



# CELCIS Impact Report 2014



Centre for excellence  
for looked after children in Scotland

Improving care experiences

## Thanks

**CELCIS would like to thank our range of funders for supporting our work. And we want to especially say thanks to all of the children, carers and parents, and to the frontline staff, practitioners, professionals and organisations we've worked alongside with, thanks to all of you for helping to make a big difference.**

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# Introduction



**At CELCIS, our ultimate goal is really quite simple. We want to make a difference. We want to make a big, big difference in the experiences, the life chances and the outcomes of Scotland's looked after children. For us that always was, and always will be, our ultimate goal.**

With over 16,000 children and young people being 'looked after' by local authorities in Scotland, our passion for making that difference burns as brightly as ever, but we can't do it alone. At CELCIS we remain fully committed to working in partnership with professionals and practitioners, and with families and carers, to provide looked after children with the very best chances to reach their potential.

As a respected and influential organisation, our ethos is solid and unchanging - we work tirelessly to promote, encourage and demonstrate methods which do make a difference. In this report, CELCIS is proud to outline some of the achievements we, and those we work alongside, have made to improve the outcomes for looked after children.

What's new is the way we're reporting our work. In this document, reporting from 2013-14, we're taking a new, more demonstrative approach. In this review of our work, we're actively illustrating the positive differences we and our partners are making to the lives of looked after children, across all areas of our work.

By illustrating and evidencing the direct, positive impact being made through innovative intervention approaches, good practice, partnership working and radical thinking, CELCIS can demonstrate our successes across the board as we continue to work towards our goal of improving the life chances of Scotland's looked after children, doing all that we can to make that big difference, now and into the future.



Jennifer Davidson  
Director

# Making a difference



**To fulfil our goal, to bring about positive and lasting impact on the lives of looked after children, and to improve their life chances, CELCIS sets the quality bar high. Our primary role is to make sure that everyone whose work affects the lives of looked after children and young people, one way or another, has the skills, knowledge and expertise needed to make that positive impact.**

The real strength of CELCIS comes from the considerable strengths and skills of our own people, and their clear commitment to working in partnership. Their role in supporting staff and agencies working in the sector to feel more confident and more able to deliver the best possible work cannot be understated. It is the strength of these partnerships which affords CELCIS status, credibility and trust.

At CELCIS itself we're setting the standards for new and innovative thinking, service delivery and learning. We offer training, research, consultation and share good practice models; we provide advisory and support services, operational guidance, strategic planning and policy development. We deliver our work across all associated sectors in Scotland, with a huge range of partners. And we do all of it within a business and corporate plan, part-funded by the Scottish Government, and part-funded by our own project work and consultancy services.

Our research, policy and learning services are delivered across several key areas of focus including Permanence and Care, Educational Outcomes, Disability, Throughcare and Aftercare, Emotional Wellbeing, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Evidence and Evaluation, International activities, and through our annual conferences. Each of these key areas of work is delivered through a range of services, all of which aim to make significant and ongoing improvements to the lives of looked after children, and contribute to making those big differences in life chances and outcomes.

## The year in numbers

# 42,400

Visitors to the CELCIS website, viewing 210,630 pages – an increase of over 44%

CELCIS engaged with 100+ organisations, including 29 of Scotland's local authorities

# 8,600

Approximately 8,600 people heard key messages formally delivered by someone from CELCIS

# 5,342

People attended a CELCIS conference or learning event – an increase of almost 22%

An increase of 74% in our Twitter followers – up from 770 to 1341 by the end of March 2014



## Setting our goals

**At CELCIS we take the setting of our goals very seriously. When defining those goals - our annual set of core objectives - we are setting ambitious, but achievable, goals for ourselves as an organisation, and in our work with our partners.**

These goals are developed and informed by the best evidence, practitioner wisdom, and the views and experiences of children, young people, care leavers, and their families and carers.

Our core objectives for the year from April 2013 to March 2014 were:

- To build sustainable capacity in the sector to manage new and existing challenges
- To build the expertise of the sector and promote the development of learning cultures
- To gather research evidence and disseminate best practice across the child care sector
- To facilitate the implementation of national policy at local level
- To work in partnership to facilitate and co-ordinate collaborative working inter-professionally, with young people and other key stakeholders across the sector, avoiding duplication and maximising collaboration with partners.
- To contribute to the purpose of the Scottish Government's care and permanence plan to achieve systemic and strategic change in the processes and procedures in planning for safe, stable and secure placements for looked after children with a focus on streamlining and reducing obstacles to the decision making process.

## Key areas of work

**Once CELCIS's core objectives for the reporting period were set, we turned our attentions to developing our new approach to reporting. In order to provide evidence, analysis and evaluation of the overall impact our work, we reviewed each of our key areas of work.**

Within each of these key areas of expertise we were able to identify real, tangible progress being made to improve the outcomes and life chances of looked after children and young people, and particular success has been achieved through partnership working.



