

Issue 6 Autumn 2015

# REACH

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



## Focus on emotional wellbeing

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*"Since our last issue, we have seen important strides forward in Scotland, particularly with the introduction of the Children and Young People Scotland Act 2014."*



We are delighted to share with you this issue of Reach. We focus on the theme of 'emotional wellbeing', a topic that is often a difficult balancing act for those of you who

work with looked after children and young people. How do we keep young people safe, but also nurture them in a stable, loving home? And how do you maintain your own emotional health in the midst of such demanding work?

We look at case studies of particular children and their traumatic journeys, explore good practice across Scotland and what has been done to support and engage those people who have direct

contact and really can make that difference.

In all case studies published here, we have anonymised the details of the young people, and any pictures used are by models.

Since our last issue, we have seen important strides forward in Scotland, particularly with the introduction of the Children and Young People Scotland Act 2014, and you will see references made on the impact we hope this will have, scattered throughout this issue. This important legislation affects us all and we will look forward to working with many of you to help you implement the parts relevant to your work.

At CELCIS we see this as a major step forward, but there is still so much to do before our work is done, before we can say that all looked after children and young people have the same opportunities and life chances as their peers. Until then, we will continue to work with individuals, local authorities, organisations and the third sector to make sure we do as much as we possibly can to continually close the gap.

I hope you enjoy reading Reach!

**Jennifer Davidson**  
Director, CELCIS

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# An ACE look at mental health

Professor Michael Smith, Associate Medical Director, Mental Health, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde looks at childhood experiences and their impact on mental health later in life. Michael is also a visiting Professor at the University of Strathclyde and is linked to the Centre for Health Policy based at the University.

If prevention is better than cure, is there anything we can do to reduce the prevalence of addictions and mental illness? The answer is a determined and optimistic 'yes!'.

Many of the problems affecting adult health were influenced decades earlier in childhood. Our insight into this phenomenon owes much to research that began in California 20 years ago. In the mid-1990s, a group of researchers defined Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as ten kinds of harmful life events (<http://bit.do/bjZBB>). They include physical, sexual or emotional abuse, physical and emotional neglect and forms of 'household dysfunction' including things like experiencing domestic violence, divorce, or a relative in prison.

This isn't an exhaustive list. Severe bullying, for example, isn't included, but we now know that it can be as harmful as other forms of childhood maltreatment. Nonetheless, counting the types of adversity experienced before 18 years gives an 'ACE score' that is closely connected to life chances and health outcomes.

Adversity affects almost everyone at some time in their lives, and two-thirds of the population has some form of ACE score. Most people seem to be able to cope with up to three ACEs in their childhood without long-term problems. For example in a recent British study, people with ACE scores of 1-3 each had a 50% chance of living into their sixties without a major health problem. But people with an ACE score of four or more had only a 20% chance of staying healthy.

*"People with ACE scores of 1-3 each had a 50% chance of living into their sixties without a major health problem. But people with an ACE score of four or more had only a 20% chance of staying healthy"*

If you've been exposed to four or more ACEs, it's not so easy to achieve your potential, or to stick to the life path you might have chosen. In fact, the more ACEs you've had, the more the odds start to get stacked against you. Higher ACE scores are associated with being depressed or suicidal, with hallucinations, medically unexplained symptoms, impaired memories of childhood, poor work performance, and unstable relationships. ACE scores are especially high amongst prisoners and people who are homeless.

There's nothing inevitable about this: some people with high ACE scores do well, often because of secure attachment relationship to adults which are able to compensate for the stress and distress of adversity.

Nonetheless ACEs are powerful, and their effects long-lasting. As Vincent Felitti, one of the original ACE study investigators put it:

*Traumatic events of the earliest years of infancy and childhood are not lost but, like a child's footprints in wet cement, are often preserved lifelong. Time does not heal the wounds that occur in those earliest years; time conceals them. They are not lost; they are embodied.*

Improved Child Protection measures, our efforts to Get It Right For Every Child, and initiatives like the Early Years Collaborative are crucial parts of enabling today's children in Scotland to have better life chances than their parents and grandparents.

But thinking about ACEs can help us to refine and extend that work. For example, although the biggest impact of 'early years' interventions might take place from the prenatal period up to two years old, that's not to say that older groups and particularly children and young people who are looked after, cannot benefit too.

The ACE studies also make it clear that lasting harm can be caused by experiences that are far below a threshold for statutory child protection interventions.

ACEs underlie a lot of the problems that health, social care, addictions, education and criminal justice services must respond to. We could do more to share our knowledge and skills, so that we can respond to vulnerable people across the range of services. Many of our systems and public institutions might look rather forbidding and inaccessible to someone with a history of trauma or neglect who is seeking help. Care in services depends on relationships, and we should 'ACE-proof' our organisations as far as we can.

Much of Scotland's poor health relates to the effects of poverty and inequality. But that's not the whole story: even after taking deprivation into account, Scots (and especially those in Glasgow and the west of Scotland) are still more likely to die young. About two-thirds of that 'excess' mortality is due to suicide, drug misuse, alcohol misuse and 'external causes' including violence - each strongly influenced by childhood experiences. It is plausible - though untested - to think that ACE reduction might lead to lower mortality from these causes.

But of all groups in society, looked after children and young people are probably most affected by high ACEs, and least likely to have experienced the protective influence of secure attachment. As 'corporate parents', we are rightly concerned about the high rates of suicide, self-harm and substance misuse in young people who have experienced care. ACE work also helps us to understand the higher rates of personality problems, educational underachievement and offending behaviour that affects looked after young people.

I remain optimistic, despite these difficulties. We are aiming for three things: fewer ACEs, more secure attachment, and communities who can work to bring that about. That's not easy to achieve. But it's a challenge we need to rise to.

# Providing Scotland's most vulnerable children with love, care and attention

The term 'wellbeing' has been in the news a lot recently. With the passing of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the concept was set on a statutory footing and significant new structures put in place for monitoring and promoting children's wellbeing (in the form of the Named Person and Child's Plan). These will lead to changes in how health visitors, schools and other key professionals operate, and detailed guidance is now being drawn up to explain how it should all work in practice.

But what does 'wellbeing' actually mean? The 2014 Act describes wellbeing in terms of eight distinct but interrelated areas (sometimes referred to as SHANARRI, or the wellbeing indicators). The indicators define a child as having wellbeing when they are:

- **Safe** – protected from abuse, neglect and harm
- **Healthy** – having the best possible standards of physical and mental health
- **Achieving** – accomplishing goals and thereby boosting skills, confidence and self-esteem
- **Nurtured** – having a loving and stimulating place to live and grow
- **Active** – having opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities
- **Respected** – being enabled to understand their world, being given a voice, being listened to
- **Responsible** – taking an active role within their home, school and community
- **Included** – being a full member of the community in which they live and learn

This idea of 'wellbeing' covers all aspects of a child's life and development. To measure it demands a holistic approach, looking at a child in the round, and in their specific and individual context. We agree with this approach at CELCIS. But we also believe that the health of a child, be it physical, mental or emotional, is a foundation stone on which many other aspects of wellbeing depend. How can we help a child to achieve in school or feel included in the community, if their physical and mental health needs are not identified and met?

For looked after children and young people

this is particularly relevant. Many will have experienced significant abuse, trauma and distress, often compounded by coming into care. Trauma can have a serious effect on anyone's health, regardless of age, but for children it can have a huge impact on their physical, emotional and brain development.

Children react to trauma in different ways: some may be detached or disruptive, others may have serious problems with their sense of self and/or resort to risk-taking behaviours such as substance misuse and self-harm. Suicide can appear to be the only escape for others: suicide rates are much higher among care experienced young people.

