

SIRCCULAR

Informing the Residential Child Care Sector

In this issue...

the new centre

Scotland's New Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children
Incorporating the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care

National Conference 2011

LACSIG

Success Stories



In the Spring Issue...



The next post-conference issue of SIRCCULAR will appear in August. We welcome relevant news, views and photos. Please contact the New Centre by 1st July if you have potential contributions or suggestions.

Have you got an idea, story or photo for SIRCCULAR? Great! Please contact the Office for the New Centre.

Tel: 0141 950 3683
or email us at:
sirccevents@strath.ac.uk

What is SIRCC?

The Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) was established in 2000 with the aim of ensuring that residential child care staff have access to the skills and knowledge they require to meet the needs of the children and young people in their care. SIRCC is now part of the New Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children. For more information, please read the article on page 4.

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Welcome

This issue of SIRCCULAR comes at a time when it is almost impossible to keep our print up to date with our news. So much has been happening, not least in relation to *The New Centre*. If you have not already read about this or have only heard rumours, please read the Director's article about what is happening.

LAC SIG, the Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group, has also been very busy and this issue gives some important updates and news about events.

In uncertain times for so many of us, it is great to be able to tell you about some of the amazing achievements of various individuals as well as organisations. Congratulations to all who help raise the profile and quality of residential child care in Scotland!

This is our last issue before the SIRCC National Conference in June. Please check the advert on the back page. I hope to see you there – there is room for you all!



Graham McCann
Assistant Director,
The New Centre

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Items published do not necessarily reflect a specific New Centre point of view and should not be seen as an endorsement of particular organisations.

Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group (LACSIG)

Following the conclusion of the secure care work and the publication of the Audit Scotland report, it was felt that there continues to be a need to develop strategic commissioning in to other children's services area. In order to continue this work the existing Children's Services National Commissioning Steering Group has now been reconfigured and absorbed into Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group (LACSIG) as part of the commissioning hub.

The remit of the LACSIG Commissioning Activity Hub is actively to promote and support the development of strategic commissioning to improve outcomes for children, improve relations between purchasers and providers, and ensure the development of services fit for the future. The Commissioning Hub will disseminate learning from the strategic commissioning work at national and regional level, will consider areas which may need to be prioritised for national commissioning, and consider best ways of collecting and interpreting data on the costs and the quality of services. The intention is that the Commissioning Hub will have a co-ordinating and information sharing role which we intend to be facilitative rather than directive.

We have recently undertaken a high level review across children's services to establish the current strategic commissioning landscape and get a sense of where individual councils are in relation to their strategic commissioning strategies, highlighting the benefits as well as the constraints and barriers. The review has also enabled the Commissioning Hub to gain an understanding of our Scotland-wide service planning assumptions and the differing levels of care requirement and, provision and, will serve as a platform from which to consider future strategic commissioning activity.

We will be holding a number of regional workshops across Scotland to engage as widely as possible with those currently involved in designing and delivering children's services, and we hope everyone responsible for the planning, design and delivery of children's services will participate in their local workshop. We want them to contribute to the wider strategic commissioning debate about how we can improve services for looked after children through adopting a strategic commissioning approach. The workshops will take place across Scotland in May and June 2011 in the following locations:

- **Friday 27th May, Inverness**
- **Thursday 16th June, Glasgow**
- **Friday 17th June, Edinburgh**
- **Thursday 23rd June, Aberdeen**
- **Thursday 30th June, Stirling.**

Claire Burns,
The New Centre



Claire Burns,
The New Centre

The Child's Journey Through Care: *Holding Key Aspects of Child Development in Mind*

Friday 13th May 2011, 10am to 4pm
Merchant Hall, 22 Hanover Street, Edinburgh

£60 per person

Contributors Include:

Rebecca Brown, Centre for Child & Family Research, Loughborough University
Professor Nina Biehal, Social Policy Research Unit, University of York
Mary Beek, Professional Adviser, Adoption Policy Team

To find out more, please visit: www.sircc.org.uk/TheChildsJourneyThroughCare



A Time of Change and Great Oppor



Jennifer Davidson

I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on the changes as they are unfolding at SIRCC.

We're evolving!

As most you will already know, the Minister for Children and Early Years, Adam Ingram, announced in February 2011 the creation of a New Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children and that the new centre would be created by changing the role and remit of SIRCC.

What about services to the residential child care sector?