### 1. Permanence and Care

The aim of our Permanence and Care programme is to secure sustainable improved outcomes for looked after children. By working towards changes in systemic and strategic processes, procedures and planning, we are looking to implement safe, stable and appropriate permanence for the very children and young people who need it most.

At CELCIS, our Permanence and Care Team (PaCT) was set up to tackle the unacceptably long waiting times for permanence being experienced by too many looked after children.

By working in multi-agency partnerships and with local authorities, we are able to identify and address concerns and issues they have with the permanence process in their own areas. This kind of collaborative work may cover areas such as concurrency planning; peer reviews; mapping of the authority's permanence process; advice and support for whole-systems changes; provision of learning and training events for social workers and Panel Members.



The impact of our work can be felt through our partnership approach - collectively we have made great strides forward in tackling some of the issues of permanence for looked after children, precisely because we don't work with teams in isolation. And the secondary, but equally important, positive impact of the work that the PaCT and or our partners have made comes from the absolute focus we place on the needs of the child. Putting the child at the heart of our cross-agency approach plays a huge part in making improvements to the permanence process.

One of the most important areas of our work, and the one where significant improvements are beginning to be made, is in our Permanence and Care Excellence (PaCE) programme. During the reporting period the PaCT were asked by the Scottish Government to begin the PaCE programme in partnership with Aberdeen City and Renfrewshire Councils. These groundbreaking PaCE projects have applied an innovative and rigorous whole-systems approach to improving permanence for looked after children, with its aim of involving all of the agencies involved in achieving permanence for children. The programme will ultimately be rolled out across Scotland, applying learning from the demonstration projects, and we are already experiencing a high demand for our work from local authorities across the country.

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## Key areas of work *continued*

The PaCT delivers a range of practice exchange workshops across local authorities enabling the sharing of practice and experience to inform the development of both practice and services. In addition, we were invited to present at six national conferences this year, including The British Association for Adoption and Fostering's annual legal conference and the Association of Directors of Social Work conference on the integrated and systematic approach taken to deliver change. Working with a member of staff and a former resident from East Lothian's Lothian Villa Children's Home, the PaCT presented at the SIRCC National Conference, considering how permanence can best be achieved for young people in residential care.

The PaCT continues to meet and work in partnership with key stakeholders from both the statutory and non-statutory sectors, through national mechanisms such as the National Foster Care Review and the Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group Care Planning Hub. We began discussions with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration research team to consider areas for collaboration; we ran a series of 'knowledge exchange' events in partnership with The Fostering Network and Quarriers, interactive events which involved approximately 80 foster carers, researchers, social work practitioners and policy makers, with further events scheduled.

CELCIS also contributed to the Scottish Parliament's inquiry into decision making on whether to take children into care by providing written and oral evidence to the Education and Culture Committee where we received positive feedback in the Scottish Parliament about our work from committee member, Joan McAlpine MSP. She said,

*"...[I] take the opportunity to say how impressed I was by the oral evidence from CELCIS. It gave me a sense of encouragement that we are taking the problem very seriously indeed at the highest level. From now on, we will have a body of research and expertise to draw on to tackle the issues that the most vulnerable children in Scotland face. I very much hope that the work of CELCIS will inform good practice on the ground... just as it has helped to shape Government policy for the good."*

*Joan McAlpine MSP*

## Permanence and Care Team: PaCT in Clackmannanshire

### PaCT was asked to work with Clackmannanshire Council to help develop and implement an improvement plan for their permanence practice which ensures sustainable change.

Working alongside the council, the PaCT delivered and supported a range of activities, which included - identification of potential areas for improvement in the permanency process; development of an IT system to track children through the permanence process; strengthening multi-disciplinary relationships; individual support and mentoring to frontline staff and their managers; contact workshops to explore the understanding of contact, and a peer review process which had an immediate and positive impact on staff confidence

These activities were embraced not only by staff and had a positive impact on their practice, but were welcomed by the Council itself...

*“The PaCT team has been a consistent presence within the long term team in particular... Relationships have developed with staff which has ensured that staff themselves have been proactive in seeking assistance - the development of the skills and confidence has been apparent. The service managers have worked hard with the PaCT team to continue to deliver improvements enabling change management/improvement activities to be planned, delivered and revised speedily. The successful delivery of the improvement plan has underscored the need for the senior managers with operational responsibility for permanence to maintain a close working relationship with the PaCT team to ensure action plans are driven forward.”*

*Liam Purdie, Clackmannanshire Council*

# Permanence and Care Team: PaCT in Clackmannanshire *continued*



## 2. Throughcare and Aftercare

CELCIS's Throughcare and Aftercare programme aims to radically and sustainably improve outcomes for care leavers. Our goal is to narrow the gap in long term positive outcomes which currently exists between care leavers and their peers. We seek to do this through the promotion of systemic and strategic changes to current processes, procedures and planning in order to improve quality and access to services.

