



# Higher Aspirations, Brighter Futures:

NRCCI Workforce Report



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# Higher Aspirations, Brighter Futures: NRCCI Workforce Report

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## *Higher Aspirations, Brighter Futures*

**Series Editors:** Romy Langeland, Kelly Bayes, Jennifer Davidson

The Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care was commissioned by the Scottish Government to lead a National Residential Child Care Initiative. This NRCCI has undertaken a strategic review of residential child care services and developed a blueprint for their development which will shape the future direction of services and ensure the needs of children and young people are met.

There is a series of publications stemming from this Initiative.

### **Other titles in this series:**

**Title:** Higher Aspirations, Brighter Futures:  
Overview of the National Residential Child Care Initiative

**Author:** Kelly Bayes

**ISBN:** ISBN 978-1-900743-98-3

**Title:** Higher Aspirations, Brighter Futures:  
NRCCI Commissioning Report

**Author:** Ian Milligan

**ISBN:** ISBN 978-1-900743-14-0

**Title:** Higher Aspirations, Brighter Futures:  
NRCCI Matching Resources to Needs Report

**Author:** Malcolm Hill

**ISBN:** ISBN 978-1-900743-04-4



# Higher Aspirations, Brighter Futures:

## NRCCI Workforce Report

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### Executive Summary



The National Residential Child Care Initiative (NRCCI) was set up in the summer of 2008 when the Scottish Government and COSLA jointly commissioned the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) to undertake a review of the context of residential child care services and make recommendations for change. The aim was to make residential care the first and best placement of choice for those children whose needs it serves. To turn this rhetoric into reality, a programme of change and improvement is recommended.



Three working groups were established to undertake work with respect to: workforce skills; needs and resources; and commissioning services. This report represents the key results of the working group on the residential child care workforce. The report draws on:

- The experience and knowledge of working group members
- Relevant literature and policy documents
- The results of the NRCCI's stakeholder consultations with young people and professionals and comments submitted to the NRCCI web-site.



#### 1 Vision and Context

Scotland aspires to having a residential child care workforce which is internationally renowned for providing the best care for our children and young people.

Residential child care inhabits a unique and important place at the very centre of services for children and young people. This is influential work that can make an authentic and long-term difference to children and young people's lives. It can be positively life-changing for the staff themselves.

The nature, purpose and functions of the unit will determine the mix of skills, expertise, knowledge and professional backgrounds of the workforce within those units.



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## 2 Current Issues in Residential Care

### *Needs of children and young people in residential care*

There have been substantial changes in relation to the level and degree of intensity in the needs of children and young people in residential care in recent years. The changing profile of children in residential care, and the increasing complexity of their needs, brings challenges to the workforce who care for them day-to-day. There is a clear need for additional and specialist support services to help these children and young people address issues from their previous experiences which will limit their capacity to lead fulfilling lives.

### *A broader role for residential child care*

In some units, residential child care workers take on a wider range of responsibilities than previously. This broader role brings new challenges in terms of staff skills and knowledge.

### *Residential care workforce*

A residential unit staff team must reflect a wide range of education and experience to meet these needs. Teachers, social workers, graduates in sports and exercise science, health improvement and alcohol and drug studies, for example, may all have a contribution to make. In addition, children and young people need for residential care staff to have the support of the wider children and young people's workforce.

## Recommendations

The report provides detailed recommendations focussing on:

### *Recruitment, Induction and Retention*

Choosing the right people, preparing them for a new role and keeping them motivated so that they give of their best is just as important as ensuring that the residential workforce is suitably skilled and qualified. Senior managers need to take responsibility for rigorous recruitment procedures which include a meaningful role for children and young people.

Developing structured and standardised induction processes are also vital for new staff and are a vehicle through which existing good practice can be identified and owned by the whole team. There is a shared responsibility between the manager of a unit and HR colleagues to ensure that the best policies and practices are in place.

The intentional retention of staff is an essential component of services which aim to provide stability and a positive care culture. Residential care should be viewed as one of several social work specialisms, with experienced staff from other areas of the children and young people's workforce moving both out of and into residential care. Effective retention will involve making staff feel valued and addressing key areas, such as pay and conditions, and recognition of the diversity of background and expectations among the workforce.

### *Qualifications, Learning and Continuous Professional Development*

Since the establishment of the social services register in 2005 the residential child care workforce has been working towards achieving qualifications, and there has been significant progress in this area.

There is an important relationship between the quality of a service and both the qualifications and the education levels of staff. The workforce group asserts that there is a need to be collectively more aspirational for the qualification levels of the sector, and proposes a 'stepped' process. Given the increasingly complex needs of children and young people and the professional tasks that require high-level academic abilities, the workforce group believes that a minimum level of education at SCQF level 9 for workers, supervisors and managers would better equip them to undertake their work most effectively.

We are proposing that the current minimum qualifications levels for registration will be accepted as predecessor qualifications in the future. This is in line with decisions made for predecessor qualifications for social workers. We would encourage those who have achieved this level to continue their development and gain additional qualifications which may be used as evidence for PRTL.

The current structure of the SSSC register does not allow social work qualified staff to register on the residential child care part of the register without being removed from the social work part of the register. This may impede the flow of social work qualified staff into residential child care, and this issue needs to be addressed.

An important foundation for open and continuously improving good practice is enthusiastic support for ongoing critical reflection, the pursuit of new learning and knowledge and the advancement of professional skills. This culture is created

and sustained primarily by the manager of an organisation. It is also important that individuals take responsibility for their own learning and development throughout their careers, with employers providing opportunities for them to do so.

### *Management and Leadership*

The distinction between the notions of management and leadership is important. The manager will have management tasks in terms of administration and supervising daily tasks, acting as a link between the establishment, the external manager and the agency's policies and procedures. Leadership, on the other hand, can be defined as being much more attributed to the qualities of the individual. The good leader translates an organisation's vision, values and aims into priority activities and desired outcomes. Supervising and supporting staff is a key responsibility for managers, and the provision of external consultancy for individuals and teams is also recommended.

### *External Management and Governance*

The external manager must be a champion of residential care and children and young people's services in general, and have a good understanding of the nature of the residential task. It is important that s/he develops a good working relationship with the unit manager. Part of this role is to be constructive, supportive and challenging. Each needs to have confidence in the other.

Local authorities placing young people in residential units outwith their own boundaries continue to have responsibility to ensure that those children and young people are safeguarded. These issues are well set out in the recently published Kerelaw Inquiry report. The same good practice expectations that have been set out for external managers applies also to governing bodies of independent service providers.



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## The NRCCI

The Scottish Government's commitment to improve the life chances of children who are looked after was reinforced in February 2008 when Adam Ingram, Minister for Children and Early Years, made a statement in parliament setting out his ambition "to work with partners to make residential care the first and best placement of choice for those children whose needs it serves".<sup>1</sup> To take forward this commitment, the Scottish Government asked the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) to lead the National Residential Child Care Initiative (NRCCI) and develop a blueprint for the development of residential child care in Scotland which would shape the future direction of services to suit children's needs.

This unique opportunity to undertake a strategic review of residential child care in Scotland, contribute to making positive changes to how future services are developed, and ensure we are *Getting it right for every child* who may need residential care, was enthusiastically welcomed by SIRCC. This report is one of three produced by three working groups led by SIRCC which met from September 2008 until July 2009. It briefly outlines the context in which the NRCCI was established, its aims and objectives, and who was involved. It then provides the vision of the Workforce working group, briefly outlines the context for this particular group, and describes its findings. The final chapter sets out the key messages and recommendations arising from these findings.

### Context for the NRCCI

Since 2000 the number of children and young people who are looked after has increased sharply. Although only 12% of them at 31st March 2007 were looked after in a residential setting, this still represents 1,661 children and young people who are often the most vulnerable and troubled in

Scotland. Many have suffered from the impact of poverty and deprivation, the effects of drug and alcohol abuse as well as neglect and abuse. Most of them will have experienced other forms of social work support and intervention, yet 55% of admissions to residential care were unplanned<sup>1</sup>.

Concerns about institutional child abuse across the UK have resulted in several inquiries showing that residential child care services need to ensure their focus is on children's rights and needs. An inquiry into abuse at Kerelaw Residential School in Ayrshire was announced in November 2007, the same month as the publication of the *Historical Abuse Systemic Review*<sup>2</sup> which recommended the development of a culture in residential child care founded on children's rights and respect for children. *Home Truths*,<sup>3</sup> published in April 2008, acknowledged that while hundreds of vulnerable children and young people are successfully cared for in residential settings, there are considerable challenges facing the residential child care sector across Scotland in achieving high quality services and positive outcomes for all young people in its care.