It is for these reasons that CELCIS makes the conscious and explicit choice of linking health and wellbeing in our work. Our aim, through a range of projects, is to help carers and professionals identify and respond to the health needs of vulnerable children. In this way, we hope to ensure all children are provided with the love and support needed to engage and take part in their family, school and community – all of which are essential to their 'wellbeing'.

A sense of belonging and feeling loved are key to children's healthy development. Children who have experienced trauma can best be supported in their struggle to recover and flourish by adults who are empowered to develop genuine and enduring relationships with them. CELCIS has been at the forefront of reclaiming the importance and validity of loving relationships between children and the adults who care for them, whether that is within their own families, foster care or residential settings.

A child's healthy development is the goal for any parent, and we believe this should be no different for Scotland's 'Corporate Parents'. With the introduction of corporate parenting duties on NHS Health Boards, and the continued roll-out of the Getting it Right for Every Child approach, looked after children's health should rise up the agenda over the next few years. We are pleased to see that the Scottish Government is anticipating this, and shaping ideas about how to improve health services for looked after children.

For example, in November 2014, the Minister for Public Health announced increased investment in Scotland's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, and the establishment of a Mental Health Innovation

Fund. Alongside the more recent announcement of the Scottish Attainment Fund, these are welcome signs of the Scottish Government's commitment to vulnerable children.

*"the health of a child, be it physical, mental or emotional, is a foundation stone on which many other aspects of wellbeing depend. How can we help a child to achieve in school or feel included in the community, if their physical and mental health needs are not identified and met?"*

CELCIS is looking forward to working closely with the Scottish Government and others to identify, evaluate and scale up effective systems and practices.

Securing and promoting the health and wellbeing of looked after children and young people is a job which requires the skills and leadership of everyone involved; foster carers, kinship carers, residential care workers, teachers, nurses, social workers, service managers, local and Scottish Government officials, the third sector, families and young people themselves. Everyone has a part to play, and health and wellbeing should never be seen as 'someone else's job'.

In this edition of Reach we highlight a number of projects concerned with securing better health outcomes for looked after children. There are examples of practitioners receiving appropriate training so that they can understand the importance of attachment relationships, the impact of childhood trauma, and the nature of resilience. There are insights into work which ensures that operational structures encourage and enable staff, rather than inhibit them.

By working together, building a network of support and resources, we can provide Scotland's most vulnerable children with the love, care and attention they need to turn a difficult start into a promising future.

**Ben Farrugia**

# Sophie's journey

*Edwina Grant, Independent Chartered Psychologist, Certified DDP Practitioner, Consultant and Trainer, and founder member of Scottish Attachment in Action, speaks about her Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) work with looked after and adopted children and their families.*

Sophie was eight years old when I first met her. She had been living with her prospective adoptive parents for a year, having been accommodated at four years old and experienced three previous foster care placements. Her birth parents were addicted to drugs, frequently violent to each other and violent to her.

Sophie spent her first four years of life terrified and often hungry. She survived but had, unsurprisingly, learned that adult care was not to be trusted and that she would have to look after and defend herself to stay alive.

Sophie's prospective adopters dreamt of being the best parents they could be. They had, as most parents do, hopes and dreams for their daughter and for family life. They had been told by the local authority that Sophie was feisty and determined but that she would settle within six weeks of living with them.

## One year later

One year later they were traumatised. This little girl with a winning smile, so smart and sometimes so charming and funny, was also so violent and so oppositional. She tried to control everything and everybody, every moment of every day.

When I first met with Sophie's adoptive parents they blamed themselves – they had been told by professionals that Sophie would settle; surely, they figured, it was their fault that she hadn't? As a Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapist (DDP - a therapy evolved by Dan Hughes) my first priority was to support Sophie's parents to understand developmental trauma. Even though Sophie was no longer being hurt or neglected, in her heart and mind she 'knew' she would be – she was afraid of her adoptive parents and was literally fighting healthy parenting. She was not going to depend on her parents for anything, why would she!

Sophie's parents were quick to understand the origins of her behaviour. Over the course

of therapy sessions we (them and I) built a relationship of trust, safety and mutual respect where they experienced, learned about and practised in day-to-day living a therapeutic parenting attitude of PACE (playful, accepting, curiosity with empathy).

I learned from them about Sophie, and together we figured out parenting strategies and interventions that helped them to be in charge of the emotional atmosphere of the home and to start to build Sophie's trust and confidence in their parental care and authority. Sophie joined us in therapy and she began the long process of understanding her terror and her shame, supported and cuddled (when she let them!) by her parents.

## Now she is 12

DDP is a therapy with much emotion – courage, laughter and tears. Sophie is now 12 years old. She has great parents, a good school that understands her attachment difficulties and social work professionals who resource and support the family.

Sophie is on the road to recovery and she still has a long journey ahead of her. Sophie now knows and understands her story and she feels safer and more secure with her parents. Most of the time she feels she is loved and most of the time she loves her parents. She is far less scared, less controlling and less oppositional. She can ask for comfort and can take responsibility for her successes and her mistakes.

Sophie still has her moments particularly when she is stressed. Overall she is far more emotionally healthy. Sophie's parents have also been on a long and difficult journey which is now peppered with joy and with some of their family hopes and dreams being fulfilled. Now for the teenage years..!

Information about Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy and Practice can be found on the website: [www.ddpnetwork.org](http://www.ddpnetwork.org)



# Attachment practice at South Lanarkshire Council

*In this article Elizabeth King, Principal Educational Psychologist in South Lanarkshire Council Psychological Service talks about the journey to embed attachment informed practice in their local authority Education Resource.*



The last decade has seen an increase in key national figures, groups and organisations advocating a more informed understanding of attachment theory and practice across Scotland. The Scottish Government acknowledged the significance of attachment theory in the Common Core of Skills, Knowledge and Understanding (2012):

*"As an employee or volunteer you will be aware of how early childhood experiences will have affected the way in which children have grown and are able to understand the world around them and will be able to empathise and communicate with children in a way they are able to understand and respond to, informed by your understanding of the significance of your own attachment relationships."*

Research commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2012 led to a collaboration between Scottish Attachment in Action (SAIA) and CELCIS exploring attachment practice across Children's Services in Scotland. The report recommends that, 'Public and professional education about attachment ideas is essential for developing a societal culture which values children and recognises the importance of their earliest emotional development.' The report entitled Attachment Matters for All – An Attachment

Mapping Exercise for Children's Services in Scotland, and an executive summary can be found on the CELCIS website.

South Lanarkshire Council Education Resources, in close collaboration with colleagues in health, social work and the voluntary sector, is at the forefront of the promotion of attachment theory and practice. They recognise that the development of teacher-pupil relationships is a powerful way to improve achievement and attainment, particularly for 'at risk' groups.

In addition to awareness-raising with school staff and probationer teachers South Lanarkshire Council produced a number of resources including:

- Attachment Psychology booklet (free from South Lanarkshire Council Psychological Service)
- Parenting programme, Early Years Framework of Assessment and Intervention for Attachment and Resilience
- A-Z of Attachment and Resilience (free from South Lanarkshire Council Psychological Service)

The Psychological Service has also drafted the A-Z of Attachment and Resilience for

Adolescence which is currently being piloted in Rutherglen High School. HEART (How Early Attachment Relationships support Transition), is running in Glenlee Primary in Hamilton and learning from both of these is being shared across the authority. All these developments have influenced the recent formation of a Children's Services Attachment Strategy, which I jointly chair with the Child and Family Manager from South Lanarkshire Council Social Work Resources.

I am currently leading on an exciting research programme in collaboration with CELCIS to develop a training programme on attachment theory and practice for Education staff. CELCIS will deliver this as a whole school training programme to St Cuthbert's Primary School in Hamilton. This training will be developed within the context of the Health and Wellbeing Experiences and Outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence, which has given a powerful focus on wellbeing for Scotland's children. Lessons from Implementation Science research will aim to influence the planning and delivery.