When describing the broad range of work being undertaken by CELCIS's Throughcare and Aftercare (T&A) programme, programme lead Kenny McGhee outlines the team's simple and straightforward goal to "engage with the whole sector to improve outcomes for care leavers". Working towards that goal, to begin to narrow the life chances gap between care leavers and their peers, requires some major shifts in structure, philosophy and practice across the board. This is far from straightforward, given numerous bureaucratic barriers and economic obstacles.

Progress is sometimes painfully slow, made in baby steps, but CELCIS's T&A programme has already begun to turn those baby steps into big strides forward with their multi-agency, good practice strategy. As Kenny McGhee emphatically puts it "...to ensure good outcomes for care leavers a multi-agency approach must happen. We can't be one voice in the wilderness, to effect positive change for children in care, we must support all corporate parents to fully meet their responsibilities".

By combining practical work with carers, practitioners and professionals, coupled with a growing body of research, guidance and policy development at strategic and policy level, CELCIS's T&A team have created considerable influence around the care leavers agenda, both here in Scotland, and the rest of the UK. By working closely with our partners we aim to see a reconnection with child-centred practices, and strive to support corporate parenting agencies to make positive transformational change at local level.

Direct positive impact can be demonstrated across a number of projects undertaken by the T&A team during the reporting period. The team made a significant contribution to the legislative extensions for corporate parenting in the forthcoming Children and Young People (Scotland) Act. Working alongside key stakeholders from across the third sector and local authority, our collective contribution included amendments to the wording of the legislation which aimed to enable better outcomes for looked after young people and care leavers by improving their right to continuing care up to age 21, and to continued aftercare support up to age 26.

During the reporting period the T&A team played a lead role in the development and publication of the three national guidance and strategy documents – Staying Put Scotland; Housing Options Protocols for Care Leavers; and Access All Areas. In these publications we aimed to inform structural and philosophical changes in the delivery of throughcare and aftercare provision, changes which are aligned to the new policy principles of the CYP Act.

A further critical part of the T&A team's work is the identification, development and sharing of good practice, and the encouragement of local authorities and other corporate parenting agencies to adopt this good practice. During the reporting period, CELCIS's T&A team engaged directly with ten local authorities across Scotland to develop and support service and practice improvements.

In March 2014 CELCIS published A National Study: Throughcare & Aftercare Services in Scotland Local Authorities, the culmination of a year's work involving 27 out of 32 local authorities. This report was enthusiastically received and welcomed as a useful and timely source of evidence into the nature of current TCAC provision and the challenges ahead for the sector.

## Throughcare & Aftercare: Supporting Services in Shetland



**In the spring of 2013 CELCIS's Throughcare and Aftercare team were invited to work with Shetland Council to develop its own embryonic throughcare and aftercare service.**

There were very specific challenges to the work we did with our partners in Shetland. Not only because of the geographic remoteness, limited experience and lack of connection with others working in this area, but also because, like all small councils, they have limited staffing and resources. And although Shetland has a relatively small number of looked after children and care leavers, the complexities of those young people's needs are just as challenging as those in other parts of Scotland, without the infrastructure or range of services to support them.

Despite these challenges, the T&A team were very impressed by Shetland's willingness to look at themselves and their existing service provision with open minds. The level of discussion entered into was impressive, as was their collective enthusiasm to embrace new ideas and conversations, and to adopt new systems and processes more focussed on the needs of the young people in their care.



Shetland has gone on to adopt a multi-agency approach to their care leavers service, with the willing participation of their partners from housing, health and Skills Development Scotland. What they have put in place is a really supportive care delivery service which is already making a really big difference by offering security and permanence for the young people they work with.

### 3. Educational Outcomes

The aim of CELCIS's Educational Outcomes programme is to improve the learning outcomes of all looked after children, across all ages, stages and placement types.

It is already well established that looked after children and young people are much less likely to achieve at school than their peers. School attendance rates for looked after children are considerably below national averages, as is educational attainment. Even within the wider looked after children grouping, there are disparities in educational outcomes, and a "hierarchy" of educational achievement exists, both in attendance and attainment. Children living in foster care do best at school, both in attendance and attainment; children living in residential or secure care have lower rates of attendance and attainment, whilst those children who are looked after at home have significantly lower attendance rates than other groupings of looked after children, and hence, the lowest levels of educational attainment. For CELCIS, it is unacceptable that the gulf in educational outcomes for looked after children and their peers remains so wide.

In order to begin to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of looked after children and young people in Scotland, CELCIS are working on a number of partnership projects. These are projects which aim to identify and change some of the bureaucratic, social and environmental barriers which prevent these young people from being able to participate in the life chances being afforded to so many of their peers through education.

Much of CELCIS's work to improve educational outcomes is linked with the Scottish Government's Widening Access and Participation in Further and Higher Education policy objective. However, to improve the educational outcomes for looked after children, CELCIS takes a wider view which begins with early years education.

## Throughcare & Aftercare: Supporting Services in Shetland *continued*

As our Educational Outcomes Lead Dr Graham Connelly puts it...