Many of these challenges centre around:

- the experience of the increasing number of children and young people with complex and multiple needs being placed in residential care;
- the status, training, education, skills and competence of the residential child care workforce;
- the pattern and the type of provision required for the future to meet the needs of children and young people, and how this can be planned at national and local level.

### Aims and objectives of the Initiative

Building on the above challenges the aim of the NRCCI was to:

1. Develop a blueprint for the development of residential child care in Scotland, including:
  - An audit and strategy for the supply of residential child care services to match the full range of needs of children and young people;
  - A determination of the right skills mix of professionals working in residential child care to ensure those working with these young people are well-equipped to support these young people to develop their full potential;
  - An agreement of expectations between local authorities and providers to ensure effective commissioning of services for these young people;
  - Recommendations on how to address the challenges facing the secure care sector (This aim was dealt with in the *Securing Our Future Initiative* report of February 2009).
2. Recommend to Scottish Government, local government and providers of residential child care the actions required to achieve consistent improvement across the residential child care sector.

### Who was involved

The Initiative has been led by a Project Board made up of key representatives from the wide range of agencies and organisations with an interest in residential care in Scotland. It was chaired by Romy Langeland, Independent Chair of SIRCC. Three working groups reporting to the Project Board were established to undertake work with respect to the three elements of the blueprint outlined above and involved further representation from across the sector (see Appendix 1 in Overview Report). A further group examining secure care reported in February 2009.<sup>4</sup>

To engage as many stakeholders as possible in the Initiative each working group identified themes and issues which were posted on the NRCCI page of the SIRCC website, were debated at four regional stakeholder engagement events held during February and March 2009, and were taken out to working group members' own organisation, association and/or network.

Through Who Cares? Scotland over 100 children and young people were also involved in debating the themes and issues and provided their expert views in a report

that went to all three working groups in March 2009. Due to resource constraints the engagement of parents was unfortunately very limited.

The experience and knowledge of all those involved on the NRCCI was an invaluable and rich source of information. In addition to evidence from the stakeholder engagement process, working group members actively sought available and relevant research, data, case studies and reports and many consulted their wider organisation/agency/network. Two of the groups undertook surveys of local authorities and independent<sup>5</sup> providers of residential care.

All of those involved in the NRCCI were in agreement that *Getting it right for every child* who needs residential care is dependent on there being a full range of residential services that can meet individual needs and which have access to both universal and specialist services, are staffed by skilled, competent, appropriately qualified and confident staff teams, and are part of a continuum of services for all children.

## Introduction to the Workforce Report

This report focuses on the residential care workforce in Scotland. Getting it right for children and young people for whom residential care is the placement of choice depends on having staff with the right skills, qualities, knowledge and behaviours. The workforce group have explored what is known about the profile of the current residential workforce, and identified where change and improvement is necessary to meet the increasingly diverse and complex needs of children and young people.

Residential child care is one of the most challenging and rewarding professional opportunities in social care, but has traditionally been of lower status than other roles, and too often not the career path of choice for those entering the social work profession. This very human resource has often been valued lower in terms of pay and conditions, and particular needs for supervision, support and professional development often overlooked. Our work has been about improving the experiences of children and young people through supporting and developing the workforce.

The report examines the quality of the recruitment and induction experience. It identifies ways of improving the status, esteem and confidence of the residential workforce. It explores the aspirations for qualification levels and on-going learning of the sector. And it places high importance on all those with corporate responsibilities for creating positive outcomes for children and young people.

Residential care workers do not operate in isolation. In addressing the needs of children and young people, the workforce group has looked both at what needs to be

done to develop the workforce within the residential setting, and what developments are required for the wider children and young people's workforce to support children and young people in residential care.

The report considers the range of roles that workers undertake in the day-to-day care of young people and how these can be more effectively aligned with others who have corporate parenting responsibilities, or who provide universal and targeted health, education and community services.

As a pre-requisite to determining the skills, qualities, knowledge and behaviours of the residential workforce the workforce group has established a view on the needs of children and young people in residential care and the core components of the residential care task.

In reaching an informed view of the current residential workforce, and making recommendations for change and improvement, the workforce group has drawn on the views of children and young people themselves, staff, managers and external managers, providers, independent advocates, regulatory bodies, human resources and commissioning staff across the statutory, voluntary and private sectors.

This report supports the view that residential care should be "the first and best placement of choice for those children whose needs it serves"<sup>2</sup>. To turn this rhetoric into reality, a programme of change and improvement is recommended.

## Vision and Context

### 1 Our vision for the workforce

Scotland aspires to having a residential child care workforce which is internationally renowned for providing the best care for our children and young people. To contribute to the achievement of this exceptional level of quality, the workforce will:

- Be competent, confident, and ensure that children and young people cared for in a residential setting are safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included;
- Have the right knowledge, skills, values and behaviours to undertake the required tasks and to provide the best possible care of children and young people which fully respects and promotes their rights;
- Attract the best talent and make residential care a positive choice for both staff and those they care for;
- Be respected and recognised as champions for Scotland's children and young people who are looked after, and able to influence policy and practice at national and local levels;
- Be seen, and see themselves, as an integral part of the wider children and young people's workforce.

### 2 Context

Residential child care inhabits a unique and important place at the very centre of services for children and young people: with its day-to-day care of children and young people, it sits between health,

education, justice, community services and social services. Often, up to now residential child care has not been recognised as having this essential place. It has been seen as an isolated service on the periphery of mainstream services, and the impact of quality residential services has been undervalued. This lack of prominence has been to the detriment of children and young people's experiences and outcomes.

Working in residential child care can be amongst the most challenging and rewarding professional opportunities in social services. It is the very relationships between children and young people and staff which serve as the foundations for effective residential care. The time staff spend with children and young people in residential care, and with their families, offers opportunities to engage reflectively, creatively and constructively in the child's life, and promotes their positive, ongoing development. This is influential work that can make an authentic and long-term difference to children and young people's lives. It can be positively life-changing for the staff themselves.

While relationships are the foundation of residential work, good residential care is also concerned with the child's situation outwith the residential unit. This includes the child's involvement with her/his family as well as education, health, mental health and advocacy services, to name just a few. Because the service sits between a wide variety of professions, staff can be engaged with a number of different professionals as they work to support the child. The emphasis of these professional relationships changes depending on the needs of individual children and young people. Managing this demanding and

complex set of relationships requires intelligent, well trained, qualified and motivated staff, who aspire to do the best for the children and young people in their care.

As a workplace, residential care offers rich opportunities to use one's own experiences of caring and family life; it provides endless variety, as no two days are the same; it can offer flexible working patterns; it provides access to ongoing training and professional development, particularly now in light of the requirement for staff to register with the SSSC.

The nature, purpose and functions of the unit will determine the mix of skills, expertise, knowledge and professional backgrounds of the workforce within those units. The range of residential units will vary from those caring for very few children and young people to those caring for larger numbers, from those offering short-term to those providing longer-term care. The needs of the children and young people also vary greatly, with provision ranging, for example, from specialist services for younger children, short break services caring for disabled children and young people, services providing education on the premises, to specialist interventions addressing mental health and problematic behaviours arising from past trauma and abuse.

### 3 The task of residential child care

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 incorporated the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, giving recognition that children have the right to be treated as individuals and receive an appropriate level of provision and protection, and the right to participate in decisions affecting their lives.

There has been a general consensus about the basic developmental needs of children and young people who are living in residential care:<sup>3</sup>

- Health, growth and development;
- Education and work;
- Emotional development;
- Family and social relationships;
- Self-care;
- Identity and self-esteem.

In our consultations we explored the residential child care tasks that young people and professional stakeholders felt were most important to ensuring a positive experience for children and young people living in the unit. In particular, children and young people and staff identified many aspects in common, including:

- Building meaningful relationships based on trust;
- Importance of communicating and listening;
- Catering for children and young people's basic emotional, physical and spiritual development needs;
- Working in partnership with the child's parents or carers;
- Working in partnership with the other professionals in the child's life.





### Current Issues in Residential Care

#### 1 Needs of children and young people in residential care

While the developmental needs of young people may be constant, there have been substantial changes in relation to the level and degree of intensity in the needs of children and young people in residential care in recent years. The NRCCI 'Matching Resources to Needs' report addresses this in more detail, however most notably:

- There is evidence that younger children are requiring residential placements because of their complex and increasingly challenging behaviour, having suffered significant neglect.
- Older children affected by parental substance misuse and self-harming behaviours present increasingly challenges.
- Research indicates that a significant proportion of children and young people who are looked after in residential childcare are experiencing mental health problems.