We will explore the impact for up to one year after the training, and plan to provide coaching and mentoring to staff as they reflect on and implement what they have learned. The research programme will explore how attachment theory integrates with other key models and theories for teachers. It will consider how differently practitioners would think and act if practice were more informed by attachment theory. Questions being applied include:

- What factors support the development of attachment informed practice and which factors inhibit it?
- Does it affect outcomes for children, especially vulnerable children?

Phase 1 of the research has started with the distribution of an audit of the knowledge, skills and confidence in the South Lanarkshire Children's Services workforce in attachment theory and practice. The data has already begun to inform the work of the Children's Services Attachment Strategy Group.

**For further information you are welcome to contact [enquiries@slcpsych.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@slcpsych.org.uk)**

# Sea Changers help children at Seamab talk about their feelings

*Joanna McCreadie, Chief Executive of Seamab School discusses how a new approach to their organisation's branding had the surprising result of engaging children in talking about their feelings.*

The emotional wellbeing of children is of critical importance to their recovery from trauma and their longer term development. At Seamab our new branding helps the children share their emotions. We didn't predict it, but it works!

The Sea Changers are the most important part of the new branding. Each has a name and represents an emotion and a characteristic of Seamab and each Sea Changer has its own story which adds depth and meaning.

## **Involving children**

The children were involved in reviewing the initial Sea Changer designs and many of them drew their own versions. This led to a number of changes, including adding a wilder hairdo to 'Free' and longer arms to 'Hug'. The children could see they had helped to create the characters and felt they were being listened to.

As the completed Sea Changers posters arrived, we started to put them up on walls and around the buildings. As fast as we could put them up they were disappearing – taken by the children and reappearing in their bedrooms. A sign of their popularity!

*"They took knitted Sea Changers on outings and activities – choosing Brave to help them with challenges."*

The children started to use the Sea Changers to talk to us and others about their feelings. They could point to Sea Changers and use them to say how they felt: 'I feel like Angry and not like Calm'. Children said they wanted Sea Changer stickers so they could show adults how they felt. They took knitted Sea

Changers on outings and activities – choosing Brave to help them with challenges.

## **Exploring themes**

We started Project Free, where children took 'Free' on adventures. Children immediately engaged with this, taking Free out and about and exploring themes of danger and rescue.

We are at the beginning of working with the Sea Changers to promote emotional wellbeing. However, we are already seeing children naturally adopt the Sea Changers as their own and use them to express themselves. We don't have this entire journey planned – but we do believe it will help our children.



# Emotionally secure

*Jacqui McAlpine, Manager of St Katherine's Secure Unit in Edinburgh on Dyadic Developmental Practice, as an approach to help troubled young people cope with the transition back out of secure care.*

Almost all of the young people who walk through our doors have experienced domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse within their families. Others have experienced the loss of a parent and by the time they end up in secure care they are extremely vulnerable.

When they arrive at St Katherine's it is really important for them to feel that they are treated fairly and that staff don't make assumptions.

## Core training

To help achieve this, all staff are given core training in Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP) and this helps us to form secure attachments and develop relationships with the young people.

DDP is based on attachment theories evolved by Dan Hughes, an American Clinical Psychologist. He developed DDP specifically for working with young people who have been traumatised by abuse or neglect. These are children who are resistant to the traditional interventions and can refuse to accept that they are loveable or likeable. They're often full of rage and shame and they can have their carers feeling helpless.

## Recent case

We had a case recently of a young girl who came to us. She had suffered extreme neglect, her parents were involved in substance abuse and her mother was in the sex industry. She was in a very poor way physically and had resorted to extreme self-harm.

Edinburgh Connect helped the girl and me to build trust and helped her to manage her stress and distress. We had a huge job to do around transition and worked hard with both her and her future team, using DDP and occasionally taking risks to ensure her safety and protection.

As the only local authority in Scotland that operates secure units, we have very close links with Edinburgh Connect, part of Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS). They combine mental health and social care and they're involved with all of our young people at a very early stage.

## Working closely

We also admitted a teenage boy who was very enthusiastic about attending rehabilitation programmes. He had completed many such programmes previously on drugs, alcohol and theft, but he was admitted to us after re-offending. We worked closely with him to translate the lessons from those programmes into his daily life and his behaviour began to change.

## SIRCC Award

St Katherine's is a health promoting unit and a few years ago we won a SIRCC award for our work in this area. We looked at the health and wellbeing of young people and staff and adapted the strategy for health promoting schools to meet our needs.

Our Health Promoting Co-ordinator consults with staff, parents, the local community, and the young people themselves. We have



We try to give young people the tools to self-regulate and empower them to take control of their emotions. On arrival every young person is given a memory book and an emotional kit box, tailored to them. It may contain music, essential oils, comfort foods or information on yoga or massage.

Each young person also has a system to alert us that they need support, and we develop this with them – it may be a key phrase or word that tells us they need help. Again this allows them to self-regulate and take control of their emotions. It also gives them the confidence that people are listening and want to help.

decorated bedrooms, we offer gym discounts to staff, and promote healthy attachment through DDP. The young people told us that they felt there was not enough opportunity for exercise and not enough for them to do at night so we have prioritised this and now have a plan in place.

We are making real progress with our staff and young people and aim to continue along this path. I am a very 'hands on' person and I ensure I am visible to the young people. I spend as much time with them as I can – you won't find me holed up in my office.



# CELCIS writes on trauma sensitive practice for IRISS

*How do you deal with trauma? Most of us have a reference point for what is 'safe' which lets us make sense of traumatic events and help us to deal with situations.*

Looked after or adopted children often don't have this emotional reference point which makes it difficult for them and their parents to deal with trauma. Children in care are likely to have experienced trauma but not all of these children will be traumatised. Every child is unique and how they deal with events in their lives varies enormously.

## Expert

Our very own Judy Furnivall is a recognised expert with a wealth of experience in this subject area and regularly provides training and specialist consultancy services on trauma and resilience, and on suicide and self-harm.

Judy was asked to use her experience of dealing with trauma in children and young people in care, and with Edwina Grant produced an IRISS Insights publication for

the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS).

The final product is Insight 27, a summary of the evidence in this challenging area to help support practitioners to reflect on their practice. It has become a seminal piece of work in this area, having been regularly referenced and viewed online not only by people all over the UK but throughout Europe, Australia and North America as well as in a few African and Asian countries. In addition to copies sent out by IRISS it has been downloaded nearly 900 times.

Some highlights include:

- An explanation of trauma and its effects across all areas of childhood including learning, building relationships and self-worth

- The neuroscience of trauma
- The implications for practice of children who have experienced significant trauma

Adults who engage with severely traumatised children can either add to their difficulties or support their recovery. These children can not only recover, but also they can actually become even more productive and loving than their peers.

By understanding trauma, practitioners and managers working with children in care can be empowered to improve their practice with severely distressed children. Applying the understanding can help reduce the negative impact of trauma not only on children but also on the adults caring for them.

[www.iriss.org.uk/sites/default/files/iriss-insight-27.pdf](http://www.iriss.org.uk/sites/default/files/iriss-insight-27.pdf)

## Kids like Kate need a home

*Kate is a child who can't live with her family at the moment. She needs to be cared for while her family sort out some issues. And Kate is not alone.*

In 2014, around 5,500 children in Scotland needed to be cared for away from their families by foster carers.

Foster carers are recruited in many different ways, using many different messages. These messages can convey mixed ideas about whether fostering is a job or a vocation. Also thrown into the messaging mix are some myths which make this a confusing landscape for people interested in becoming a carer.

Common misconceptions include:

*'Surely I must need to have been a parent to know how to parent?'*

*'I wouldn't be able to foster because I'm single.'*

But one thing is certain – carers of all shapes and sizes, of all backgrounds and marital statuses can help children who need to be looked after away from their family home.