*“It’s not all about university, it’s about having a fulfilling life, having chances for steady employment and successful relationships. Without good educational opportunities and outcomes these things can be very hard for looked after children to achieve. But we’re aiming to make big improvements in this situation by working in partnership with local authority and third sector groups, starting at nursery level, then school, and onwards to the college and university sectors.”*

One area where positive impact can be demonstrated is in our partnership working with local authorities. CELCIS’s Educational Outcomes team have engaged several councils to help them develop projects for schools and teachers explicitly aimed at improving the experience of looked after children in the school environment. In North Lanarkshire one project was centred on working with looked after children in P6 to improve their transition to secondary school. An Edinburgh project centred on improving communications between schools and social work as a means of supporting children in their education. And in one Stirling project CELCIS used the plan, do, study, act (PDSA) cycle to examine attendance of looked after children, which resulted in changes to their monitoring procedures.

Our Educational Outcomes group has been delivering further positive impact by having an influential role in the development of improvement methodology within the Scottish Government’s Raising Attainment For All team. We have contributed to Who Cares? Scotland’s Higher Education Handbook for Care Leavers in Scotland, and began the process to raise funds to have all of this information migrated to a website. In partnership with the NUS and Who Cares? Scotland, we ran a multi-agency focus group which identified many of the barriers to education being experienced by looked after young people - this work was fed directly into the Students Awards Agency Scotland.

## Educational Outcomes: Multi Agency Mentoring



**Working in partnership with the MCR Charitable Foundation, Glasgow Life, Glasgow City Council, Strathclyde University and The Herald, CELCIS supported the process of establishing a mentoring programme for looked after teenagers, as an alternative method of improving their educational outcomes.**

Beginning in 6 East End secondary schools in Glasgow, the MCR Pathways programme initially signed up 150 looked after young people, and linked them for one hour a week with volunteer mentors from across all walks of life. The process of building positive mentoring relationships is expected to provide significantly improved educational opportunities for these and many more young people, with several notable individual successes having been already chalked up by the project.

The MCR Pathways programme is to be extended from 6 to 10 schools in Glasgow in late 2014/ early 2015, with the ultimate aim of rolling the project out across the whole city, directly linking with the Scottish Government's policy to develop a national mentoring scheme for young people.

# Educational Outcomes: Multi Agency Mentoring *continued*

## 4. Disability

The aim of CELCIS's programme is to facilitate better outcomes for disabled care leavers, tackle barriers and identify solutions regarding permanence for looked after disabled children and ensure the 'views of the child' are heard.

Disabled children are often a forgotten group within the population of children and young people who are looked after, perceived by some as having such unique needs that they sit outside of mainstream policy agendas, such as improving permanence and aftercare. CELCIS is determined to redress the balance, and we do this by working in partnership with organisations across the sector to ensure that disabled children have their voices heard in our debates about the future of Scotland's care system.

Our work has brought a group, normally on the margins, into the mainstream, stimulating an interest and debate. And we have played a key role acting as a link between many of the agencies working in the interests of looked after children who are disabled.

Our knowledge exchange project on permanence and disability, "Getting It Right for Looked After Disabled Children", was funded by the Scottish Universities Insight Institute. The project not only established a constructive and ongoing partnership between key organisations, but also substantially raised the profile of looked after disabled children, opening a dialogue with Scottish Government and local authorities on the issues of data and participation. CELCIS's Disability Team lead 4 seminars as part of this process, sharing information and knowledge about the particular issues and challenges of permanence and disability across a wide range of agencies including voluntary organisations, health services and local authorities.

A second knowledge exchange project developed in conjunction with our colleagues in the CELCIS Permanence and Care Team also served as a catalyst for other activities, including the development (and initiation) of a significant research project, exploring the care experience of disabled children in foster care. As a consequence of this work, and to continue the focus on disability and permanence for children in Scotland, the Achieving Permanence Research Group was established. This includes policy makers, academics and practitioners who are working on options for further research funding bids to ensure that there remains a key focus on improving permanence practice and children with a disability.

## Disability: East Park performers take to the stage

**The beginning of our reporting period witnessed the culmination of a 15 week long forum theatre programme facilitated for pupils and residents of East Park in Glasgow by the Active Inquiry theatre group which resulted in a performance at the event at The Lighthouse in Glasgow.**

CELCIS was delighted to collaborate with this Scottish Universities Insight Institute project, one which gave voice to looked after children with disabilities and autism. It was an incredible opportunity to hear the children describing their own experiences as looked after children, in their own voices, in their own way. We were really impressed with the way Active Enquiry and the children worked together to produce a challenging piece of theatre, and with the children's willingness to provide us with an in-depth understanding of their lives and experiences.

