (AFA) formed late last year as an independent service to provide training and consultancy to professionals on adoption and fostering.



Adoption and Fostering Alliance Scotland

All their trainers and consultants previously worked for BAAF and have considerable experience, knowledge and skills in adoption and fostering practice.

To find out more contact AFA on info@afascotland.com.

Strategy on looked after children

The Scottish Government has published a new strategy 'Getting it right for looked after children and young people'. The strategy is ambitious and will help us continue to make positive and lasting improvements to the lives and wellbeing of Scotland's vulnerable children and families, including children and young people living in and on the edges of care.

The strategy sets out three priority areas of work:

- Early engagement
- Early permanence
- Improving the quality of care

The strategy is important for the effective implementation of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

SRCCWA Tea and Talk

The Scottish Residential Childcare Workers Association Tea and Talk series of events have been successfully running for around three years now. The most recent event in Perth attracted around 30 people from Perth, Kinross, Glasgow and Fife. The theme was the therapeutic use of the everyday within the lifespace.

Practitioners coming along and taking part varied in experience from 5 weeks to 25 years.

The purpose of Tea and Talks is to provide input on a topic related to practice, followed by facilitated small group and large group discussions. The wisdom is in the room and it's through thinking together that people are able to reflect on practice and support themselves to develop. SRCCWA had some great feedback and there was a real energy within the room. They even managed to begin thinking about using the everyday to be therapeutic – not just for young people, but also for each other – and how we care for practitioners.

SRCCWA is happy to facilitate Tea and Talks wherever people welcome them, and also support people to lead the events alongside them. Please contact Kathleen at kathleen.mulvey@srccwa.com.

Links and resources

The Young Person's Journey in criminal justice

The Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice (CYCJ) has published a couple of useful resources:

Youth & Criminal Justice in Scotland

The Young Person's Journey is a new, interactive online resource that aims to simplify how the youth and criminal justice system works for under 18s in Scotland.

<http://www.cycj.org.uk/news/youth-criminal-justice-in-scotland-the-young-persons-journey/>

Young People at Court in Scotland is a paper referring to the young people appearing in adult courts in Scotland.

<http://www.cycj.org.uk/resource/young-people-at-court-in-scotland/>

Getting it right for every child toolkit

Scottish Government has produced a GIRFEC Information and Communications Toolkit, with all the training, guidance and information you need to help with learning and support engagement with children, young people and parents.

<http://www.maternal-and-early-years.org.uk/getting-it-right-for-every-child-girfec-information-communications-toolkit>

New guide for those involved in the Children's Hearing System

Children and young people's views and experiences of the Children's Hearing System are at the heart of the new guide 'Helping me make choices'.

This guidance helps all adults working with, and caring for, children and young people who are involved in the Children's Hearings System.

<https://www.celcis.org/files/8314/5027/1519/CHIP-Helping-Me-With-Choices-about-how-to-best-take-part-in-my-childrens-hearing.pdf>

Kinship care and benefits – the essentials

This factsheet from Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) has been fully updated to reflect recent legal changes, and includes information on the impact of universal credit on kinship carers.

<http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-factsheet-kinship-care-March2016.pdf>

Residential Child Care Level 9 update

The timetable for implementing the new Level 9 qualification for residential child care workers, supervisors and managers was published recently. It's an ambitious plan which prepares professionals to meet the challenge of the ever-changing needs of children and young people.

The timetable for the roll out of the new qualification is:

Managers of a residential childcare setting and all new starts

Phased in from: 1 October 2017 or re-registration date following that. Immediate for new starts.

Supervisors of a residential childcare setting

Phased in from: 1 October 2017 or re-registration date following that. Immediate for new starts.

Residential childcare workers

Phased in from: 1 October 2019 or re-registration date following that.

The time allowed to gain the award for all workers is five years.

CELCIS is working with the SSSC, Scottish Government, Universities and the Scottish Qualifications Authority to help answer questions.

[Visit CELCIS webpage on the Level 9 qualification for more information.](#)



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Our goal is simple. We want to make a difference. We are totally committed to making positive and lasting improvements in the experiences, life chances and outcomes for Scotland's looked after children and young people. Taking a multi-agency, collaborative approach towards making sustainable changes, we help break down barriers, and forge new paths to change thinking and ways of working, with everyone whose work touches the lives of looked after children.