### The challenge

The real challenge facing local authorities trying to provide kids like Kate with a good home is attracting good foster carers. East Renfrewshire Council is one authority who decided that their foster carer recruitment

campaign required a revamp. The Council recognised that they needed a bigger pool of carers to have the best chance of meeting each individual young person's need to have a home. They wanted to keep East Renfrewshire children in the local area, and to do that they needed to extend the East Renfrewshire family.

Currently, many of the children requiring foster care in East Renfrewshire have to move out of the area. Local foster carers are in short supply, yet East Renfrewshire recognises that young people need the familiarity of their local school, their peer group and local community to meet their wellbeing needs during stressful periods when they are not in their family's care.

### Local residents speak out

So the Council asked local residents to help with the campaign. They asked what questions people might have about becoming a carer. By taking the time to ask, the Council found out that local residents wondered what support they would have, what the assessment process would be like, what the young people were like, and what experience they had to have to become a carer. Local people also said

they would be interested in talking to an experienced foster carer to find out more.

### The campaign message for kids like Kate

The Council then used this valuable feedback and the questions raised to redesign their website. They asked existing looked after children and carers about their experiences of fostering and used their responses in the website too. The words of the carers were used to demystify the role, and to dispel the myths. And now, the message being shared is that the most important attribute of a foster carer is a genuine regard for the welfare of children. The Council hoped that this simple and positive message would help to attract more people with the right values to become foster carers. And they are on track to achieve this. Since the campaign launched in March 2015, there has been a 525% increase in enquiries. A new preparation group for prospective foster carers has also started, with six interested parties.

The future's looking bright for kids like Kate who will now have a much better chance of being looked after as part of the East Renfrewshire family.

# Shetland leads the way

Elaine Aitken, Team Leader at Shetland Islands Council talks about their approach to permanency for children in residential care.

Shetland is unique – and not just for the fact that puffins currently outnumber humans by 10:1, or that it is more northerly than Moscow. Shetland can also claim to be one of the first Scottish local authorities to apply for permanency orders allowing children to remain long-term in residential care.

## Questioning thinking

When we began working with CELCIS on our permanency procedures, we started to question our thinking and realised that the best option for some young people is in fact a residential unit that they can call home. This has been strengthened by the Children and Young People Act, which has given us the ability and power to take this forward.

The Scottish Government defines permanence as: *'... providing children with a stable, secure, nurturing home and relationship, where possible within a family setting that continues into adulthood.'* And this is what we plan to provide.

We attended the Children's Panel and put forward our case on why the best option for these particular young people was to remain in residential care. When this was passed by the Panel, it was then endorsed by the Sheriff.

## Challenges

We know that there are challenges ahead – we have to rethink our approach and the challenges we are likely to face. This must be a settled house, for the children's sake,

so striving to keep a consistent staff is high on the agenda.

We expect staff to commit long-term and to take ownership of the children, building relationships and attachments. The staff are delighted that they can now make plans for the care of the young people, who are bonding in a safe, long-term home. Staff were kept informed and included throughout the process and this has sustained a high level of motivation.

We want these children to experience a family home and be able to do things that their peers take for granted such as having a friend for a sleepover, having a set of house keys or being left alone for short periods of time, as age appropriate.

## Rules rewritten

As you will be aware this is not how a standard residential home would be run, so we are re-writing the rule book. We are trying to cut down on recording – to only record the important things, and we are working very closely with social work and the Care Inspectorate, keeping them informed so that they can support us on this journey.

One of the young people, who has just received a permanency order, has spoken of the impact that the Children's Panel has had on her while she has been in care. They commented on how they were always being asked if they wanted to go to a foster home, and they talked of how it 'did their nut in'.

When they went into the Sheriff's office to see the final paperwork signed for them to remain in the house, they were in fact a little disappointed – they had wanted a big fanfare, or 'hooha'. To mark the occasion they went with the social care worker to choose an item which could be engraved with a date – the date the permanency order went through! The young person now feels 'owned'.

## Stigma changing

The stigma of being in a residential home is changing in Shetland. In our previous home, tour guides used to stop outside and tell the tourists that this was where the 'bad children' were put. Now many of the locals are unaware that this new purpose built house is a residential home! We are now part of the community.

We are keen to make this their 'forever' home. We want them to feel they can return whenever they want and to stay in touch – as their peers will do with their families.

There are still issues to sort, such as how do they get to college and who funds that, so we are linking closely with throughcare and aftercare services to work this out. And we are working with corporate parents to plan ahead considering some of the challenges which might manifest, for instance using a home's car when a young person wants to learn to drive. It is a learning curve for us all.

# A conscious decision to develop Attachment Focused Practice

*Moira Greentree, Manager at Moore House in Bathgate, talks about the changes they have made to practice that are having a direct result on the morale of staff and the behaviour and attitude of the young people in their care.*

Moore House has always recognised the need for young people to have meaningful relationships within their lives, including in a residential setting. However, our experience suggests that the level of trauma, attachment deficits and placement disruptions that many of the young people placed with us experience prior to admission, is on the increase.



In response, we understand the impact that complex trauma and the absence of secure attachments has on the ongoing development of young people, particularly in their ability to make and sustain rewarding relationships. This knowledge informs the development of our services to effectively meet the needs of young people.

Moore House currently has five small group houses that can be tailored to suit the young people who come to us from many different and often difficult situations. Typically they will come with previous experience of care, including secure care, and will have experienced multiple placement failures and the associated feelings of rejection.

## Attachment

Recent examples include a young man who came to us from secure care. He was very angry and aggressive towards males so we placed him in a small house with an all-female team where he was given the time to work through his feelings before being in the company of male staff. The staff focused on attachment and gave him the chance to be

a child again, and to fill some of his early developmental gaps.

In our more rural house we 'adopted' three lambs that needed to be hand-reared and the young people became heavily involved in this, which gave them experience of providing care and nurture. Even now, one boy likes to go and sit amongst the lambs when he needs a bit of space.

## Relationships

We have introduced a number of changes to the way that our services are structured, how they are managed and staffed and how our staff are recruited and developed. We create environments which are conducive to the development of relationships between our staff and our young people. Our investment in attachment-focussed practice empowers our staff to work at a relational level with the young people.

The vocabulary used within houses was adapted: 'physical assistance' was given not 'physical restraints'; young people do not 'kick off' they 'struggle or have difficulty'. The thought processes behind these words are seen as important in maintaining relationships in sometimes difficult situations. The importance of consistency, boundaries and holding young people safe relationally more than physically is a priority.

CELCIS helped us by providing attachment, trauma and resilience training, working with us to develop attachment promoting teams, and awareness of the importance of managing the emotional and physical environment that the young people and staff are living in. We now write all case notes to the young person and build in time within each shift for reflection and understanding.

## Expectations

A new development programme for staff is in place which emphasises the importance of reflective practice, helping staff understand

the rationale for change and the expectations moving forward.

We introduced a new approach to responding to and managing challenging behaviour which focuses heavily on understanding the reasons for difficult behaviour and developing positive, relationship-based strategies.

Four years on, we are seeing real changes in practice, although the journey continues. We are now working towards organisational accreditation in Dyadic Development Practice (DDP) with the aim of the majority of staff who work directly with young people being trained to Level 1 DDP and the majority of managers trained to level 2 DDP within 18 months. This will deepen staff's understanding and abilities in working from a relational perspective.



As for the impact on our young people, whilst it is difficult to capture results without initial baseline figures, a combination of soft and hard evidence suggests progress in a number of areas. Staff, young people and stakeholder surveys show a dramatic improvement in how people feel about their work and ours and the organisation, and young people continue to move to positive destinations. Placement disruptions are rare.