The changing profile of children in residential care, and the increasing complexity of their needs, bring challenges to the workforce which cares for them day-to-day. There is a clear need for additional and specialist support services to help these children and young people address issues from their previous experiences that will limit their capacity to lead fulfilling lives.



#### Residential care workforce statistics

There are 5807 workers, supervisors and managers employed in the residential child care sector in Scotland.<sup>5</sup> In 2007, a large-scale survey of the workforce<sup>6</sup> found the average age to be 41 years within a range of 19-66 years, with a 32% male: 68% female gender ratio.

#### 2 Residential care workforce

The changing profile of children and young people and their needs calls into question the diversity of the workforce and the range of skills and experience that is essential. Children and young people require good primary care which sees their basic needs well cared for, including diet, health and wellbeing. In addition, however, they need staff members who will encourage their physical activity, promote their educational achievement, encourage their self-care skills, and help them address issues from their past in order to make best use of their opportunities for the future.

Because residential workers on a day-to-day basis carry out the tasks and responsibilities expected of a good parent, and more, it is essential that they are active, fit and healthy, and hungry for learning and new experiences. They must also be outward-facing and able to help young people develop networks and contacts. These residential child care tasks sit alongside workers' active and complex case work with children, young people and their families.

Accordingly, a residential unit staff team must reflect a wide range of education and experience to meet these needs. Teachers, social workers, graduates in sports and exercise science, health improvement and alcohol and drug studies, for example, may all have a contribution to make.

#### 3 A broader role for residential child care

In some units, residential child care workers take on a wider range of responsibilities than previously. Staff may undertake several or all of the following:

- Work with families;
- Work with other agencies such as the NHS and CAMHS;
- Carry case management responsibilities;



- Provide intensive support to children and young people, including delivering accredited intervention programmes;
- Work with teachers and schools to support children and young people's educational attainment;
- Support community participation.

This broader role brings new challenges in terms of staff skills and knowledge.

#### 4 Working with the wider workforce

Residential care workers do not operate in a vacuum any more than parents bringing up their own children. In addition to supporting access to universal services such as education, health, sports and leisure, looked after children are likely to need specialist services. All those who have corporate responsibility for a looked after child need to work together like an extended family in the best interests of the child; all too often this corporate family does not function well. As the person with the day-to-day care of the child or young person, the residential worker is uniquely placed to co-ordinate other professionals and services. The more senior staff and full range of managers have a role to play in shaping policy and service provision to meet the needs of these children and young people and ensure their rights are upheld.

Residential care is changing, and the needs of the children and young people looked after are more diverse and more complex. Children and young people need residential care staff to have the support of the wider children and young people's workforce. As a result, the workforce group urge the residential child care sector to engage with the process being led by the Scottish Government to create a common values statement and a common core of skills for the children and young people's workforce. We anticipate that this may help to break down real or perceived barriers between professions, improving trust and understanding between professional groups in order to improve joint working.

#### 5 Theoretical approaches

The qualities, skills, knowledge and behaviours described above, which are essential for providing quality residential child care, feature in several major theoretical frameworks which underpin residential child care practice in Scotland. Social work, European social pedagogy, UK therapeutic practice and North American child and youth care work all promote a sound knowledge of child development, group processes and children's rights. These frameworks have common features, and promote in various ways holistic child care practices which focus on the centrality of a relationship with the young person.

##### *Social pedagogy*

The key principles of social pedagogic practice summarise what we consider to be at the heart of the residential child care task. These are the key principles of social pedagogy, as defined through research at the Thomas Coram Research Unit:

- A focus on the child as a whole person, and support for the child's overall development;
- The practitioner seeing herself/himself as a person, in relationship with the child or young person;
- While they are together, children and young people and staff are seen as inhabiting the same life space, not as existing in separate, hierarchical domains;
- As professionals, pedagogues are encouraged constantly to reflect on their practice and to apply both theoretical understandings and self-knowledge to their work and the sometimes challenging demands with which they are confronted;
- Pedagogues should be both practical and creative; their training prepares them to share in many aspects of children and young people's daily lives, such as preparing meals and snacks, or making music and building kites
- In group settings, children and young people's associative life is seen as an important resource;

- Pedagogy builds on an understanding of children and young people's rights that is not limited to procedural matters or legislated requirements;
- There is an emphasis on team work and valuing the contributions of others in the task of 'bringing up' children and young people: family members, other professionals and members of the local community.

### *Social work*

The social work profession also promotes skills which are highly relevant to the residential child care task. The social work profession promotes problem solving in human relationships. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments, for example in group care, fieldwork and community settings. The social worker's task is to work with children and young people in residential care to help them build resilience, maintain hope and optimism, and develop their strengths and abilities. Similar to other approaches, the quality of the therapeutic relationships between a social worker and a young person and/or their family is critical to achieving successful outcomes.<sup>8</sup>

### *UK therapeutic practice*

The UK model of therapeutic practice has its roots in the therapeutic community movement and in models such as planned environmental therapy<sup>9</sup>. It is based on the principle that all behaviour, including that of the adults caring for children, is a form of communication and that therefore it should be open to systematic enquiry and reflection by the entire community including, where possible, the young people. The model is underpinned by group and organisational theory and an understanding of child development. This has been reinforced by recent developments in neuroscience.

Therapeutic practice requires a planned and integrated environment providing a positive physical and sensory milieu that addresses the therapeutic needs of young people. The social, emotional and cognitive context is also carefully

managed with clear boundaries, close relationships, purposeful shared activity and a forum for the open resolution of tensions and conflicts. Children and young people are able to act to some extent as a therapeutic resource for each other and there is a shared commitment to growth and development.

### *Child and youth care*

The most dominant theme within the Child and Youth Care (CYC) approach is the centrality of *relational practice* which emphasises the mutuality of process between the child and adult, with an explicit focus on the relationship(s) as the primary vehicle for growth and healing. Through these relationships, children and young people are offered prototypes for future special and personal relationships.

Additional key principles from CYC literature include:<sup>10</sup>

- Engagement and connection as a foundation;
- Use of daily life events as a focus of intervention with attention to, and use of, daily 'rhythms and rituals';
- A developmental focus on the whole child that informs assessment and intervention;
- A focus on each child's individuality, requiring a flexibility of approach;
- Interventions focussed on the present, making connections between past, present and future;
- An understanding of the 'lifespace' (or therapeutic milieu) as key for effective practice;
- Use of activities to enable children and young people to experience themselves more positively;
- Attention to the processes of meaning-making;
- Staff members' self awareness and their 'use of self'.

The roots of the CYC profession are in residential child care, but it involves other settings as well (e.g. school-based programs, parent education and family support). CYC training and frameworks exist in North America, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and some parts of South America.

## Recruitment, Induction and Retention

Choosing the right people, preparing them for a new role and keeping them motivated so that they give of their best is just as important as ensuring that the residential workforce is suitably skilled and qualified. Doing this badly will be costly in both financial and human terms.

### 1 Children and young people's views

Research tells us that children and young people are very clear about what they want from the staff who work with them.<sup>11</sup> These views of children and young people must inform recruitment, training and the culture of the home. Children and young people have told us that their best experiences are when staff:

- ☺ Like them,
- ☺ Are kind, caring and honest,
- ☺ Are understanding, non-judgemental and patient,
- ☺ Are friendly, reliable and able to compromise,
- ☺ Listen to them and help with problems,
- ☺ Are funny, happy and easy to get along with,
- ☺ Are supportive, understanding and encouraging,
- ☺ Keep them safe and well,
- ☺ Help them feel secure,
- ☺ Are motivated to find out what children and young people want and need,
- ☺ Spend time with them.

### 2 Personal characteristics and qualities of residential child care workers

Residential child care staff must be intelligent and articulate with a willingness and motivation to question and challenge on behalf of a young person. They must have personal authority and be self-aware. Being an autonomous practitioner, they will be level-headed and positive in the face of challenging behaviour, even when this is directed towards them. Residential child care staff must be confident in their ability to form quality personal relationships with often well-defended young people and must genuinely like working with and have empathy with those young people for whom they care.

