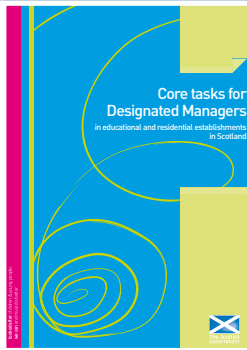


SIRCCULAR

Informing the Residential Child Care Sector

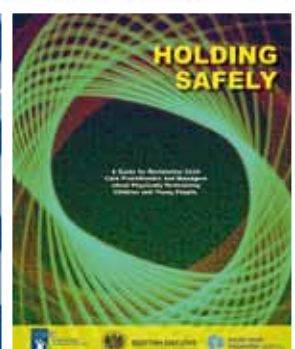
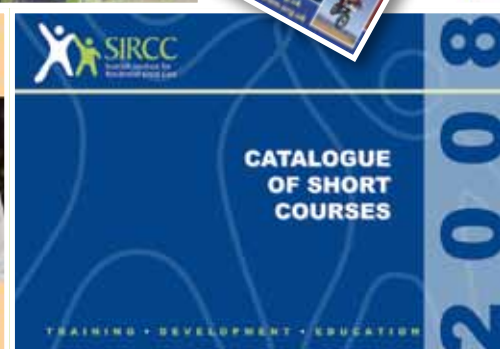


10 YEARS Building on Success

Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care



Reflections and Visions
How We Create Health
Rising Confidence and Competence
A RIGHT Blether
Young People's Participation
Your Stories



In this 10th Anniversary issue...



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Welcome

Welcome to this special edition of SIRCCULAR.

As part of SIRCC’s 10th Anniversary, we invited both individuals and organisations to reflect on the successes, achievements and developments in the residential child care sector over the last 10 years. This edition showcases what colleagues from across Scotland felt, from their point of view, were some of the highlights of the last 10 years. Thanks, as always, go to all of our contributors for taking the time to make our 10th anniversary edition not only a bumper edition, but unique in the range and number of topics covered.



Graham McCann
Assistant Director, SIRCC

I hope that you enjoy reading this edition of SIRCCULAR and will agree with me that the variety and range of ‘reflections’ are both thought provoking and inspirational. This is a good building block as the residential child care sector develops and evolves further over the next 10 years.

What is SIRCC?

The Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) is funded by the Scottish Government and is a partnership of the University of Strathclyde, The Robert Gordon University, Who Cares? Scotland and Langside College. 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.

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

The National Residential Child Care Initiative

I am especially proud of the National Residential Child Care Initiative. I made a commitment to make residential care the first and best placement of choice for those children whose needs it serves and the review I asked SIRCC to lead is the most significant review of residential childcare in decades. Yes, it is aspirational and yes, there are costs attached to the reforms, but change is long overdue. We have to raise the bar and be as ambitious for looked-after children as we are for our own children. This is about making best use of all relevant resources. The cost of failing to invest in high quality care is one that neither we, our young people or society can afford.

Adam Ingram, Minister for Children and Early Years



Reflecting on the Last 10 Years of Residential Child Care



Jennifer Davidson

Scotland's residential child care sector is a highly varied landscape, and from my vantage point, care for young people has changed in many, many exciting ways over these past 10 years. Staff teams are embracing a philosophy of care that unites everyone in the crucial and life-changing work they are undertaking alongside young people; empowering

managers are leading creatively; workers are ever more engaging in their own learning; and workers have connected with others through events, conferences and training. This reduced isolation means many more people are able to integrate good practice examples from elsewhere, as well as reflect on their own.

And while there is still some way to go, the numbers of staff who have achieved qualifications for registration have increased substantially; it is a momentous accomplishment for many individuals which is worthy of real celebration. The status of the residential child care workforce has improved as well, with a demonstrated commitment to people's ongoing development in the context of professional registration. And this is what young people deserve! These 10 years have shown real progress toward a vision of young people being cared for by the very best workers who have the personality and passion for developing supportive relationships with them, and who have relevant knowledge and skills

to ensure these young people have the best opportunities for a bright future.