I believe this is a great opportunity for the residential child care sector. You'll know that SIRCC has long advocated parity in status for residential child care workers and other professions working with the same children. The New Centre will offer cross-professional learning opportunities and practice projects; our aim is to promote the residential child care sector to take advantage of both these cross-professional opportunities as well as the services that will remain residential child care-specific. This means other professionals working with these children and young people will have the chance to learn from residential staff, and vice versa.

Our commitment to the residential child care sector remains unchanged. SIRCC services will be central to the New Centre and will continue as we develop our new role and remit over the coming months. We can with some confidence highlight residential child care-specific services which will continue to be delivered through the new centre:

- Students currently participating in a qualifying course (HNC, SVQ, PDA, Undergraduate Degree and Masters) will have their cost-free tuition continued to an agreed completion date.
- The SIRCC National Conference which takes place annually in June will go ahead as planned.
- There will be a substantially reduced budget from which to offer services specifically to the residential child care sector in future years. Nevertheless residential child care workers will continue to have access to limited residential child care-specific services as well as to participate in all other services for the wider looked after children's workforce offered by the New Centre.

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How can I stay informed?

We are aiming to have the New Centre for excellence fully operational by autumn 2011; transition plans are currently being developed and implemented to meet this target. In order to keep everyone informed about the development of the New Centre for excellence we have created an interim website: www.thenewcentre.org.uk, which will be updated regularly with information about our transformation. You can also subscribe, via the interim website, to receive regular email updates and announcements about the development of the New Centre.

What's the New Centre going to do?

In addition to encompassing the work of SIRCC, the role of the New Centre will be to:

- Offer specialist training and support to anyone working with looked after children and young people.
- Work with the further and higher education sectors to ensure appropriate qualifications are available to relevant professionals.
- Retain a consultative role with children and young people on practice improvement.
- Provide consultancy advice to help relevant groups put in place, monitor and evaluate projects.
- Act as a central point of contact for those seeking information/advice, including the provision of a web-based resource.
- Run seminars and conferences to promote good practice and raise awareness of current thinking and developments in the area of looked after children, as well as helping to develop good practice through a research programme covering domestic and international practice.
- Work with the sector to reduce the stigma associated with being a looked after child or young person.

How will we do this?

While this is a great opportunity to build on the successes and achievements of SIRCC and to take forward further improvements in the services provided for looked after children in Scotland, it is being done at a time of limited financial resources. As with most publicly funded organisations we will be operating on a reduced level of funding in the coming years and, as a result, the creation

Opportunity for SIRCC

of the New Centre will be achieved within the context of a reduction in our Scottish Government funding of 25% over the next three years.

With this and the conditions associated with our funding from the Scottish Government in mind, it is important to tell you that we will be introducing revised booking conditions and charges for some of our services, e.g., specialist training courses. Full details about the new booking conditions and charging (including when they will be introduced) will be circulated widely and published on the interim website and the SIRCC website in due course.

Going forward from here...

Although this a period of significant change for SIRCC, we are delighted that the Scottish Government have recognised the quality and effectiveness of SIRCC's work with the residential child care sector over the last 10 years. I would like to thank all those working in the residential child care sector who have worked in partnership with us. We look forward to working closely with you into the future. As we look forward to the next ten years we will retain our core focus, while working closely with an even wider range of partners working with looked after children.

Like you, I know that many of the young people we are working with have overcome some remarkable odds and have massive potential to achieve great things for themselves throughout their lives. As SIRCC evolves into the new centre, we are keen to ensure that consistently high quality of care and the best possible chances in life become a genuine reality for all our looked after children and care leavers.



Jennifer Davidson
Director, The New Centre

Nutritional Guidelines for Children and Young People in Residential Care Settings

The Minister for Children and Early Years, Adam Ingram, has published new nutritional guidance to help improve the health and well being of children and young people in residential care settings. It provides nutritional and practical guidance along with information and advice that will assist practitioners to support the children and young people in their care.

Go to: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/02/17140611/0

Guidance & Guidelines

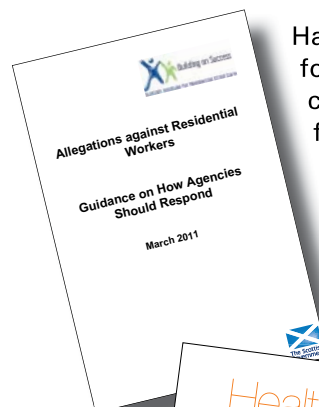
Allegations Against Residential Workers: Guidance on How Agencies Should Respond

Allegations Against Residential Workers: Guidance on How Agencies Should Respond has been published on the Scottish Government website in electronic format only.