### 3 Rigorous and safe recruitment

An excellent staff team begins with good safe recruitment based on a high degree of rigour. First, employers must ensure that they understand what is expected of them. The SSSC Codes of Practice<sup>12</sup> clearly state that employers have a responsibility to recruit safely and to ensure that staff are registered with the SSSC:

*As a social service employer you must make sure people are suitable to enter the social service workforce and understand their roles and responsibilities.*

A residential worker should be:

*'Someone who is happy and friendly so we share our private information with them. Trustworthy, caring and I want them to be nice' (Tracey, age 11)*

*'Understanding, be able to compromise' (Clare, age 14)*

*'Someone who gives you the support you need – independent living skills, gives you one to ones, talking about care plans, going places, coming to meetings and talking for you'*

*(James, age 13)*



This includes:

- Using rigorous and thorough recruitment and selection processes focused on making sure that only people who have the appropriate knowledge and skills and who are suitable to provide social services are allowed to enter your workforce;
- Checking criminal records, relevant registers and indexes, and assessing whether people are capable of carrying out the duties of the job they have been selected for before confirming appointments;
- Seeking and providing reliable references.<sup>13</sup>

Guidance on safer recruitment is available,<sup>14</sup> and we expect employers will apply these consistently. For example, *Safer Recruitment through Better Recruitment: Guidance in Relation to Staff Working in Social Care and Social Work Settings*<sup>15</sup> is relevant and useful. As a starting point, it identifies six basic outcomes of safer recruitment which are offered as guiding principles for the design of a recruitment and selection process:

- Legal and regulatory requirements are met,
- Potential applicants are aware of the employer's commitment to the welfare of vulnerable people,
- Employers are satisfied that each candidate has demonstrated their suitability for the specific post,
- Employers are satisfied as far as possible at each stage of recruitment and selection that the candidate is safe to practice,
- Employers are satisfied at each stage of the recruitment and selection process that the best candidate(s) have been selected to progress to the next stage,
- Employers are satisfied of the candidate's identity, qualifications and registration status.

Despite the availability of this guidance, the Care Commission found that one in five of the services they sampled needed to improve their procedures for recruiting staff.<sup>16</sup> SIRCC research confirmed that employers' use of basic safer recruitment guidelines is patchy and inconsistent across Scotland.<sup>17</sup> A review in 2006 of the use of a recruitment toolkit found evidence that not all employers were using it to any great effect.<sup>18</sup> The researchers concluded that senior officers at corporate level must become involved and committed to safer recruitment.<sup>19</sup> We agree. This is an important message we repeat here: **senior corporate leaders must demonstrate consistent leadership in this area.**

### RECOMMENDATION 1

Employers should ensure all staff are recruited in accordance with Scottish Government Safer Recruitment guidance and the SSSC Codes of Practice.

National Occupational Standards (NOS)<sup>20</sup> bring together the knowledge, understanding, values and practical skills required to do the work relevant to a particular job or function, and are presented as statements of competence. We support the recommendations of the Skills for Care and Development to use these NOS<sup>21</sup> for recruitment, in particular in the development of a person specification. We propose that managers implement the guidance regarding the strategic uses of the NOS.<sup>22</sup>





## 4 Children and young people's input: choosing the right staff

Children and young people have consistently felt that they have an important contribution to make in staff recruitment. The Workforce group agrees. Children and young people have clear ideas as to what makes a good member of residential care staff and they are aware that the quality of staff recruited to care for them will have a profound effect on their experiences.

***“I felt it was important that children have a say about who works with them. People can act differently if it’s children or adults who they are speaking to.” (Grace, age 12)***

Meaningfully involving children and young people in recruitment has been successful across a number of different settings. Their input can help managers identify the essential ‘subtle fit’.

***“I think one of the main criteria of employing someone to work with children is that they have a genuine interest in children and young people. They [children and young people] have got ways of establishing that I don’t have”***  
*(Peter, service manager)<sup>23</sup>*

## 5 Structured and standardised induction

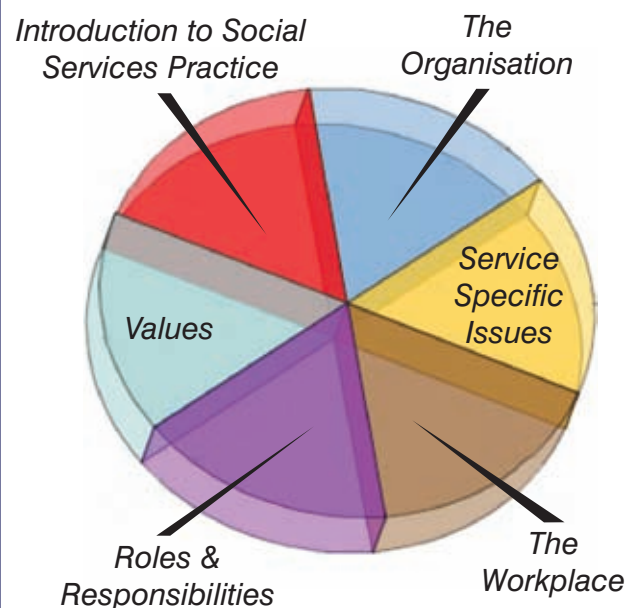
The next important step following rigorous and safe recruitment is a structured and standardised process for introducing staff to the organisation. This is the way in which employers can establish good practice. This process helps newly recruited staff to be properly introduced to the service and their roles, and it can tailor staff members' skills to the needs of the specific residential setting.

On appointment and during the first year in any new post, staff should have:

- an individual learning plan,
- supervision and additional support,
- a protected workload,
- regular performance review at least quarterly.

There is a shared responsibility between the manager of a unit and their HR colleagues to ensure that policies and practices are in place. These should assist employees who need particular support to improve their performance and to allow termination of employment where there is evidence that competencies are not being met.

The SSSC has produced a comprehensive induction tool *Preparing for Practice: Induction guidance for social service employers in Scotland*.<sup>24</sup> They describe six key components of induction as shown in the diagram below. We commend this resource to employers as a useful prompt to reflect on their current induction practice and consider ways in which they could improve.



### 6 Intentional retention

Historically, some providers of residential child care have had difficulty retaining good quality staff. Unlike other areas of social work where staff will move between services and then return, traditionally qualifying staff might get their start working in residential child care, but move on to fieldwork posts before too long. There are residential settings where this is not the case at all, and we can learn from them.

While we recognize the valuable contribution made by people who remain in residential child care services even for a short time, residential care should be viewed as one of several social work specialisms, with experienced staff from other areas of the children and young people's workforce moving both out of and into residential care.

Changing this trend is a challenge, and is related to a range of factors. While the status of the sector is certainly an underlying factor here, there are key areas that managers can address which can have a substantial influence on staff retention and which can help to inform employers' efforts at recruitment.

### 7 Pay and conditions

Pay and remuneration across public, private, and voluntary sectors is broadly consistent, with the exception of services with disabilities, where there may be some disparity. Residential child care workers are generally paid less than their field social work colleagues and this has an impact on recruitment and retention of social work qualified staff. We consider that there is a critical role for qualified social workers working within residential care teams, and this disparity seriously undermines this aspiration. In addition, as we drive up

educational and qualifications levels in this workforce and recognize the importance and complexity of the work, we must ensure this sector can compete for the best staff.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**  
**Employers need to ensure that pay and conditions within the sector are competitive, attract the best people and are commensurate with the importance and complexity of the task.**

### 8 Valuing staff

Research across all sectors of the workforce supports the view that people remain in a job where they feel valued, even if the pay is not as high as they would like it to be. Staff will be more likely to stay and progress whilst in the job if employers:

- support their workers' development
- maintain a culture of effective supervision where it is possible to learn from mistakes
- offer good role modelling and mentoring;
- offer career pathways<sup>25</sup>.

### 9 Valuing diversity

Employers who successfully retain competent staff recognise the diversity of their workforce and how workers' attitudes to their work and their expectations differ from person to person. When it comes to incentives to remain in a post, different people in the workplace have varying expectations of what their work should give to them.<sup>26</sup> For some, additional pay may be important for retention and motivation while for others additional leave or more flexible working arrangements may make the difference between one employer and another.



## Qualifications, Learning and Continuous Professional Development

In setting out its policy for regulation of the social services workforce, government gave a clear indication of the importance of the RCC workforce by including them in the initial groups of workers to be registered. Qualification requirements were consulted upon and set, and the register for residential child care opened in 2005. The residential child care workforce has been working towards achieving qualifications, and we have seen significant progress in this area. Children and young people can begin to feel confident that the staff caring for them are better equipped to do the job.

### 1 What do children and young people say?

When asked for their opinions regarding staff training in SIRCC's *Training Needs Analysis* in 2001, young people were clear that staff ought to have qualifications and listed areas that they wanted staff to have better understanding of, including managing challenging behaviour and supporting loss and grief.<sup>27</sup> Three years later, when the Care Commission asked SIRCC and Who Cares? Scotland to undertake an independent consultation with young people in residential care, the young people said the training levels in residential child care were inadequate and that there needed to be much more attention paid to this area.<sup>28</sup> When interviewed for this report (2009), young people said that training is just one of many important components of good care, and stressed that interpersonal skills and personal qualities were exceptionally important.