One young person recently made a statement to the Care Inspectorate which said: 'The best thing about Moore House is the staff, I could trust them with anything'.

# £2.3 million investment in Scotland's care experienced young people

The Life Changes trust has launched a funding pot of £2.3 million to back the development of Champions Boards for young people with experience of the care system in Scotland.

This revolutionises how care experienced young people are involved in the decision making that affects their lives and provides a unique approach to transforming the quality of their wellbeing.

## Prioritising

Champions Boards put young people in the driving seat, prioritising their views, opinions and aspirations. They build the capacity of young people to influence change, empowering them by showing

confidence in their abilities and potential, and give them the platform to flourish and grow. Trusting young people to drive and influence their own lives also challenges the stigma they traditionally encounter.

By bringing together care experienced young people and those who work with and for them - including senior local authority staff, elected members and service providers - Champions Boards lead improvements in the services and support available to young people.

## Piloting

A successful Champions Board pilot is already running in Dundee and other local authorities are showing interest, with some in the early stages of developing their own Boards.



You can read more about the funding on the Life Changes Trust website at [www.lifechangestrust.org.uk](http://www.lifechangestrust.org.uk).

# Young people's views on the Children and Young People Act

Following the passage of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Who Cares? Scotland spoke to 87 young people across Scotland who have experience of growing up in care. They wanted to understand what living in care was like for the young people, what they hope for from life after care, and what kinds of support they would need to make this happen.

This momentous legislative change would not have been possible without the help of young people sharing their experiences of Scotland's care system. The implementation of the Act marks the beginning of potentially life-changing provision for care experienced young people. These young people can now stay in care until they are 21, receive aftercare support until they are 26 and help shape better services through 24 identified Corporate Parents, including NHS Boards and post-16 education institutions.

## About the research

A key message from the research is simply that young people want to be involved in discussions about their life and their future. They also want to know what rights they have yet 80% of the young people Who Cares? spoke to did not know who their Corporate Parents were and what they could do for them.

*"Young people who felt they were not listened to were much more likely to prefer the idea of living with their birth family once they leave care."*

Young people who felt they were not listened to were much more likely to prefer the idea of living with their birth family once they leave care. Those who felt they were listened to tended to prefer the option of

living with others. This suggests that those who do not feel consulted with or listened to are more likely to return to a potentially unsuitable family home, rather than progress to independent living.

We can infer that if young people do not know what options they have for the future, they may simply choose to select the option that feels most familiar - regardless of whether or not it is what they want or if it is the right decision for them.

The focus undoubtedly now moves to putting these new commitments under the Act into practice, and that is not always easy. Relationships - loving ones - are key to a successful care experience, according to Who Cares? Young people want positive relationships with workers and carers in their lives that are genuine and not time limited.

A copy of the full research can be downloaded from the Who Cares? Scotland website at [www.whocarescotland.org](http://www.whocarescotland.org).

# Attainment of looked after children rises

New Government figures show an improvement in the levels of attainment and transition into a positive destination like employment, education or training for looked after children in Scotland.

The number of looked after school leavers attaining a qualification at SCQF Level 5 or better (equivalent to Intermediate 2 exams) rose from 28% in 2011/12 to 40%. While this rise is encouraging, it still falls well short of the 84% overall who achieved this result.

Similarly there is a rise in school leavers in

a positive destination such as employment, training or further education nine months after leaving school from 67% in 2011/12 to 73%. Again this falls short of their peers (92%)

The figures are good news and are due to the hard work going on across Scotland.

At CELCIS we are absolutely committed to closing this gap further and you can read our full statement on the statistics on our website at [www.celcis.org/news/entry/attainment\\_of\\_looked\\_after\\_children\\_rises](http://www.celcis.org/news/entry/attainment_of_looked_after_children_rises).



## BAAF enters administration

We recently learned that the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) had entered administration.

There is no doubt that the loss of BAAF will be felt across the sector by everyone who has worked with them. BAAF has made a significant impact over the years to secure improved outcomes for children and young people, in addition to raising the profile of permanence for children nationally.

Plans were put in place to support individuals, local authorities and others affected and also, where possible, to allow the continuation of some aspects of their work – St Andrew's Children's Society and Coram are supporting some areas of the work undertaken by BAAF.

## 15 years of helping parents

Children 1st ParentLine Scotland is celebrating 15 years as the national helpline, email and web chat service for anyone caring for or concerned about a child. ParentLine is there to listen, and to offer support, advice and information.

And the service is not just for parents, ParentLine also take calls from grandparents and other relatives, friends and neighbours.

Three distinct strands of service are offered, all of which are free and confidential:

- ParentLine - support to parents and anyone who has concerns about a child.
- Kinship line - support to kinship carers. The service provides emotional support as well as practical guidance. This can be in the form of sign-posting to more specialist services, advocacy or on-going telephone support with a named call-taker.
- Family Decision Making Service - support to families who are separating or separated. Support includes emotional

support, legal advice from qualified solicitors, benefits from skilled workers, support for lone parents, family mediation and family group conferences.

Everyone who contacts ParentLine has one thing in common - to make things better for their child or a child they know and ParentLine is there to help make that happen.

See more on their website at [www.children1st.org.uk](http://www.children1st.org.uk).

# Blood borne viruses – what you need to know

Disadvantaged young people can be at greater risk of exposure to blood-borne viruses including hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and HIV.

There are many ways these viruses can be passed from person to person including injecting drug use and unprotected sex, which are the main ways of transmission in Scotland. Others include tattooing, performance and image enhancing drug use and body piercing.

It's important that young people who could be at risk of involvement in these risk behaviours are aware of issues such as transmission routes, prevention messages and testing options.

How we get this information to them is the

challenge. The majority of young people using drugs don't access the information they need through specialist substance-use services so it is crucial that other services with experience and expertise play their part.

Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF) and Hepatitis Scotland are national organisations co-located in Glasgow. At the CELCIS conference they presented on blood-borne viruses, drugs and sexual health, and the links between them. The feedback at the conference showed that services and frontline staff understood the relevance to their work.

SDF and Hepatitis Scotland have developed training in blood-borne virus issues, general drug awareness and also in new psychoactive substances ('legal highs').

Working with young people who are experiencing harm because of their drug use is a significant challenge and the training focuses on the importance of the relationships workers can foster in talking about these challenges.

You can contact SDF on 0141 221 1175 or at [enquiries@sdf.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sdf.org.uk).

## In The Zone

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) has published the latest edition of its magazine for young people. Copies of 'The Zone' magazine are available in waiting rooms in their Hearing Centres and there's also an e-book version in the young people section of SCRA's website at [www.scra.gov.uk/home/the\\_zone\\_magazine\\_for\\_young\\_people.cfm](http://www.scra.gov.uk/home/the_zone_magazine_for_young_people.cfm).

The aim of The Zone is to keep young people occupied and entertained while they wait to go into their Hearing. The latest edition is packed with a variety of articles and fun quizzes like word searches and sudoku games.

They've interviewed young people who have recently gone through the Hearings System, and we have several articles based on their experiences. They wanted to use their experiences of attending Hearings to help other young people in the system.



# Transforming Lives: The first 18 months of the MCR Mentoring Programme

The project to help disadvantaged young people reach their potential has now been running for 18 months and over 500 people have contacted MCR Pathways to find out how to become a mentor.

MCR Pathways provides mentors to teenagers who have experience of care and is a partnership between the MCR Charitable Foundation, Glasgow City Council, the University of Strathclyde, and CELCIS.

The partnership was formed to realise a vision that young people can achieve significantly more in education through a mentor who can give encouragement, care and guidance on the skills young people will need to get a foothold on a career.

The programme currently operates in six Glasgow secondary schools and there are plans to expand to include 10 schools and a total of 250 mentoring relationships in 2015.