Libby Welsh of Quarriers was in the audience for the performance and said, "It was a really powerful piece of theatre - I was struck by how engaged this group of young people were during their performance - it was so slick and well rehearsed. I came away thinking how important it is to provide opportunities for disabled looked after children to take part in drama. This performance and this kind of work allows these children to be visible and really challenges perceptions about what they can achieve."

### **5. Emotional wellbeing**

The principle aim of CELCIS's work in the area of emotional wellbeing is to acknowledge the critical importance of good emotional health and wellbeing for looked after children and wellbeing. A high proportion of these children have experienced trauma and neglect in their early years, and many are already emotionally unwell at a young age. At CELCIS we aim to promote an understanding of the social, environmental and psychological barriers to emotional wellbeing which are experienced by so many of these young people.

## Disability: East Park performers take to the stage *continued*

At CELCIS, we believe that everyone working with looked after children and young people has a responsibility to support and nurture their emotional wellbeing. Further, we believe that CELCIS plays a vitally important role in supporting those practitioners, carers and professionals who work with this group of young people to understand, and empathise with, some of the complex emotional issues they may experience.

Research has shown that looked after children in Scotland and the rest of the UK have significantly poorer mental health than their peers. These young people often experience poor emotional wellbeing - they are more likely to display risk-taking behaviours during and after leaving care, some harm themselves or become substance abusers, some contemplate, or even commit, suicide.

As CELCIS's Service Development Consultant Judy Furnivall says,

*“Getting it right for long term emotional wellbeing needs to begin early, with help from everyone working with these young people. As it is, by the time they are at the point of leaving care, we have not equipped them with the skills, emotional development and resilience they are going to need for the rest of their lives. Too often the current systems actively disrupt emotional wellbeing - no sooner does a child seem to be doing well than we move him or her on to the next place. Or we fail to show them the love they need. These children's lived experience is often one of disruptive relationships, of not feeling that they belong to anyone. But it's okay to love these children, to care about them, and try to minimise the emotional and practical disruption in their lives. And that's exactly what we're trying to do.”*

By working in multi-agency partnerships, CELCIS seeks to encourage sustainable systemic changes which it is hoped will reduce disruption, and have a lasting positive impact in the emotional wellbeing of looked after children, and on their life chances.

## Protection Through Partnership



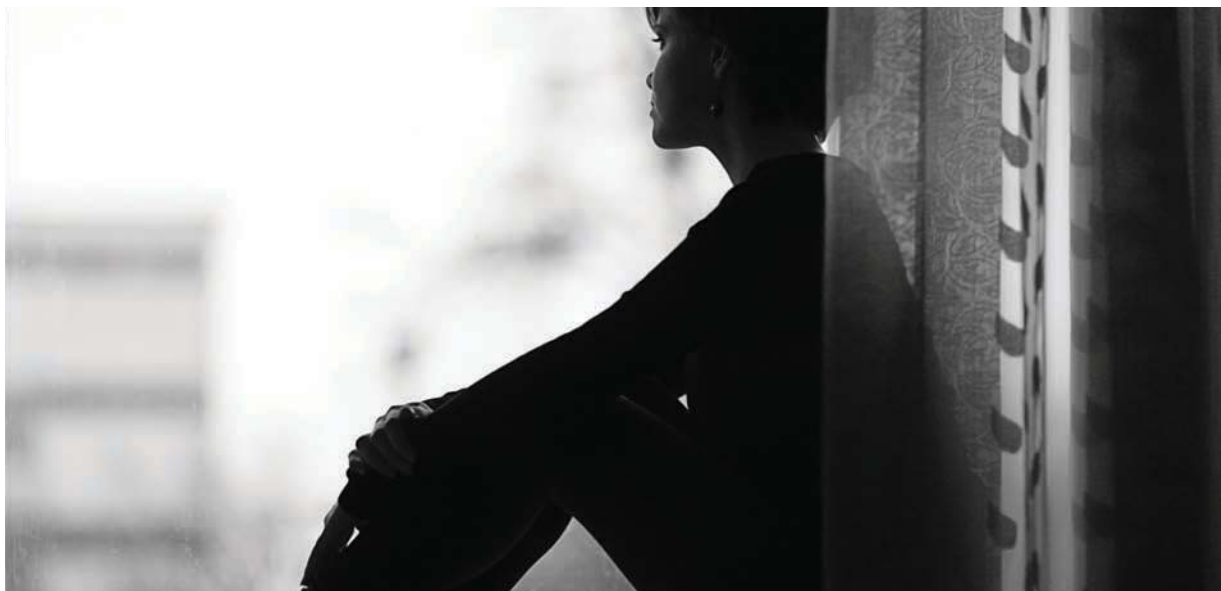
**CELCIS worked on one project in particular during the reporting period - the Protection Through Partnership (PTP) project - which aimed to improve the ways agencies work with each other and raise awareness amongst senior managers in social work, health and education throughout Scotland of the issues of self-harm and suicide for looked after children and young people including both those who live at home and those who live away from home.**

In response to a Fatal Accident Inquiry into the deaths of two children whilst in care, CELCIS was commissioned by Scottish Government to deliver a programme of awareness seminars aimed at senior managers in social work, health and education throughout Scotland followed by a series of training days for practitioners.