The needs and pre-care experiences of the young people coming into residential child care have also changed; and this in turn is changing the intensity and challenges of residential care. I believe that the changes in the sector over the past 10 years are just the start to the ongoing developments that are needed for the future across children's services to ensure the best care for the right children and young people at the right times in their lives.

There have been important changes in inspection, regulation and legislation governing the activity of residential child care. It has been critical that in the midst of all these changes, we have kept sight of the foundation for good practice and excellent care: strong leadership, purposeful engagement and reflective relationships are at the heart of good quality residential care.

I'm convinced that in many ways, young people entering residential care today will be far more likely to have better care experiences than 10 years ago. But good care experiences rely on the wider children's services systems as well as the work that goes on within children's homes. We have been moving in the right direction these past 10 years, and the increasing engagement of education, health and social work services in partnership with young people's residential care teams will help reach our vision of excellent care to ensure positive outcomes for young people even sooner.

Jennifer Davidson, Director, SIRCC

Rising Confidence and Competence in Residential Child Care

**Anna Fowlie,
Chief Executive, Scottish
Social Services Council**

Ten years ago, I was working in HR in local government. A significant part of my job was dealing with discipline, grievance and absence issues in residential childcare. I also dealt with the closure of a traditional children's unit and the opening of a close support unit. I can't pretend it was an uplifting experience.

What I saw was unqualified staff with low morale, managers struggling to cope and a lack of strong leadership. Elected members and chief officers had little understanding of the service (other than as a source of complaints from the public) and the lack of aspiration for and by staff mirrored a lack of aspiration for young people. At first I thought it was a local issue but soon found that, while there were pockets of good practice, the issues were prevalent across the country.

Since then I have, in whatever job I have done, tried to change it. It was funda-

mentally wrong for the young people but also fundamentally wrong for the workers.

The establishment of SIRCC at roughly the same time as the establishment of the SSSC saw a new determination to make things better.

The message it sent out was that these children matter; these workers matter. We needed to invest in their training, we needed to support them properly and offer them career progression. We needed to build their confidence, recognise their contribution and create a culture of aspiration. We also needed to sharpen up our recruitment and selection and take some tough decisions about moving some people on.

The work that SIRCC has done much to support all of those things, together with employers, learning providers, regulators and indeed individual workers. The introduction of required registration has raised standards and fostered a new professionalism in residential child care. It has not been easy and continues to be a challenge for us all. That challenge will grow if we are to meet the aspiration of the NRCCI that all workers in the sector are qualified to ordinary degree level.

The young people who are in residential care need and deserve workers who are qualified to the best standard, who understand their needs and who can support their education. And the workers deserve to have their knowledge and skills accredited. To have a confident, competent workforce is not a dream. It is a necessity and I am glad to say that we are much closer to making the dream real than we were at the turn of the millennium.

Anna Fowlie



Making the Grade



The Care Commission has recently published a report on the first year of grading, *Making the Grade?*, which shows that the vast majority of residential services for children and young people are high quality services which provide the good care and support necessary for the achievement of good outcomes for young people. 91% of care homes, 94% of special schools and 100% of secure care accommodation services were awarded grades of Good and above for Care and Support. Only two out of the 228 services

graded had grades of weak or unsatisfactory for this theme. Grades awarded for the other themes relating to the environment, staffing and management and leadership were also very strong. This is a very significant achievement, of which the sector should be justly proud. You can find the full report on our website: www.carecommission.com

**Ronnie Hill, Director of Children's
Services Regulation
Care Commission**

A Decade of Reflection



The main highlights for us reflecting over the last ten years are the achievements of the young people who have lived and grown at Sycamore. Young people who have faced enormous challenges and worked hard with dedicated staff to overcome the challenges and experience their own successes.