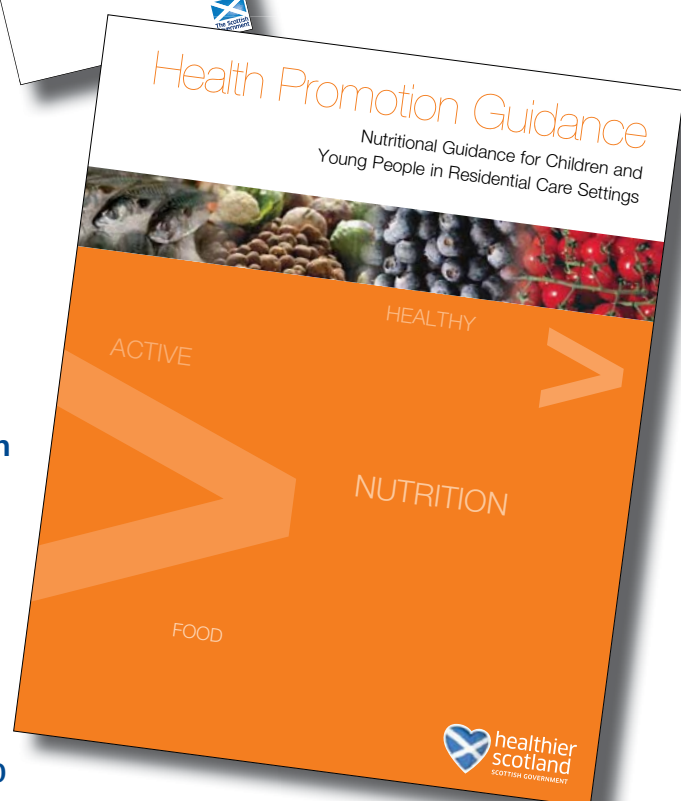
You can view the guidance at:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/18100100/0

This follows a request from the former Children's Commissioner and residential care providers for guidance to be produced for residential care staff. Provider organisations and staff working in this area expressed concerns at how allegations of abuse or mistreatment are dealt with. The Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) was commissioned to develop this guidance. Interim guidance was widely circulated for consultation in November 2010 and consultation ended in January 2011. Similar guidance for Foster and Kinship Carers will also be published.



Having guidance in place for both foster carers and residential child care staff allows for consistency for the young people who often move between foster care and residential care. This guidance will be published in May 2011.



Investors in People

Going above and beyond to put people first

Common Thread Group has recently become the first residential child care company in Scotland to secure the prestigious silver Investors in People (IIP) award. They were also the first company in any sector to achieve this award in Dumfries & Galloway.

Gaining the silver IIP award is not an easy task but for any organisation thinking of having a go, it certainly shows a commitment to excellence. It involves not only surpassing 39 evidence requirements for the standard award but in this case fulfilling 76 additional requirements.

Peter Russian, Chief Executive Office for Investors in People Scotland, underlined the link between quality of service and the way in which staff are managed and developed:

Creating a culture of openness and respect, where learning is a day to day activity, and managers are inspirational role models, requires real commitment but produces real results.

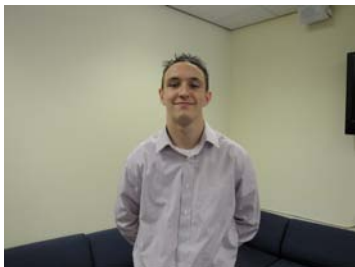
Julie Joseph, the managing director, was obviously delighted after all the hard work that went into achieving this award. Julie also made it clear that employee engagement is crucial, both internally and in the development of services offered. More information about how to apply for Investors in People awards is available at <http://www.iipscotland.co.uk>



Pictured from left to right:

Derek Bannon (Head of Care), Mark Joseph (Business Director), Julie Joseph (Managing Director) & Peter Russian (CEO IIP Scotland)

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration



William
SCRA Modern Apprentice

Modern Apprenticeship with the SCRA

Four young people are the first to start a new two-year Modern Apprenticeship with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) which sits at the heart of the Children's Hearings System. The four

young people involved are hoping the care and protection system for children and young people will 'hear' what they have to say.