*'Qualifications are important 'cause they set a standard but they need to know other stuff too that you can't learn at college.'* (Ryan, age 21, Care Leaver)

*'I think they should have an idea about children's rights and how to explain these to young people.'* (Gemma, age 17)

*'Look at all the good mums and dads, you don't need qualifications for that. Its more about the person than the qualifications.'* (Robbie, age 15)

### 2 What do residential professionals say?

Residential child care staff have reported that they are much better equipped to undertake their task and feel much more confident and competent after training and gaining relevant qualifications.<sup>29</sup> In the consultations for this report, workers, supervisors, managers and external managers expressed compellingly the need for training, qualifications and supervision in order better to equip them for the residential child care task. Many expressed the need to have child-care-related qualifications, a residential child care qualification, a social pedagogy or social work education degree. The majority concluded that there should be higher aspirations for them. This underlines the need to extend the focus beyond initial training to include ongoing learning and post-qualifying training.

We now need to build upon the work already undertaken in relation to qualifications. The workforce group asserts that there is a need to be collectively more aspirational for the qualification levels of the sector. Achieving the vision of a competent, confident, professional workforce of

critically reflective practitioners requires attention to, and aspirations for, the range of ways in which learning is brought into the workplace. This ranges from professional qualifications, education levels and on-going learning, to the successful transfer of this knowledge into practice.

### 3 The relationship between qualifications, education and children and young people's outcomes

There is an important relationship between the quality of a service and both the qualifications and the education levels of staff.<sup>30</sup> Research into the universal care setting of pre-school education determined that the higher the level of the qualification, particularly that of the manager, and the more relevant the qualification for the task, the more progress the children and young people made.



### 4 Ambitions: a proposed stepped process

#### Step One

We suggest a stepped process to reach these higher aspirations. As a first step we recommend a review of the current qualifications for registration with the intention of removing all but the most appropriate and relevant to care.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**  
**The Scottish Government should discuss with the SSSC a review of the current qualifications for registration with the intention of removing all but care-specific qualifications.**

#### Step Two

A workforce charged with the care of children and young people who are looked after ought to meet—or be able to meet—reasonably high levels of academic achievement in order to understand and respond critically to the increasingly complex needs of the children and young people in their care. Workforce members should also be able to comprehend, analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions; these are skills which are developed through, and assessed within, academic studies.

This aim of a well-educated workforce is particularly important, in light of both the compromised pre-care educational experiences of these children and young people, and also the importance of successful educational outcomes for their future opportunities.

## *The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework<sup>31</sup>*

The purpose of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is to make the Scottish system of qualifications, and the way in which they relate to each other, easier to understand and use. It aims to:

- Clarify entry and exit points,
- Show routes for progression and credit transfer,
- Enable credit links to be made between qualifications or learning programmes.

The SCQF has 12 levels that reflect the Scottish system of education and training with level 1 the least challenging and level 12 the most challenging. The descriptions of each level explain the increasing complexity and depth of knowledge required, as well as the learner's increasing degree of autonomy.

The SCQF describes the application of knowledge and understanding to practice for each level, and outlines the following broad areas (see Appendices 1 and 2 for more detail):

- Knowledge and understanding (mainly subject based);
- Practice (applied knowledge and understanding);
- Cognitive skills (for example evaluation, critical analysis);
- Communication, numeracy and IT skills;
- Autonomy, accountability and working with others.

## **5** Current and proposed required levels

For the purposes of residential child care registration with the SSSC, the current required minimum levels of educational achievement are at SCQF level 8 for managers and supervisors, and at SCQF level 7 for main grade workers.

Given the increasingly complex needs of children and young people and the professional tasks that require high-level academic abilities, the Workforce group believes that a minimum level of education, with assessed practice, at SCQF level 9 for workers, supervisors and managers would better equip them to undertake their work most effectively.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

**The Scottish Government should discuss with the SSSC (who will consult with employers) the setting of new registration requirements, so that from 2014 all new residential child care workers would be required to hold or be working towards a relevant care qualification at SCQF Level 9 (as the minimum), which includes or is in addition to the assessment of competence in practice.**

**This does not apply to those who are already registered as residential child care workers or as residential child care workers with supervisory responsibility; the qualifications that enabled them to achieve registration or which they are working towards achieving as a condition of registration should continue to be acceptable.**

The achievement of a minimum SCQF level 9 will ensure that staff:

- Have a knowledge base with a critical understanding of theories and concepts, as well as some areas of specialist knowledge informed by forefront developments;
- Apply this knowledge within a range of professional level contexts that have a degree of unpredictability;
- Are equipped to draw from a range of sources when making judgements;
- Are able to present information to a range of audiences;
- Are able both to exercise autonomy and initiative in some areas of their work, and also to work effectively as part of a team.

This description meets our vision for a competent workforce capable of reflective practice and equipped with the right skills and knowledge for the changing task.

We are proposing that the minimum qualifications levels for registration currently will be accepted as predecessor qualifications in the future. This is in line with decisions made for predecessor qualifications for social workers. We would encourage those who have achieved this level to continue their development and gain additional qualifications, which may be used as evidence for PRTL.

This aim resonates with the Scottish Government's Continuum of Lifelong Learning<sup>32</sup> action plans and with the aspirations of the SSSC's Continuous Learning Framework which offer clear guidance for learning and improvement.

### 6 Mutual professional respect

Residential child care workers do demanding jobs and they need to be highly skilled, not just so they can provide the best services to children and young people but because they need to work alongside and build relationships with other professionals. Every other profession that works with children sees the value in having a highly qualified workforce. Residential child care workers need to be able to communicate with these professionals, on the same level, with the same status and with professional respect. Having a workforce qualified to similar levels, with similar skills and professional values, not only helps create trust between different professionals, but has the potential to open up additional career opportunities between residential child care and other professions.

Employers play a critical role in providing training and support for their staff they employ.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5

**Employers who choose to employ people who have not yet attained the educational qualifications to do the job but who have the ability to do so must develop robust training and support schemes so that these staff are equipped to achieve the qualifications required for registration within the appropriate timescale. This would ensure the continued valuing and inclusion of staff who may have diverse life experiences, appropriate qualities, skills and attitude.**



The challenges of residential work are continually changing as the needs of children and young people become increasingly more complex. Courses acceptable for registration of the workforce should reflect this.

**RECOMMENDATION 6**  
HE and FE sectors, the Scottish Qualifications Authority and the SSSC should ensure all courses deemed acceptable for the registration of managers and other staff are regularly reviewed and updated. The views of employers, providers, children, young people and their families should be sought during these reviews.

## 7 Management qualifications

Given the influential role of the manager in the leadership and culture of any establishment, managers are required by the SSSC to have both a care and a management qualification. We strongly recommend to employers that managers who do not hold a management qualification on appointment should be given the opportunity to gain their management qualification as soon as possible thereafter. This would ensure children and young people are cared for by a staff group who are managed effectively.

We anticipate that this might also encourage good succession planning, with employers supporting residential child care supervisors to further their management skills and knowledge in advance of promotion.

**RECOMMENDATION 7**  
Where employers require to appoint a manager who does not yet hold a management award required for registration, they should ensure that opportunities are put in place quickly to enable the manager to gain the appropriate qualification as soon as possible.

A residential manager registered by another regulatory body, e.g. the General Teaching Council for Scotland, Nursing and Midwifery Council, or the Health Professions Council, is currently not required to hold a management qualification. We strongly recommend to employers that any such manager should be required to gain a management qualification in line with those registering with the SSSC.

**RECOMMENDATION 8**  
Employers should ensure that managers registered with regulatory bodies other than SSSC are expected to achieve a management qualification in line with those registering with the SSSC.

## 8 Professional registration of the workforce

Registration itself has a role to play in not just raising the status of the sector, but also in the ways in which staff move about from one setting working with children and young people to another. The construction of the SSSC register, with its inflexibility in not allowing social work qualified staff to be registered on the residential child care register as social workers, may impede the flow of social work qualified staff into residential child care. This inflexibility is an additional way in which the critical role for qualified social workers working within

residential care teams is seriously undermined. We have asked the Scottish Government to consider what it can do to change this.

### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

**The Scottish Government should identify a suitable legislative vehicle to amend legislation in order to enable social workers to be registered on more than one part of the register, to reflect the original policy intention.**

#### **9 Continuous Professional Development**

An important foundation for an open and continuously improving good practice is the enthusiastic support for ongoing critical reflection, the pursuit of new learning and knowledge and the advancement of professional skills. This culture is created and sustained primarily by the manager of an organisation. Individuals should take responsibility for their own learning and development throughout their careers with employers providing opportunities for them to do so.