When we reflect on the staff, we think how many of us are still around. We think of 14 people completing their BA in Social Work, numerous HNC and SVQ qualifications. Professional visits to Sweden, Uganda and Montana. Visits and learning from Dan Hughes, Liz Kohlstadt and others. Students from Scotland and Denmark; two cohorts of Social Pedagogy courses; seven cohorts of dyadic developmental psychotherapy courses; a constantly increasing programme of learning, supporting a growing and developing staff team, based in different services, but working together.

Moira Greentree,
Learning and Development Business Partner
Tim Foley,
Head of Sycamore Services.

Care to Work

I am pleased to have this opportunity to celebrate some of the key successes in the residential child and youth care sector over the past ten years. Too often we only hear the negative stories, but at Kibble we firmly believe there are many positive stories about the sector which should be given a wider airing. It is hard to pick out one "key success" at Kibble within the past ten years, as our over-arching aim is to constantly drive up standards and provide positive outcomes for all the young people in our care.

However, I will take this opportunity to highlight KibbleWorks, our enterprise and employment hub, launched in 2005, which provides an integrated transitions package

for young people leaving care post-16. Young people at KibbleWorks work alongside a skilled adult who is running a small business, and opportunities are offered in warehousing and distribution, mechanics, landscaping, recycling, catering, construction, general trades, promotional goods and multimedia. KibbleWorks plays a pivotal role by offering routes out of residential or secure care, and routes into training and employment for young people with no previous contact with Kibble. The availability of a KibbleWorks placement can often be a deciding factor when local authorities are making a residential or secure placement.



Through our new KibblePlus initiative, the KibbleWorks model is now being extended to offer employment placements for disadvantaged young people aged 18 to 24. Kibble's success is measured by our ability to make a real difference to the young people in our care, from 12 to 24. It may sound a bit of a cliché, but we firmly believe their future is working!

Graham Bell, Chief Executive, Kibble

We Can and Must Do Better

Being involved in helping to prepare the We Can and Must Do Better training materials in 2008 was a fantastic experience for me as both a professional worker and a foster carer. It was a privilege to have contributed to this work undertaken by SIRCC, even in such a small way, that will hopefully have such a long-lasting and significant positive impact on the lives of looked-after children and young people.

Debbie Booth,
Senior Officer,
Dundee City Council

HOW WE CREATE HE



Dr Harry Burns,
Chief Medical Officer for
Scotland

Scotland's health, it is generally agreed, is poorer than it should be, given our overall level of wealth and development. If the gap in health status between rich and poor in Scotland could be narrowed by improving the health of the worst-off people in society, then the average life expectancy would move much closer to the European average. Tackling socio-economically driven health inequalities remains the greatest challenge for our country in its quest to improve health status.

The conventional approach to health has always been to try to prevent illness. Eating a sensible diet, not smoking and taking regular exercise will, we know, prevent a range of serious illnesses. However, if we are to narrow health inequalities we need to understand how we can develop the internal resources which allow us to expand our capacity for positive health. The evidence is that this capacity is not uniformly distributed across society.

The first researcher to begin to talk about health creation – a process which he called salutogenesis – was Aaron Antonovsky, an American sociologist who studied adults who, as children, had survived the holocaust. Antonovsky argued that those who had grown into healthy adults had, as young children, acquired what he termed “a sense of coherence”. By this he meant that their early years