'We've had lots of ideas, but we know we have to be realistic. We have to work within the law and we also have to work with the money which is available, but we think we can make a real difference which will help improve things for children and young people.' Zoie

As well as gaining an SVQ3 in Youth Work, they hope to improve the services provided to children and young people who attend Hearings.

The apprentices all agree that not many children and young people know much about the Children's Hearings System, but they might have heard of friends or classmates going to the 'Panel'.

'It's part of our job to make sure more children and young people know about the system. They need to

know it's there to make things better for them. We also want children and young people to feel comfortable if they do have to go to a Children's Hearing.' Jamie-Lee

Part of the apprentices' role involves visiting Hearings Centres across Scotland.

'We have started to inspect Hearing Centres to make sure they are up to standard. We are checking the reception areas, the waiting rooms and the Hearing rooms. We want to make sure they have the right information, in a format that is child-friendly, so children and young people can understand what is happening to them. We will also be looking at things like the furniture so children and young people don't feel intimidated.' William

William, also a member of Who Cares? Scotland's Board of Directors, heard about the apprenticeship as he was asked to help interview candidates for SCRA's new role of Participation Officer. He added: 'My first goal is to successfully complete my SVQ3, and then maybe go on to college to do an HNC. My long term aim is to work with children and young people who live or have lived in care.'

The Hearings System is a legal system and has to stick to the law; however the Modern Apprentices know that there can be realistic changes to improve the system.

SCRA



SCOTTISH

CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Living in a Young Person's Unit

I moved into a young person's unit in September. I have settled in well, get along with everyone, and have my own bedroom and my own space. There are always things to do. Everyone laughs at stupid things.

Sometimes I don't feel like doing things that are offered and sometimes staff cannot spend as much time with me as I would like. Usually staff will explain why this is not possible and I am okay about this, I can tell when they are busy.

I like to help staff to do the unit shopping, as we can buy things that I like to eat. I am learning how to cook new dishes with support from staff. It might sound crazy but it was my idea to help staff to keep the unit clean and tidy. We now have a chore sheet and can earn extra pocket money as an incentive.

Last year, staff asked if I would like to be the photographer for a charity abseil off the Forth Rail Bridge. This was a good day out and we went to KFC afterwards. I wanted to try abseiling myself but wasn't allowed because of my age.

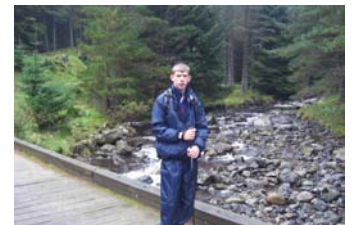


JC in the great outdoors!

Staff encourage me to keep fit and I have joined a local football team. Whenever possible, staff have taken me fly fishing. Sometimes I catch more than they do. I also enjoy cycling. When the staff took me camping in the Glen Doll area, I got a real shock when I noticed pairs of red eyes looking at me. Staff said, 'That's the deer', and they ran off. I have never been so close to deer in my life.

At the moment I go to the HELM education support each day and have just recently applied for a construction course at college. Hopefully, I will be able to start this later this year.

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By JC

Residential Care Worker of the Year

Jacqui Kirk, Service Manager at Aberlour's Fife Short Breaks services, helps to provide a range of support through outreach and residential short breaks to families who have children and young people with learning disabilities up to the age of 18, and who live within the Fife area. The Outreach service was also recently awarded straight top marks in a Care Commission inspection report, the first time this has ever happened within Aberlour.

Jacqui first started with Aberlour in 1994 and has had varied roles in that time but has made it very clear that the award is not just about herself but demonstrates the worth and value of her dedicated and caring teams who strive to create positive changes for the children and their families.

Jacqui is also very positive about the parents who support the children and young people in order to keep them at home. 'The respite offers them the

opportunity to recharge and refresh'. She also emphasized the positive relationship with Fife Council'.

On average, children and young people only have one weekday or weekend respite break every six weeks and Jacqui would love to see additional funding.



Jackie Kirk & Adam Ingram MSP

Aberlour is conducting a campaign to raise funds for its disability services across Scotland. Please visit the website if you are interested:

www.aberlour.org.uk

John Ryan, Aberlour's Head of Standards and Safeguarding, said, 'We are delighted that Jacqui is able to ensure that children and young people are involved in how services are delivered and that she provides strong leadership which has been validated by the Care Commission who rated her service as excellent. This is a very unique achievement in social care services in Scotland today.'