By bringing senior managers together to discuss such emotive and challenging topics as suicide and self-harm, we aimed to develop understanding, improve the care and mental health, and ultimately protect, these vulnerable children and young people. Further, the seminars have challenged managers to ensure that policies and guidance in their agency is up to date and relevant and that all staff and carers know about it.

*Continued over*

## Protection Through Partnership *continued*



The seminars were supported by specific training events for frontline staff. A vitally important element of the training sessions was that they provided a forum and safe environment for frontline staff from a variety of agencies, including health and education, to network and discuss the professional and personal difficulties they have experienced when dealing with suicide, attempted suicide, or self harm by young people in their care, and to express loss.

For some the opportunity presented new learning and insight. For example, nursery and primary school staff were able to acknowledge the importance of their role in the early years of looked after children, and Dr. Michael Smith, Consultant Psychiatrist & Associate Medical Director of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, acknowledged that issues of attachment for looked after children may impact hugely on their mental health in adulthood and must be taken into account during treatment.

Following the completion of the 18 month project, CELCIS evaluated the outcomes of individual seminars and of the overall programme. We delivered 15 locally based working seminars and 26 two-day sessions and we collected 750 questionnaires from attendees. At least 95 % of respondents rated these sessions and discussions as good or excellent and 99 % rated the additional resources and materials as good or excellent.



## Other areas of our work

**In addition to our five key areas of work, CELCIS continues to lead, inform, influence, analyse and evaluate in other critical areas which impact on the lives of looked after children and young people, and care leavers.**

We have made significant contributions to Scotland's legal framework, our consultancy work reaches out both domestically and overseas, and we provide an evaluative analysis of our own, and other people's work, in the looked after children's sector.

### 1. Legislation

With the introduction of two new major pieces of legislation in Scotland in recent years - the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 - a significant part of CELCIS's work during the reporting period was delivered with the aim of enabling the sector to understand and implement this legislation, through briefings, seminars, guidance, discussion and direct peer support.

#### From Act to Practice - Part 1; The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011

A number of significant changes to the Children's Hearing system came into force with the implementation of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 in June 2013. The changes in the legislation were introduced to modernise and strengthen the children's hearing system, with the ultimate aim of delivering better outcomes for children, and it was anticipated that the changes would have a significant impact on everyone coming into contact with the Hearings system.

In order to support planning and preparation for implementation of the changes in the Act, CELCIS worked in partnership with CI@n Childlaw and the Scottish Government to develop and deliver a programme of 16 half day From Act to Practice information seminars across all of Scotland's NHS Board areas. The primary focus of the seminars was to provide participants with a consistent, factual and comprehensive overview of the changes to the Children's Hearings system. The overall objectives of the seminars were to increase knowledge of the key changes in the Act that affected practice; to raise awareness of the preparatory work required for the Act's commencement; and to influence practice application to ensure the embedding of children's rights into practice.

## Other areas of our work *continued*

Over 900 participants attended these seminars, from across all sectors involved in the Hearings system. With its partners, CELCIS were able to play an important role in raising understanding and awareness of the impact the legislative changes would have, and continues the implementation work with the development of a second series of From Act to Practice seminars.

### The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

Even before the first draft of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill was laid before the Scottish Parliament on 17 April 2013, CELCIS played a critical role in facilitating discussion between the sector and the Government itself, discussions which fed into the consultative parliamentary process and the legislative framework itself.

During the development stages, CELCIS provided advice and guidance to Scottish Government on request, and participated in sector activities to influence and inform the content and focus of the legislation. With the start of formal Parliamentary scrutiny, CELCIS refocused its efforts to ensure maximum impact. We set out to inform and facilitate debate, with the aim of supporting Government and Parliament to pass a Bill that guaranteed significant improvements for children and young people which would be implementable.

We produced a number of briefings to inform parliamentary and sector debates, synthesising the research evidence with our knowledge about systems and practice on the ground. We engaged directly with MSPs, civil servants, and other children's organisations, building coalitions and facilitating discussion, and were able to build on our positive reputation with the neutrality and impartiality of our reporting.

Of particular note was our critical contribution to the success of the Coalition for Continuing Care, whose campaign for enhanced support for care leavers led to the introduction of Part 11 of the Bill, 'Continuing Care'. This landmark reform of the care system in Scotland, guaranteeing care leavers the opportunity to maintain positive relationships with their carers into adulthood, was brokered by CELCIS, who brought the key parties together in a neutral space, and assisted in developing solutions to practical challenges.

### **CELCIS's activity around all sections of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill led to invitations from Scottish Government to comment and contribute to the development of guidance and secondary legislation.**

At the close of 2013-14, with the Bill's successful passing by Parliament, the Scottish Government invited CELCIS to draft the statutory guidance on Part 9 (Corporate Parenting). This will be the only guidance related to the Act developed and drafted by an external organisation. The commission is evidence of the success of our strategy around the Bill.