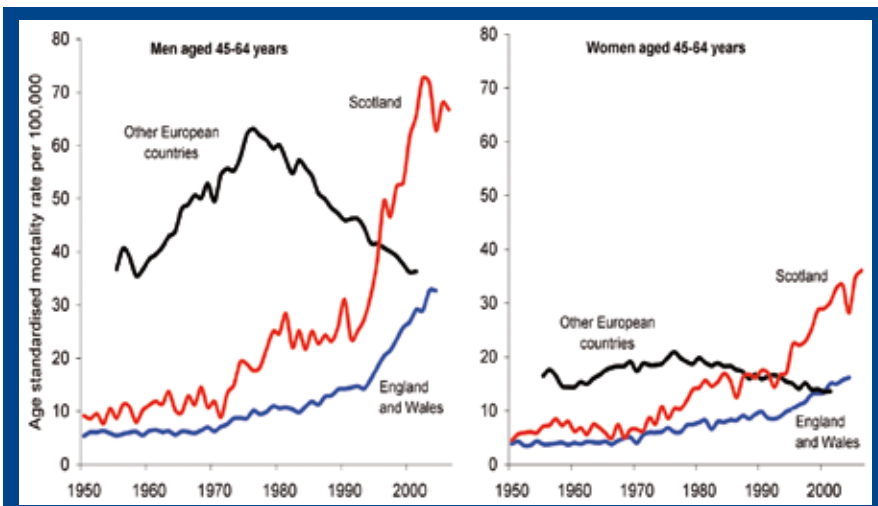
had equipped them to understand and manage the challenges thrown at them. Failure, he said, to develop this capacity would leave an individual constantly stressed and unable to achieve his full capacity for health.

Since Antonovsky published his work 30 years ago, considerable evidence has accumulated to support the notion that successful stress management is acquired in very early life by babies and children.

Babies learn to understand the social environment in which they find themselves as a result of consistent interaction with their principal adult carer – usually their mother. The first stresses they feel such as hunger, wet nappy, cold, etc. prompt a cry and the consistent response of the mother allows the baby to develop the sense that it has a measure of control over its environment. It develops more sophisticated behaviours such as smiling and vocalisation and gradually, through consistency of response with adults, it develops an internal working model of how relationships with others can be managed. Failure to experience such consistency leads to difficulties in socialisation and inability to “attach” successfully to others. As Antonovsky suggested, this failure of attachment leads to chronic stress with persistently high levels of the stress hormone control.

Recent evidence points to fundamental differences in brain development as

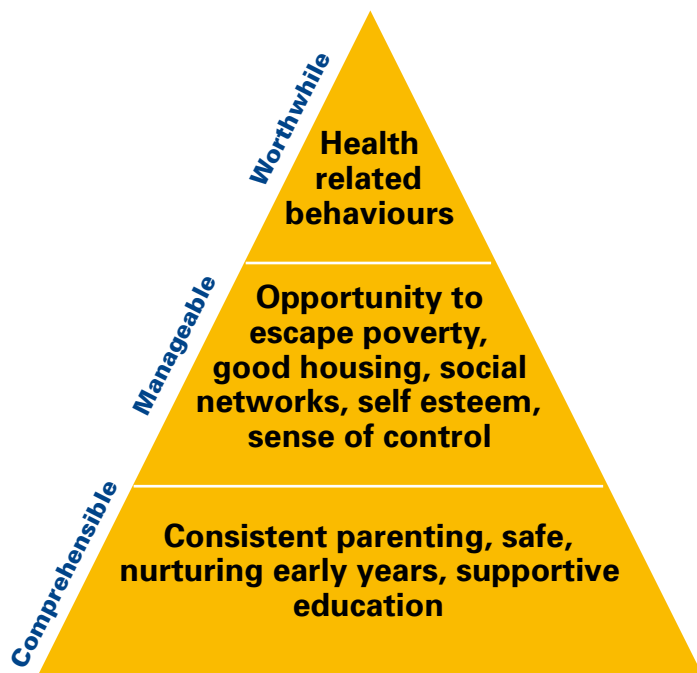
Alcohol mortality Liver Cirrhosis Death Rates 1950-2006



ALTH

the basis for this increased stress response in babies brought up in inconsistent and chaotic environments. The centres of the brain which control stress hormone levels seem less able to respond to high levels of control and so do not shut off production of the hormone by the adrenals.

The health consequences of this chronic upregulation of one of the bodies acute defence mechanisms are profound. A lifetime of chronically elevated cortisol seems to be associated with abnormalities of fat metabolism which increase the deposition of fat in the arteries.