**If you know someone who would make a great mentor, please direct them to the MCR Pathways website at [www.mcrpathways.org](http://www.mcrpathways.org).**



## New training programme on gendered abuse and exploitation



Centre for excellence  
for looked after children in Scotland

As residential workers, the issue of gendered abuse and exploitation is one we can't afford to ignore, and a daily reality in the lives of many young people we work with. Recent high-profile child exploitation cases such as Rotherham emphasise the importance for professionals not only to have an understanding of how to deal with abuse and exploitation as it happens, but also how to prevent it in the future.

The increasing sexualisation of young people, through social media and technology as well as easy access to soft and hard-core pornography puts young people under a great deal of pressure. Young women in particular walk a tightrope between the need to be seen as 'sexy' and conform to hyper sexualised stereotypes without being too sexual and risking being labelled. In this cultural landscape, it's vital that residential workers have the skills and confidence to support young people in developing healthy, respectful relationships.

With this in mind, CELCIS, CYCJ (the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice), and Zero Tolerance launched a new programme of training on the prevention of abuse and exploitation, aimed at residential staff.

The training takes place over two days, and covers an interactive introduction to exercises which the participants take away and deliver to the young people. The training will be delivered by experienced residential staff, and trainers who have been trained by Zero Tolerance and CELCIS.

**To find out more contact Amanda Lawler at [a.lawler@strath.ac.uk](mailto:a.lawler@strath.ac.uk) or call 0141 444 8535**



# Historical Abuse

CELCIS has played a key role in supporting the Scottish Government's initial groundwork for its National Inquiry into historical abuse of children in care.

The Scottish Government's National Inquiry follows on from recommendations made by the Scottish Human Rights Commission's (SHRC) Action Plan for Justice for Victims of Historic Abuse of Children in Care, a multi-agency action plan in which CELCIS was a significant partner. To develop this Action Plan, we provided research and consultancy, and contributed qualitative evidence gathered from interviews with survivors of historical abuse, former care providers, and national organisations with responsibility for care.

As a result of this work, CELCIS was asked by the Scottish Government to design and facilitate an Inquiry Engagement process ahead of the launch of the Inquiry itself.

## Organised

We organised and facilitated nine events for survivors, and three events for care providers and other agencies. The purpose of these events was get feedback on the Inquiry's terms of reference, including the attributes of the Inquiry Chair and panel. Views on the time bar, a survivor support fund and commemoration were also sought.

We hosted a survivor phone line for those who could not attend an event. An analytical report from the engagement activity was prepared by Professor Andy Kendrick of University of Strathclyde and the report was used to inform the Scottish Government's thinking.

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning Angela Constance recently made an announcement in Parliament naming Susan O'Brien QC as chair, detailing the timeline and the detail of what the Inquiry would include.

## Milestone

This announcement is an important milestone for the people of Scotland, and in particular for abuse survivors. For many survivors, their experience is not historic because they live with the lifelong consequences of their abuse on a daily basis.

At CELCIS we believe that care should help children to reach their full potential, and nurturing and safe care is happening every day throughout Scotland. Where abuse has happened we have a moral responsibility as a society to support their healing and ensure survivors have access to justice.

Survivors, care providers and former care providers have worked hard together to find a way forward and have gained a mutual respect and understanding through the recent Human Rights InterAction process and the engagement events which CELCIS supported with the Scottish Government this year.

The Inquiry will also highlight the long-term consequences of abuse, and the measures to address the current needs of survivors are to be welcomed.





# 'Caring for Vulnerable Children': CELCIS breaks records with FutureLearn course

CELCIS and the University of Strathclyde created an ambitious new online course 'Caring for Vulnerable Children'.

CELCIS and the University of Strathclyde created an ambitious new online course 'Caring for Vulnerable Children'. When the first run of this free six-week course ended it had achieved the highest level of social engagement ever for a FutureLearn course.

Over 12,500 people from over 100 countries joined up for the course, with over 55,000 comments made and 61% of learners taking part in the discussions.

The course was created for FutureLearn (part of the Open University) and uses proven methods for encouraging social engagement.

The course was led by Graham McPheat from the University of Strathclyde and included informative contributions from CELCIS experts.

This FutureLearn course was a new venture for CELCIS and we were interested in finding out what the course statistics would reveal.

Conversations flowed about child development, social pedagogy, risk, the Children's Hearing System, scenarios and the politics of caring for vulnerable children. Participants already working in child and



*'This has been one of the best online courses I have ever completed. It is completely relevant to my working day and has been a brilliant insight into the children's Hearing System and how social work operates.'*

youth care said that the course encouraged them to examine their own practice. Other learners reported that they were inspired



*'Of all the FutureLearn courses I have done, this was by far the most enjoyable. It was easy to follow and very interesting from beginning to end. I would definitely recommend this course to anyone with an interest in the field.'*

to pursue a career in this field or to further their studies. The course proved so popular that Futurelearn ran it again in July 2015.

## The Journal

CELCIS publishes the Scottish Journal of Residential Childcare three times a year. This online Journal on the CELCIS website at [www.CELCIS.org](http://www.CELCIS.org), provides a forum for debate and dissemination of topical issues in residential child care research, policy and practice.

The scope of the journal relates to all aspects of residential child care, including the links between residential care and areas such as health, education and other care settings.

We welcome contributions from practitioners, managers, researchers, policy analysts, young people in care, and care leavers. Contributions come from Scotland, elsewhere in the UK and abroad, as we believe international comparison provides unique opportunities for the development of policy and practice.

Read the journal or find out how to submit an article on the CELCIS website.





# Evaluating Tadpoles

Since January 2013 Scottish Adoption has run a programme called 'Tadpoles' that supports the development of attachment between adoptive parents and children through play.

Since January 2013 Scottish Adoption has run a programme called 'Tadpoles' that supports the development of attachment between adoptive parents and children through play. The programme is being funded by a grant from the Communities and Families Fund.

Scottish Adoption asked the Permanence and Care Team (PaCT) at CELCIS to evaluate the programme and consider the impact the programme has on parent/child interactions and the development of attachment.

Overall, parents were positive about their experiences of taking part in the programme

and could identify a number of benefits. The two most valuable aspects of the programme were the opportunity to be part of a group of parents going through similar experiences, and the opportunity to be observed and reassured by the senior practitioners.