#### **2. International**

The aim of CELCIS's international project work is to promote good practice, provide expertise and experience, and to share learning through our consultancy services. All of our international projects are externally funded.

CELCIS's international work has numerous strands. In addition to our involvement with the delivery of consultancy training, research and advisory services overseas, CELCIS itself is recognised as a leading centre of learning and hub of knowledge exchange for visiting practitioners and professionals.

Most of CELCIS's international work is being undertaken in partnership with other major agencies, particularly UNICEF, and we have made a number of successful tender bids to deliver discrete project work on behalf of UNICEF in Turkey, Albania and Macedonia.

## Sharing our expertise overseas



### **CELCIS was commissioned by UNICEF Turkey to work with the Turkish government as part of a major restructuring of its strategy for looked after children.**

Working in close partnership with the Department of Internal Audit at the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, CELCIS staff were able to help develop and implement a self-assessment project for the care standards in its residential sector.

This approach was a first for the Turkish authorities, before CELCIS's involvement they had never applied self assessment methodology to their own care standards, to analyse strengths and weaknesses. Never before had Turkish care workers consulted directly with the looked after children in their care, or the parents.

After a successful pilot, the finished project was launched at end of February 2014.

Subsequently, a programme of training events for every province was carried out and the new system is now in operation across Turkey.

As well as work in the field, CELCIS has contributed to a variety of research, learning and knowledge exchange programmes overseas.

In this reporting period we contributed a range of learning materials to a major regional online resource centre for south eastern Europe, led by the Swiss NGO Terre des Hommes; and we carried out a comparative analysis of the implementation of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children across 8 African countries, in partnership with SOS Children’s Villages and the University of Malawi.

Building on last year’s CELCIS publication of *Moving Forward: Implementing the Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children*—now translated into 7 languages - we have been commissioned to develop a set of strength-based measuring tools that will measure how well countries are doing in their alternative care systems when set against the standards found in the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.



### 3. Evidence and evaluation

Given the evidence-led nature of our work, CELCIS plays an important role in ensuring that research and evaluation is of an appropriately high quality, that it is relevant both to us as an organisation, and to our partners, collaborators and stakeholders working in the sector. Not only do we apply rigorous testing and evaluation methodology to the work that CELCIS itself undertakes, but we provide testing and evaluation services to other external agencies.

## Sharing our expertise overseas *continued*

Identifying and maximising the impact of our own work is critical to our success, provides accountability, and supports our ethos of continuous improvement. During the reporting period internal evaluation has included intensive work around our PaCT, From Act to Practice and Protection Through Partnership programmes, as well as ongoing work across the organisation.

In our work with external agencies, we aim to ensure maximum impact through close involvement of practitioners and decision makers. CELCIS does this by acting in co-research partnerships, by membership of advisory groups, by participating in research, through workshops and other dissemination activities, by publicising outputs such as briefings and reports and through various follow-on activities.

The over-arching positive impact to be had from CELCIS' research and evaluation processes is that we know our work provides critical evidence-led examples of service delivery in action. The data and research we provide informs external agencies on the implementation of good practice and/or systemic change models, and the tools to evaluate the success (and costs) of such models. We support implementation of new processes through numeric data, surveys and questionnaires, focus groups, online and phone interviews etc.

Our partnerships, and the evidence and evaluation work we provide, extends from Government to carers, from local authority to the looked after children themselves. Examples of where we have been invited to provide evaluation include the ETCs Outcomes Framework, the Border's Early Assessment Team and The St Andrews Family Outreach Service at Camphill.

Using our research expertise, we have worked with tremendously diverse range of agencies and projects. These include the Children's Hearing System where we undertook a study into the deployment of Safeguarders; a joint research project in improving permanence for disabled children with Glasgow School of Social Work and the University of Edinburgh; and we provided consultancy and support to the InterAction and Action Plan for survivors of historic abuse, conducted in partnership with the Scottish Human Rights Commission. This work uniquely brought together survivors, providers and former providers, civil servants, faith groups and residential practitioners to increase understanding and, for some, began reconciliation.

## A cross-sector study

### Through our study of sexual exploitation of looked after children for the Care Inspectorate, although a brief study, our engagement with the sector was extensive:

- A study advisory group
- Inclusive methods (eg expert Delphi panel)
- Helpful methods (eg file audit tool for social workers)
- Workshops at the Care Inspectorate National Conference to over 50 delegates
- A facilitated discussion with the Inspectorate and their partners
- Report placed in the public domain
- Informal discussions with the Public Petitions Committee Inquiry
- Invitations to provide follow-on inputs.

Positive impacts began before completion of the study, with social workers commenting on the value of the file audit in informing their discussions and casework. We're keen to continue to raise concerns and find credible responses about the particular vulnerability of this group of children in our activities in the coming year.