### **RECOMMENDATION 10**

**All staff must take responsibility for their own learning and development, and employers should ensure support and advice are in place to help existing staff attain the necessary qualifications to improve their skills and career opportunities.**

The Continuous Learning Framework<sup>34</sup> (CLF) offers a tool for use by staff and managers to develop their skills of managing relationships and managing themselves. It is an assessment framework based on a range of four accomplishment levels: engaged,

established, accomplished, or exemplary in key areas. The CLF is also a useful tool to facilitate the creation of a culture where learning and development is the norm, and where new knowledge is regularly integrated back to practice.

Materials which describe the features of a 'Learning Organisation' is another helpful lens through which to view and strive for an ongoing culture of professional development (see Appendix 3 for further details of the CLF and the Learning Organisation).

Staff and managers require opportunities to come together with professionals from other areas of practice to ensure they are helped continually to reappraise the practice and culture within their unit.

Students on professional courses for those pursuing careers working with children (health, social work, education, etc.) should have the opportunity to participate in joint initial training in order to integrate at an early stage the practice of effective joined-up working.

### **RECOMMENDATION 11**

**The HE and FE sectors and employers should ensure that managers and staff have relevant opportunities to learn alongside peers from the wider children's services workforce. This should be informed by recent research and practice.**

The government is leading work to analyse skills across children's services to ensure the workforce is best equipped to meet the needs of children and families now and in the future. It is imperative that the skill needs of residential child care workers form part of this work. We need to build on what different professionals have (or should have) in



common around working with children to help create trust and a shared understanding of each others' role and the unique contribution that different professionals bring.

## **RECOMMENDATION 12**

**The Scottish Government should liaise with sector skills bodies to build on the work already undertaken through the sector skills agreements further to analyse skills and skill gaps across the children and young people's workforce (across all relevant sectors including health, education and social services). This will ensure the residential child care workforce skills are in line with the needs of children and young people, and encourage local and national action to plug skills gaps and strengthen joint training and learning across the workforce.**

### **10 Knowledge transfer**

An essential component in the success of continuing professional development is the effective transfer of that learning to the workplace. This transfer of knowledge is directly influenced by the culture of an organisation, and research has shown that knowledge transfer is strongly influenced by contextual factors and organisational conditions which can both enable or block the integration of learning to the workplace. In particular, research points to the behaviours of the supervisor in workers' ability to transfer learning to the workplace.

## **RECOMMENDATION 13**

**We fully endorse and reiterate the following recommendations about personal performance planning from the *Independent Inquiry into Abuse at Kerelaw Residential School and Secure Unit*:**

- **Providers should ensure all heads of residential units have a personal performance plan for the year ahead covering organisational and personal objectives, including development objectives and accountability for the performance management of those reporting directly to them. The plan should be agreed in advance with the external manager and performance reviewed in a face-to-face discussion with the external manager at least twice a year. This management review should be in addition to any professional practice related supervision which may also take place (19.12).**
- **Providers should ensure that other senior residential unit managers should have a similar plan, agreed by the head of the unit and reviewed by him or her in a face-to-face discussion at least twice a year. Plans should include the number and frequency of supervision sessions to be carried out with staff who report to them (19.13).**

Given the important role that supervisors and managers play in the learning and development process, this suggests a clear need for more support for managers and supervisors of residential child care services to develop the skills necessary effectively to lead a culture of learning.

# Management and Leadership

The distinction between the notions of management and leadership is important. The manager will have management tasks in terms of administration and supervising daily tasks, acting as a link between the establishment, the external manager and the agency’s policies and procedures. Leadership, on the other hand, can be defined as being much more attributed to the qualities of the individual. The good leader translates an organisations’ vision, values and aims into priority activities and desired outcomes.<sup>36</sup>

## 1 The manager’s role

The influential, ‘pivotal role’<sup>37</sup> of the residential child care manager should not be underestimated. The very culture of a home is created and maintained primarily by the manager; s/he is the individual with significant power to ensure that the culture promotes and enables excellent practice. Research findings reinforce this message and emphasise the importance of the manager’s role in determining the quality of care offered by a home.<sup>38</sup>

There is evidence from the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) research<sup>39</sup> that even lower qualified practitioners improved their performance, improving services and outcomes for children and young people, when managed by a highly qualified leader. Residential child care staff and managers also identified strong, skilled and effective managers as key to improving the skills, abilities and professional status of the residential child care workforce.<sup>40</sup>

According to research, residential child care managers are effective when they:

- Feel in control and supported and have a clear strategy to make the home child-oriented;
- Deliver interventions to children and young people and families that are the most logical and evidenced-based to meet their needs;
- Develop a staff team to implement these plans;
- Can sustain the approach through difficult periods.<sup>41</sup>

The National Occupational Standards for Leadership and Management for Care Services<sup>42</sup> offer a broader definition of some of the tasks of the manager:

- Manage and develop yourself and your workforce within care services;
- Lead and manage provision of care services that respects, protects and promotes the rights and responsibilities of people;
- Develop and maintain systems, procedures and practice of care services to manage risks and comply with health and safety requirements;
- Lead and manage effective communication that promotes positive outcomes for people within care services.

## 2 The task of supervision

Supervising and supporting staff is a key responsibility for managers. Regular supervision meetings between a manager or supervisor and staff is key:

- to safeguarding children and young people;
- to ensuring that skills and knowledge are used and developed;
- to building staff confidence and commitment;
- to promoting job satisfaction and staff retention.

Residential child care staff have reported that regular supervision meetings, in-house training and performance management systems are important contributors to the improvement of residential services.<sup>43</sup>

Supervisors play a crucial role in ensuring robust and fair policies and processes are in place to safeguard and support staff.

We agree with the views on supervision expressed by the *Kerelaw Inquiry* which highlights the three core elements of supervision:

- performance management,
- staff development,
- staff support.

### 3 Consultation

There is convincing evidence of the value of consultation available to staff individually and to teams. Ideally a consultant will have regular contact with the team to establish a relationship of basic trust<sup>44</sup>. This may be undertaken by a range of professionals with skills and expertise who are able to fulfil the functions of the role as negotiated and agreed.

#### RECOMMENDATION 14

**We fully endorse and reiterate the following recommendations about supervision advised by the *Independent Inquiry into abuse at Kerelaw Residential School and Secure Unit*:**

- **Providers of residential child care should develop and implement a supervision policy which is based on regular, planned and recorded supervision sessions between all grades of staff and their line managers up through the management chain.**
- **In addition, in order to promote group learning, consideration should be given to introducing shift or other forms of group supervision.**
- **Supervision should include three core elements: performance management, staff development and staff support – as suggested in the *Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review (Changing Lives)* in 2006. (19.16 – 19.18).**



## External Management and Governance

### 1 Roles and responsibilities

The external manager must be a champion of residential care and children and young people's services in general, and have a good understanding of the nature of the residential task. It is important that s/he develop a good working relationship with the unit manager. Part of this role is to be constructive, supportive and challenging. Each needs to have confidence in the other. Other key aspects of this role include the following:

- In order for an external manager to have a full understanding of the operations of the home, it is crucial for her/him to have routine contact with the children and young people by visiting the home on a regular basis and observing during different shift patterns. In this way, the external manager will monitor the experiences of children and young people and become one of a range of safeguarding tools.
- The external manager must have a good working knowledge of current trends and research, and should challenge practice as well as offer support. S/he provides a link to the operations of the agency and can offer an overview of policies, procedures and expected performance in the wider context for the manager. S/he ensures that practice complies with all legislation, regulations and national and local guidance.
- In this safeguarding role, it is important that external managers are involved and present during Care Commission announced inspections and are clear in their responsibilities in relation to all other regulatory activities.

- The external manager should be familiar with the work of advocates such as Who Cares? Scotland, and ensure the work of its own organisation is informed by the views of children and young people.
- S/he must ensure robust and fair policies are in place to oversee any allegations made against staff to safeguard both young people and staff.
- S/he must promote the objectives, purpose and values of the organisation, and in this particular case the residential unit.
- S/he should ensure the home and physical environment is in a good state of repair, and ensure any problems are dealt with swiftly.
- We suggest it is desirable but not essential that the external manager has experience of residential child care.

These are particularly important given that many inquiries, most recently the *Kere law Inquiry*, conclude that significant factors contributing to abuse have included tasks which extend beyond the boundaries of the home itself, but which are associated with systems which work closely with the home:

- a lack of adequate line management,
- the homes having no clear objectives,
- inadequate complaints procedures,
- unsatisfactory placement policy and processes,
- poor recruitment processes,
- inadequate or no specialist external professional advice,<sup>45</sup>
- external management workloads and low prioritisation of residential visits.