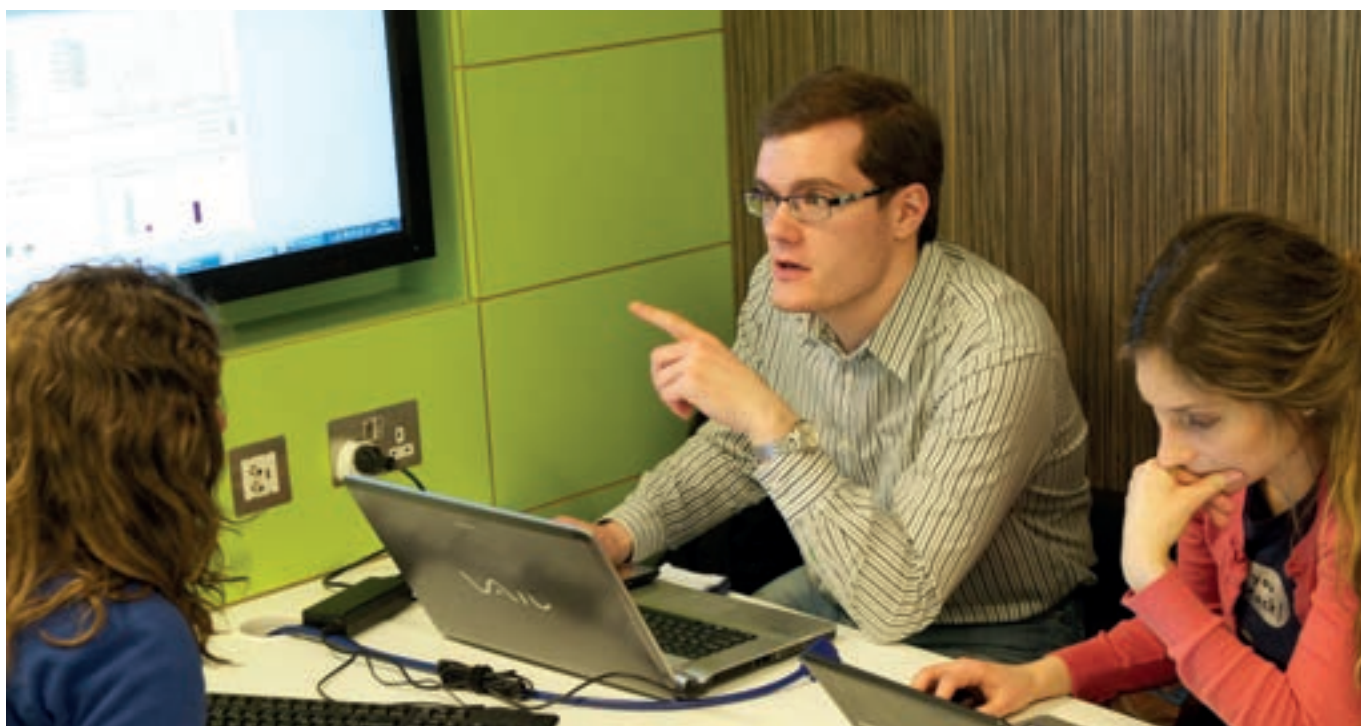
The findings suggest that, by reassuring parents, the programme has contributed to a reduction in the stress they were feeling with the adoption process and building attachment with their child. A reduction in stress is likely to have a positive impact on parents' relationships with the child and others.

Participants welcomed the flexibility of the programme which allowed them to attune to their children's needs and to tailor the activities according to their preferences, competencies and stages of development. However, some further flexibility may be needed so that the programme can readily attend to personal needs and preferences.

**You can read the full report on the CELCIS website at [www.CELCIS.org](http://www.CELCIS.org)**

# Update on the Standard for Residential Child Care

The Standard for Residential Child Care is the new Level 9 (Ordinary Degree Level) qualification that managers, supervisors and workers will soon be required to have.



The Standard is a positive recognition of the value and complexity of the work that is done with children and young people and offers all workers the opportunity to further develop their existing skills and knowledge. The Standard describes the tasks that residential workers, supervisors and managers carry out every day and recognises the need for these tasks to be seen and valued.

Residential child care workers, supervisors and managers already have a wide range of relevant qualifications and it is important to emphasise that these existing qualifications will be taken into account and count towards this new qualification.

## Mapping

A mapping exercise by SSSC is currently underway which will inform decisions about further study for practitioners who have

Level 10 or 11 qualifications. The amount of further study required will vary according to the individual's current qualifications, and the implementation of the Standard will begin with managers and supervisors. All staff will have five years to gain the qualification.

CEL CIS is working alongside the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and Scottish Government to move forward with the implementation of the Standard and to gather and share information about the development and progress of the qualification.

Further progress will be made once the Minister for Children and Young People formally announces the Standard for Residential Child Care and the new qualifications that will arise from the Standard. Once this announcement has been made, learning providers such as

universities, colleges and SQA assessment centres will then progress the development of courses towards the qualification.

## Overview

In the meantime CEL CIS and the SSSC have developed an Overview Document about the Standard for organisations who provide residential child care services and also a hand-out giving a summary of how the Standard was developed and who was involved in this. We recently ran a series of information events to give the workforce an opportunity to hear about the qualification and to ask questions about what it means for them.

**Find out more or read the documents on the SSSC website at [www.sssc.uk.com](http://www.sssc.uk.com).**

# Spotlight on Policy

## What does the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 mean for CELCIS and its partners?

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 became law in March, 2014. It introduces a number of changes to how children and young people in Scotland are to be cared for. Some of these changes have already come into force and the rest will follow over the next few years. These changes will have a significant impact on how we and our partners work.

Important changes for our looked after children and care leavers in the Act include:

- 600 hours of free early learning and child care for all two-year-olds who are looked after or secured with friends or relatives
- through a Kinship Care Order (Part 6, sections 47 and 48)
- Corporate parenting duties for certain individuals and organisations (Part 9)
- Extended eligibility for 'Aftercare' assistance up to the age of 25; a new duty on local authorities to report on the death of a young person in receipt of 'Aftercare' services (Part 10)
- Introduction of Continuing Care, providing certain care leavers with the opportunity to continue with the accommodation and assistance they were provided with immediately before they ceased to be looked after (Part 11)
- Support for children at risk of becoming looked after (Part 12)
- Assistance for applicants and holders of a Kinship Care Order (Part 13)
- Use of Scotland's Adoption Register made a duty for all adoption agencies (Part 14)

The Act is central to the Scottish Government's strategy for making 'Scotland the best place in the world to grow up'. The Act refocuses on the early years of a child's life, and towards early intervention when a family or young person needs help. With children at risk of becoming looked after through to the introduction of continuing care and the extension of aftercare, the Act draws attention to the whole child, and their entire journey through care and beyond. This is critical for us at CELCIS as we know that poor childhood experiences can have a profound effect on looked after children's chances and opportunities as they get older.

The Act also makes looked after children a priority by the naming of Corporate Parents. We know that tackling issues important to looked after children and young people, such as poverty, leaving school early and poor physical and mental health, needs us to work together. At CELCIS, we offer support to Corporate Parents to help them meet their new duties and responsibilities.

## CELCIS welcomes new Corporate Parents

There are now 120 new Corporate Parents in Scotland and they all have the potential to have a huge impact on the lives of looked after children and young people.

In fact, it's now their legal responsibility to do just that.

Of course, Corporate Parenting alone will not make the differences we all long to see - the differences will depend on how these organisations and individuals bring these duties and responsibilities to life and how they make them real.

The purpose of Part 9 of the Act (the section on Corporate Parenting) is to make sure that

looked after children have what they need to fulfil their potential by focusing Corporate Parents on their needs and aspirations. These many different Corporate Parents will have a direct influence on looked after children and young people, and will influence the wider systems that they will engage with.

For our young people to really benefit from all that Part 9 promises, Corporate Parents must 'implement' the legislation in full, representing a real opportunity to change

the landscape for Scotland's looked after children and young people.

At CELCIS, we know that implementing these duties well will take leadership, sustained focus and aspirations, particularly given the difficult financial climate. Implementing these duties is really important, and we look forward to working alongside these new Corporate Parents to support innovative and effective implementation. This will benefit everyone's future.

# CELCIS responds to the inquiry by the Education and Culture Committee on the educational attainment gap

The Scottish Government recently increased its focus on closing the attainment gap between children from the most privileged and disadvantaged backgrounds.

This led to an Inquiry by the cross-party Education and Culture Committee of the Scottish Parliament. CELCIS produced written submissions in response to the three areas of the consultation:

- The implications for schools, teachers and pupils of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce
- The role of the third sector and the private sector in improving attainment and achievement for all school pupils, particularly those whose attainment is lowest
- How parents (including guardians) and schools can work together to raise all pupils' attainment, particularly those whose attainment is lowest

The first area of the consultation related to the recommendations of the report of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (also known as the 'Wood Report' [www.gov.scot/Resource/0043/00433287.pdf](http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0043/00433287.pdf)).