#### 4. Conferences

During the reporting period, CELCIS played a leading role in information exchange through the planning and hosting of two annual conferences for the sector - the long-running annual Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care conference, and the inaugural CELCIS conference.

CELCIS participated in the planning and hosting of the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) "Making Connections" conference which was held in June 2013 in Glasgow. As part of a multi-agency cross-sector planning group which included Who Cares? Scotland, children's rights officers, learning and development workers, representatives from the Scottish Government, local authority and the independent schools sector, and young people themselves, CELCIS played a key role in the development of the conference around themes of developing and sustaining relationships, trust, achievement and self-worth in the lives of looked after children and young people.

## A cross-sector study *continued*

Amongst a wide range of presentations, the conference tackled the challenging themes and sometimes taboo subjects of love, sex and death, and suicide, and provided valuable space for everyone in the sector to share experience and learning.

A further positive impact emerging from the “Making Connections” conference came as a result of the speech delivered by keynote speaker Jenny Molloy, co-author of “Hackney Child”. The insight provided to conference delegates by Jenny (a former looked after child herself) began a profound change in thinking from the sector about the way services for looked after children are delivered, and have informed ongoing work and further learning and discussion forums.

CELCIS itself launched its own cross sector inaugural CELCIS Conference in Edinburgh in October 2013 with keynote speeches from Scotland’s Chief Medical Officer Sir Harry Burns, child care consultant and trainer Sally Wassell, and Scottish Minister for Children and Young People, Aileen Campbell. Planned around the theme of “Partnership for Progress”, this groundbreaking conference was specifically designed, planned and marketed to all sectors and agencies involved in delivering services and support for looked after children and young people, not just to those working in residential care.

For the first time, CELCIS’s multi-agency planning group involved representatives from the health sector, including the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, and the Looked After Children Nurses’ Forum. Delegates from across the sector attended the conference itself - everyone from foster and kinship carers to social workers, health and education professionals - and its real success came from providing an outstanding opportunity for the different agencies to communicate, collaborate and share information towards the common goal of improving outcomes for looked after children. The collaborative, partnership working continues with planning for the 2014 CELCIS “We Are Family” Conference.



## The coming year

**At CELCIS, our work continues apace, with between 50-70 projects underway at any one time. In the coming year we will deliver on several additional key areas of work, all with the ultimate goal of making a big difference to the lives of looked after children firmly at the forefront of our thinking.**



In addition to the continued work in our key areas of focus, and the ongoing delivery of our services, we will undertake the following activities:

- Embark on a Permanence and Care Excellence programme to complement and add to the outputs and benefits of our current work in Permanence and Care. This will apply an improvement approach to develop a 'whole system' approach to delivering better outcomes for children.
- Deliver From Act to Practice Phase 2 - delivery of a strategic leaders symposium and a series of twelve multi agency good practice and guidance seminars for middle managers and practitioners to follow on from Phase. These seminars will continue to develop an understanding of the legislative requirements of the Act, to ensure the embedding of children's rights into practice across all agencies involved in its implementation.

## The coming year *continued*

- Continue our involvement in the Children's Hearing Improvement Partnership (CHIP) by leading one and participating in two additional new workstreams to focus more effectively on delivering change and improvement across the children's hearings system.
- Support the Implementation of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, including supporting the development of guidance on Corporate Parenting on behalf of Scottish Government as well as the development of briefings.
- Identify and support for 'transformational change' as part of our Educational Outcomes programme.
- Develop our evidence and evaluation strategy and increase the range and dissemination of practice papers.
- Joint development and delivery (with University of Strathclyde) of an MSc in Child and Youth Care Studies by Distance Learning.
- Undertake a national stakeholder survey to gather information on current state of play of Throughcare practice and delivery.
- Develop and promote a new model for sector learning by brokering tailored peer support learning opportunities by identifying and matching people together to share knowledge and skills.
- Host the 2014 annual CELCIS conference around the theme of "We Are Family", exploring what "family" means for looked after children. The keynote speakers will be Frank Cottrell Boyce and Anni Donaldson.
- Alongside our partners, plan and host the annual Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care conference 2014, to be titled "Aspirations and Ambitions: Changing Lives Through Learning".
- Begin planning for a residential summit, a UK wide conference focussed on issues of permanence in the residential child care sector, following on from the Learning Exchange Summit of 2013.
- Development of a strategic partnership, The Creative Consortium, to develop links between the looked after children and creative sectors, with the aim of ultimately providing an integrated approach to the development of access to the arts and creative learning opportunities.





Centre for excellence  
for looked after children in Scotland

In the coming year we will deliver on several additional key areas of work, all with the ultimate goal of making a big difference to the lives of looked after children.

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CEL CIS is the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland. Together with partners, we are working to improve the lives of all looked after children in Scotland. We do so by providing a focal point for the sharing of knowledge and the development of best practice, by providing a wide range of services to improve the skills of those working with looked after children, and by placing the interests of children at the heart of our work.