**RECOMMENDATION 15**  
**The Scottish Government should commission a piece of work that sets out the roles and responsibilities of the external manager and governing bodies of service providers and of those commissioning services similar to that undertaken for the Chief Social Work Officer, building on the requirements already set down in regulations.<sup>46</sup>**

Local authorities placing young people in residential units outwith their own boundaries continue to have responsibility to ensure that those children and young people are safeguarded. These issues are well set out in the recently published *Kerelaw Inquiry* report.

Consideration also needs to be given to safeguarding those children and young people in residential homes or schools who are not in the LAAC system, for example children with disabilities receiving short break services and some young people in residential schools.

## 2 Governance

This part of the report is addressed to those people who have governance responsibilities, and in this particular instance in their capacity as external managers of residential services. This will include local authority elected members, members of management committees, trustees and non executive members of boards of voluntary and private organisations.

The same good practice expectations that we have set out for external managers above applies to governing bodies of all service providers.

## 3 Guidance

There are a number of sources for guidance on governing bodies and elected members' corporate responsibilities for the children and young people within their professional spheres of influence. We recommend these:

- Corporate parenting responsibilities are described by Scottish Government in *These Are Our Bairns*;<sup>47</sup>
- The *Ethical Standards in Public Life, etc. (Scotland) Act 2000*<sup>48</sup> provides *Codes of Conduct* for local authority elected members and members of relevant public bodies. These individuals carry responsibilities within these Codes; it is important that they are familiar with their responsibilities, adhere to them, and hold others to account.
- Members of governing bodies will find the SCVO<sup>49</sup> *Roles and Responsibilities of Voluntary Management Committees* guidance helpful.
- The Independent Commission on good Governance in Public Services produced the *Good Governance Standard for Public Services*<sup>50</sup> report. This comprises six core principles of good governance which are laid out in the diagram overleaf (p.4):

*The six core principles of good governance*



In addition to the responsibilities of the external manager above, we draw particular attention to four areas of responsibility for governing bodies of residential services:

- The organisational arrangements should equip the board to carry out the functions of the external manager outlined above.
- Governing bodies should pay close attention to their recruitment in light of these expectations, as board members must be fit for purpose.
- Governing bodies should take responsibility for getting to know the home, getting to know the children and young people, and being the champion for children and young people.
- Governing bodies should take time to get to know and listen to staff.

## Key Messages and Recommendations

Scotland aspires to having a residential child care workforce which is internationally renowned for providing the best for our children and young people. This report supports this vision, and the view that residential care should be ‘the first and best placement of choice for those children whose needs it serves’.<sup>51</sup> To turn this rhetoric into reality, a programme of change and improvement is necessary.



### 1 Recruitment, Induction and Retention

#### *Rigorous and safe recruitment*

Choosing the right people, preparing them for a new role and keeping them motivated so that they give of their best is just as important as ensuring that the residential workforce is suitably skilled and qualified. Doing this badly will be costly in both financial and human terms. An excellent staff team begins with good safe recruitment based on a high degree of rigour. Senior corporate leaders must demonstrate consistent leadership in this area.

**RECOMMENDATION 1**  
Employers should ensure all staff are recruited in accordance with Scottish Government safer recruitment guidance and the SSSC Codes of Practice.

#### *Pay and conditions*

Pay and remuneration across public, private and voluntary sectors is broadly consistent, with the exception of services with disabilities where there may be some disparity. Residential child care workers are generally paid less than their field social work colleagues and this affects recruitment and retention of social work qualified staff. We consider that there is a critical role for qualified social workers working within residential care teams, and this disparity seriously undermines this aspiration.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**  
Employers need to ensure that pay and conditions within the sector are competitive, attract the best people and are commensurate with the importance and complexity of the task.

The workforce group asserts that there is a need to be collectively more aspirational for the qualification levels of the sector.

Research indicates there is an important relationship between the quality of a service and both the qualifications and the education levels of staff. Young people have said that training levels in residential child care are inadequate, and that there needs to be much more attention paid to this area. Residential child care staff have reported that they are much more equipped to undertake their task and feel much more confident and competent after training and gaining relevant qualifications.

### *Qualifications*

We propose a stepped process to reach these higher aspirations.

#### **Step 1**

As a first step we recommend a review of the current qualifications for registration, with the intention of removing all but the most appropriate and relevant to care.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

**The Scottish Government should discuss with the SSSC a review of the current qualifications for registration with the intention of removing all but care-specific qualifications.**

#### **Step 2**

A workforce charged with the care of children and young people who are looked after ought to meet—or be able to meet—reasonably high levels of academic achievement in order to understand and respond critically to the increasingly complex needs of the children and young people in their care.

This aim of a well-educated workforce is particularly important in light of both the compromised pre-care educational

experiences of these children and young people, and the importance of successful educational outcomes for their future opportunities.

For the purposes of residential child care registration with the SSSC, the current required minimum levels of educational achievement are at SCQF level 8 for managers and supervisors, and at SCQF level 7 for main grade workers.

Given the increasingly complex needs of children and young people and the professional tasks that require high-level academic abilities, the workforce group believes that a minimum level of education at SCQF level 9 for workers, supervisors and managers would best equip them to undertake their work most effectively.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

**The Scottish Government should discuss with the SSSC (who will consult with employers) the setting of new registration requirements so that from 2014 all new residential child care workers would be required to hold or be working towards a relevant care qualification at SCQF Level 9 (as the minimum) which includes or is in addition to the assessment of competence in practice.**

This does not apply to those who are already registered as residential child care workers or as residential child care workers with supervisory responsibility; the qualifications that enabled them to achieve registration or which they are working towards achieving as a condition of registration should continue to be acceptable.



## *Support for learning*

Employers play a critical role in providing training and support for their staff they employ.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

Employers who choose to employ people who have not yet attained the educational qualifications to do the job but who have the ability to do so must develop robust training and support schemes so that these staff are equipped to achieve the qualifications required for registration within the appropriate timescale. This would ensure the continued valuing and inclusion of staff who may have diverse life experiences, appropriate qualities, skills and attitude.

## *Courses for registration*

The challenges of residential work are continually changing as the needs of children and young people become increasingly more complex. Courses acceptable for registration of the workforce should reflect this.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

HE and FE sectors, the Scottish Qualifications Authority and the SSSC should ensure all courses deemed acceptable for the registration of managers and other staff are regularly reviewed and updated. The views of employers, providers, children, young people and their families should be sought during these reviews.

## *Equipping managers swiftly*

Given the influential role of the manager in the leadership and culture of any establishment, the workforce group supports the current legislation that requires managers to have both a care and a management qualification.

### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

Where employers require to appoint a manager who does not yet hold a management award required for registration, they should ensure that opportunities are put in place quickly to enable the manager to gain the appropriate qualification as soon as possible.

### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

Employers should ensure that managers registered with regulatory bodies other than SSSC are expected to achieve a management qualification in line with those registering with the SSSC.

### *Registration of social work qualified staff*

Registration itself has a role to play in not just raising the status of the sector, but also in the ways in which staff move about from one setting working with children and young people to another. The construction of the SSSC register, with its inflexibility to allow social work qualified staff to be registered on the residential child care register as social workers, may impede the flow of social work qualified staff into residential child care.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

**The Scottish Government should identify a suitable legislative vehicle to amend legislation in order to enable social workers to be registered on more than one part of the register to reflect the original policy intention.**

### *Continuing professional development*

An important foundation for open and continuously improving good practice is the enthusiastic support for ongoing critical reflection, the pursuit of new learning and knowledge and the advancement of professional skills. This culture is created and sustained primarily by the manager of an organisation. Individuals should take responsibility for their own learning and development throughout their careers, with employers providing opportunities for them to do so.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 10**

**All staff must take responsibility for their own learning and development and employers should ensure support and advice are in place to help existing staff attain the necessary qualifications to improve their skills and their career opportunities.**

### *Multi-disciplinary joint training and learning*

Staff and managers require opportunities to come together with professionals from other areas of practice to ensure they are helped continually to reappraise the practice and culture within their unit.