At CELCIS, we feel that the implementation of the Wood Report recommendations should lead to a growth in opportunities for many young people who do not complete their senior phase at school, or complete it with limited success. Many of these young people are able, but lose out to their peers in an increasingly competitive jobs market. Significant additional support may be needed to engage these young people and it will be necessary to:

1. Help the most vulnerable and disengaged families to benefit from pre-school and primary education
2. Have suitable arrangements for meeting the additional support for learning needs of individual children throughout school stages
3. Provide flexible and continuing social and emotional support (potentially in partnership with the third sector) as they take up educational, employment and training opportunities.

We welcome Wood's proposals for school-college partnerships. These 'dual enrolment' arrangements have been available in some parts of the United States for many years. These offer advantages to young people from

a looked after background (more than 80% of whom typically leave school at 16 or earlier) in that the school where they are known and have built good relationships would remain responsible for their welfare and for monitoring their progress.

Transitions can be particularly difficult for looked after young people, who can easily

other professionals from unintentionally agreeing with young people's views that the senior phase is 'not for them'.

Overcoming inequalities associated with having a 'care experience' requires attention. First, while support to address inequalities in education or health should be available across the life course, an increasing level



become lost in the post-school education system. While college is currently an important first destination for a high proportion of looked after school leavers, annual statistics suggest that they are at a high risk of dropping out. Dual enrolment might help to avoid this problem, allowing colleges and schools to demonstrate their corporate parenting responsibility, as set out in Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The particular circumstances of residential and day special schools need to be considered in arranging these partnerships.

## Clear

We think that a logical extension of the Wood proposals is for the 'education' leaving age in Scotland to be raised to 18. This would send a clear message of the importance Scotland places on the education and training of our young people.

For looked after children and care leavers an extension of compulsory education and training should help prevent school staff and

of resource must be targeted at early years and primary school stages.

Second, shifting towards a preventive model will require an additional resource commitment (for example investing in specialist teachers). The mandatory preparation of Children's Services Plans in each local area presents the Scottish Government and Parliament with a valuable opportunity to audit how well we are achieving this objective.

At CELCIS we believe that it is important to guard against an assumption that a young person is best directed to a vocational route because they are or were looked after. It may be more challenging to support a looked after young person with significant additional needs to achieve Highers, but this does not mean that a vocational option is best.

The most disadvantaged young people have a right to realise their academic potential, and while vocational qualifications offer employment opportunities, traditional 'academic' routes into the professions also offer a route out of poverty.

# Training tailored just for you

At CELCIS, our tailored training courses and workshops provide carers, professionals and practitioners working with looked after children a range of outstanding learning opportunities.

Our courses offer staff the chance to learn new skills, and keep them up to speed with the latest developments in practice and legislation.

All of our training is designed around evidence-based research and we aim to provide participants with the insight, understanding and confidence to apply new knowledge directly into good practice.

With a wide range of learning and development options, we'll tailor a training course to fit your organisational needs. What's more, we can deliver training when and where it suits you best.

Our training is delivered by expert CELCIS staff and consultants, who combine their own frontline experience and an excellent understanding of the sector, with memorable and effective delivery methods on topics such as:

- Attachment, Trauma and Resilience
- Implementing the Children and Young People Act (2014)
- Connecting with Children with Social

Communication Difficulties

- Understanding Suicide and Self Harm
- Throughcare and Aftercare
- Implementing Getting It Right For Every Child

That is just a small sample of the learning opportunities we offer at CELCIS. We can deliver training on any topic related to looked after children and care leavers - just contact us and we'll work out what works for you.

CELCIS training costs start at £350 for a half day, or £550 for a full day.

For more information or to discuss your specific training needs, contact Amanda Lawler: 0141 444 8535 or email on [a.lawler@strath.ac.uk](mailto:a.lawler@strath.ac.uk).

## Did you know we also offer Consultancy?

At CELCIS our consultancy encourages a child-centred approach which keeps the need

and rights of the children and their families at the heart of service. We have specialist consultants with expertise across the board - we cover health and wellbeing, education, attachment focused practice, permanence, throughcare and aftercare and understanding suicide and self-harm.

We can help you by providing a supportive 'critical eye' and we understand just how important it is that you have the right support and guidance when you need it.

We're able to guide an entire service review, or work on a one-off project; working with small groups or whole systems, short-term or until the job is done. We come to you for as long as it takes, or we can lend an ear at the end of a phone.

Whatever your needs we will tailor a package just for you that fits your needs and your budget.

Contact Amanda for a chat on 0141 444 8535 or email on [a.lawler@strath.ac.uk](mailto:a.lawler@strath.ac.uk).



# Recent publications and useful resources

## Corporate parenting guidance

The Scottish Government has published Statutory Guidance on Part 9 (Corporate Parenting) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act, which CELCIS drafted on their behalf. This guidance provides corporate parents with information and advice about how to fulfil the duties set out in Part 9 (Corporate Parenting) of the Act.

[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

## New resource for foster carers

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) has produced a new information resource for Foster Carers which is available on their website.

The interactive e-book aims to provide new foster carers with some introductory information about the Children's Hearings System and hopes to help foster carers prepare children and young people for coming to their Hearing. It provides information on the rights of children and young people and the rights of foster carers.

SCRA already has similar e-books available for trainee and new social workers and for education staff which you can view in the Working in Partnership section of their website at

[www.scra.gov.uk](http://www.scra.gov.uk)

## IRISS FM: Trauma and looked after children

How do we deal with trauma? Most of us have a reference point for what is 'safe' which allows us to make sense of traumatic events and provides a framework to deal with it.

Looked after or adoptive children often have no such reference point which makes it difficult for them and their parents to deal with trauma.

In this episode of IRISS FM, Christine Gordon and Karen Wallace - co-founders of Adapt Scotland - talk to Fiona Lettice about their first-hand experience of fostering, adoption and trauma.

[www.celcis.org](http://www.celcis.org)

## Insights 28: supporting positive relationships for children and young people with care experience

This review explores the growing emphasis being placed on the relationships of children and young people in care. It examines: the nature and type of these relationships; what indicators are used to define quality; why relationships are beneficial; what barriers there are to their formation; what initiatives have been designed to support relationships; and what evidence there is about their impact.

[www.celcis.org](http://www.celcis.org)

## Review of LGBT foster carers research

The Rees Centre for Research in Fostering and Education has published a literature review on the recruitment, assessment, support and supervision of LGBT foster carers.

The research considers:

- What is known about the effective recruitment, assessment, support and supervision of LGBT foster carers?
- What can fostering services do to improve the quality of the recruitment, assessment, support and supervision of LGBT foster carers?

[www.celcis.org](http://www.celcis.org)

## Engaging with families website

The Scottish Government and Education Scotland have a website to support parents, schools and organisations to find the latest Scottish, UK and international research evidence to support family engagement strategies.

It has a particular focus on engaging with vulnerable families and those living in our most deprived communities with a view to raising attainment and achievement of all and closing the inequity gap in educational outcomes.

[www.celcis.org](http://www.celcis.org)

## College Handbook for Looked after Young People and Care Leavers 2015

The Who Cares? Trust has created the 'College Handbook for Looked After Young People and Care Leavers' to give young people who are in or leaving care information about the support that is available at colleges in Scotland.

We asked each college to tell us what it offers and brought that information together to create this handbook. There is a page for every college, organised alphabetically.

The guide is designed for young people but is also useful for carers and professionals working with and supporting looked after young people and care leavers.

[www.celcis.org](http://www.celcis.org)

## Latest Children's Social Work Statistics

The Scottish Government's publication contains 2013-14 statistics on looked after children, child protection and secure care and close support accommodation.

It shows a reduction in the total number of looked after children for a second year. The total number of looked after children at 31 July 2014 was 15,580.

Nearly 40% of care leavers (including those formerly looked after at home) received no aftercare support in 2013-14 and the number of children looked after 'at home' decreased again, from 4,762 to 4,144.

[www.celcis.org](http://www.celcis.org)



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