Students on professional courses for those pursuing careers working with children (health, social work, education, etc.) should have the opportunity to participate in joint initial training in order to integrate early the practice of effective joined-up working.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 11**

**The HE and FE sectors and employers should ensure that managers and staff have relevant opportunities to learn alongside peers from the wider children's services workforce. This should be informed by recent research and practice.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 12**

**The Scottish Government should liaise with sector skills bodies to build on the work already undertaken through the sector skills agreements further to analyse skills and skill gaps across the children and young people's workforce (across all relevant sectors including health, education and social services). This will ensure the residential child care workforce skills are in line with the needs of children and young people, and encourage local and national action to plug skills gaps and strengthen joint training and learning across the workforce.**

## *Personal performance plans*

An essential component in the success of continuing professional development is the effective transfer of that learning to the workplace. This transfer of knowledge is directly influenced by the culture of an organisation, and research has shown that knowledge transfer is strongly influenced by contextual factors and organisational conditions which can both enable or block the integration of learning to the workplace. In particular, research points to the behaviours of the supervisor in workers' ability to transfer learning to the workplace.

Given the important role that supervisors and managers play in the learning and development process, this suggests a clear need for more support for managers and supervisors of residential child care services to develop the skills necessary effectively to lead a culture of learning.



### **RECOMMENDATION 13**

**We fully endorse and reiterate the following recommendations about personal performance planning from the *Independent Inquiry into Abuse at Kerelaw Residential School and Secure Unit*:**

- **Providers should ensure all heads of residential units have a personal performance plan for the year ahead covering organisational and personal objectives, including development objectives and accountability for the performance management of those reporting directly to them. The plan should be agreed in advance with the external manager and performance**

**reviewed in a face-to-face discussion with the external manager at least twice a year. This management review should be in addition to any professional practice related supervision which may also take place (19.12).**

- **Providers should ensure that other senior residential unit managers should have a similar plan, agreed by the head of the unit and reviewed by him or her in a face-to-face discussion at least twice a year. Plans should include the number and frequency of supervision sessions to be carried out with staff who report to them (19.13).**

### 2 Management and Leadership

#### *The task of supervision*

Supervising and supporting staff is a key responsibility for managers. Residential child care staff have reported that regular supervision meetings, in-house training and performance management systems are important contributors to the improvement of residential services<sup>52</sup>.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 14**

**We fully endorse and reiterate the following recommendations about supervision advised by the Independent Inquiry into abuse at Kerelaw Residential School and Secure Unit:**

- **Providers of residential child care should develop and implement a supervision policy which is based on regular, planned and recorded supervision sessions between all grades of staff and their line managers up through the management chain.**
- **In addition, in order to promote group learning, consideration should be given to introducing shift or other forms of group supervision.**
- **Supervision should include three core elements: performance management; staff development and staff support – as suggested in the Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review (Changing Lives) in 2006. (19.16 – 19.18).**

### 3 External Management and Governance

#### *Roles and responsibilities*

The external manager must be a champion of residential care, and children and young people's services in general, and have a good understanding of the nature of the residential task. It is important that s/he develop a good working relationship with the unit manager. Part of this role is to be constructive, supportive and challenging. Each needs to have confidence in the other.

These key aspects are particularly important given that many inquiries, most recently the *Kerelaw Inquiry*, conclude that significant factors contributing to abuse have included tasks which extend beyond the boundaries of the home itself, but which are associated with systems which work closely with the home.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 15**

**The Scottish Government should commission a piece of work that sets out the roles and responsibilities of the external manager and governing bodies of service providers and of those commissioning services similar to that undertaken for the Chief Social Work Officer, building on the requirements already set down in regulations.**



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## Appendix 1: The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Level Comparisons

Note below the differences in outcomes between level 7 which is the current level required for workers, and levels 9 and 10 (emphasis ours).

At SCQF level 7, [workers] should be able to use some of the basic and routine professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline.

At SCQF level 8, [supervisors and managers] should be able to use some of the basic and routine professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline a few of which are advanced or complex. Adapt routine practice within accepted standards.

At SCQF level 9, graduates should be able to use a selection of the principal skills, techniques, practices and /or materials associated with a subject or discipline. SCQF level 9 also requires the ability to use a few advanced skills, techniques, and practices, and to practice routine methods of enquiry and/or research.

At SCQF level 10, graduates should be able to use a range of the principal skills, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline. Use a few practices and/or materials which are specialised, advanced or at the forefront of a subject/discipline. Execute a defined project of research, development or investigation and identify and implement relevant outcomes. Practice in a range of professional level contexts which include a degree of unpredictability and/or specialism.

### Appendix 2: The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Outcomes of Learning at Level 9

Some of the relevant characteristics and outcomes of learning at the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 9 include:

#### 1. Knowledge and understanding

Demonstrate and/or work with:

- A broad and integrated knowledge and understanding of the scope, main areas and boundaries of a subject/discipline.
- A critical understanding of a selection of the principal theories, principles, concepts and terminology.
- Knowledge that is detailed in some areas and/or knowledge of one or more specialisms that are informed by forefront developments.

#### 2. Practice: applied knowledge and understanding

- Use a selection of the principal skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline.
- Use a few skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are specialised or advanced.
- Practice routine methods of enquiry and/or research.
- Practice in a range of professional level contexts which include a degree of unpredictability.

#### 3. Generic cognitive skills

- Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues.
- Identify and analyse routine professional problems and issues.
- Draw on a range of sources in making judgements.

#### 4. Communication, ICT and numeracy skills

Use a range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject or discipline, for example:

- Make formal and informal presentations on standard/mainstream topics in the subject/discipline to a range of audiences.
- Use a range of IT applications to support and enhance work.
- Interpret, use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to achieve goals/targets.

#### 5. Autonomy, accountability and working with others

- Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level.
- Take some responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources.
- Practice in ways which take account of own and others' responsibilities.
- Work under guidance with qualified practitioners.
- Deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes of practices, seeking guidance where appropriate.

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## Appendix 3: The Continuous Learning Framework

The CLF, launched in December 2008, is a useful tool for staff progression at all levels of the workforce. It focuses on four key areas:

- ⊙ The qualifications and training that are needed;
- ⊙ The knowledge, skills, values and understanding required;
- ⊙ Personal capabilities which describe the way people manage themselves and their relationships with others;
- ⊙ Organisational capabilities which describe the culture and conditions in the workplace that enable social service workers to be the best they can be.

In considering learning and development, the CLF aims to support workers to:

- ⊙ Identify their learning needs throughout their careers;
- ⊙ Get the most from induction, supervision, performance management and employee development processes;
- ⊙ Improve their practice;
- ⊙ Gain recognition for the progress and achievements they have made over time;
- ⊙ Gain recognition of prior informal learning;
- ⊙ Provide evidence of the impact on their practice of formal and informal learning, including post registration training and learning (PRTL).

It also aims to support employers to:

- ⊙ Identify, analyse and meet the learning needs of their workforce;
- ⊙ Increase the capability of their workforce;
- ⊙ Provide transparent, consistent and detailed person specifications for job roles in their organisation;
- ⊙ Create an organisational culture and conditions which support the recruitment and retention of staff;
- ⊙ Add value to existing systems for induction, supervision, performance management and employee development;
- ⊙ Provide evidence of the impact of learning and development on the quality of service provision and continuous improvement.

These are consistent with the features of the Learning Organisation which can be defined as:

- ⊙ **Organisational structure**  
Learning organisations have managerial hierarchies that enhance opportunities for employee, carer and service user involvement in the organisation. All are empowered to make relevant decisions. Structures support teamwork and strong lateral relations (not just vertical). Networking is enabled across organisational and hierarchical boundaries both internally and externally.
- ⊙ **Organisational culture**  
Learning organisations have strong cultures that promote openness, creativity, and experimentation among members. They encourage members to acquire, process and share information, nurture innovation and provide the freedom to try new things, to risk failure, and to learn from mistakes.
- ⊙ **Information systems**  
Learning organisations require information systems that improve and support practice and that move beyond those used in traditional organisations where information is generally used for control purposes. 'Transformational change' requires more sophisticated information systems that facilitate rapid acquisition, processing and sharing of rich, complex information which enables effective knowledge management.
- ⊙ **Human resource practices**  
People are recognised as the creators and users of organisational learning. Accordingly, human resource management focuses on provision and support of individual learning. Appraisal and reward systems are concerned to measure long-term performance and to promote the acquisition and sharing of new skills and knowledge.
- ⊙ **Leadership**  
Like most interventions aimed at securing significant organisational improvement, organisational learning depends heavily on effective leadership. Leaders model the openness, risk-taking and reflection necessary for learning, and communicate a compelling vision of the learning organisation, providing the empathy, support and personal advocacy needed to lead others towards it. They ensure that organisations and work groups have the capacity to learn, change and develop.<sup>54</sup>



# Higher Aspirations, Brighter Futures:

## NRCCI Workforce Report

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### Appendix 4

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