Accumulation of fat in the abdomen leads to increase in measures of chronic inflammation. High levels of inflammatory proteins such as C-reactive protein in the blood are associated with significantly increased risk of stroke, heart attack and type II diabetes. There is also now emerging evidence that these chronic metabolic changes are associated with subtle abnormalities in DNA which may render an individual at greater risk of cancer.

The evidence is accumulating, therefore, that the process of attachment which a baby embarks upon in the first few days, weeks and months of life is of critical importance in ensuring that they are equipped with the capacity to build healthy lives for themselves.

Healthy Care

Together with SIRCC, Scottish Government and the Scottish Healthy Care Network, NHS Health Scotland commissioned a small-scale study in 2008 profiling health improvement within residential care homes for children and young people. It was particularly encouraging to highlight the role of residential care staff in improving the health of looked after children through informally identifying their health needs, promoting healthy lifestyles and supporting children to uptake health promotion information and attend health appointments. This fantastic support has proved a real incentive and a step in the right direction towards establishing the *Health Promoting Care Home* in Scotland.



John Brown, NHS Health Scotland

Looked After & Accommodated Children's (LAAC) Nurses

Over the past eight years the LAAC nursing role has developed, with a specific remit for children and young people who are cared away from home. LAAC Nurses have a clear role and



responsibility to maintain and improve the health and well-being of looked-after and accommodated children in their care. Working together with residential child care staff, there is a terrific opportunity and willingness to do this and I certainly look forward to continue to develop this partnership to the benefit of children and young people.

NHS Education Scotland in 2008 developed a "capability framework" that details the level of knowledge and skills the nurses need to undertake the role, which was a huge step nationally in acknowledging the role. Available on: http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/Child_health/currentwork/documents/LACFrameworkFINALlores.pdf

Jackie Dougall
Clinical Nurse Specialist LAAC
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

Dream Becomes A Reality

Ten years ago Cairn Mhor Childcare Partnership was just dream. Seven and a half years ago it became a reality.

Starting with one house in Leven, Fife and 12 staff, today we have three houses and 55 staff, 95% of whom are qualified to SSSC standard and 9% who are qualified above this level. Our ability to integrate young people into full-time education has also been impressive.

up the Muirhead Outreach Project which has worked with 133 young people in the community. We do not see this as a conflict of interest as we believe that both services play a core role.

The young people who have left our service still know that we care and will



Before and after



As the first independent residential child care service in Fife there were a few hurdles to conquer in order to be recognised and valued. At our latest unannounced inspection we received six Grade 6s and two Grade 5s.

support them through their positive experiences as well as the upheavals in their lives. A visual reminder to us all on a daily basis is our cairn which the young people have their first name and something about themselves recorded.

A perceived gap in resources led us to set

Dorothy Markham, Director, Cairn Mhor



Growing Up – Quite a Journey

As a relatively new addition to SIRCC, working as a Research Fellow (and a PhD Student at Glasgow University), I have not been witness to many of the

changes that have taken place within SIRCC. In amongst the stories and legends of old (so the old-timers tell me) a fledgling organisation has grown up, gained 'wings', a sense of self, balance and confidence and has at times soared high.



Zachari (right) on the sponsored bike ride for CLA

In reflecting on SIRCC celebrating its own tenth year, I thought about where I was ten years ago: in care. Over the last ten years I've lost and fought, struggled and triumphed, but ultimately been glad to have travelled. This brings me on to another point: in celebrating ten years of an organisation, we must celebrate those things that make an organisation, what it is and look within ourselves and each other at what we've all achieved that has made SIRCC grow so successfully. Here's to another ten years.

**Zachari Duncalf, Research Fellow, SIRCC,
Executive Member, Care Leavers Association**

www.careleavers.com/executive

Arts and Activities

One of the things I have noticed over the last ten years is not only the increase in the use of activities with children and young people in residential care, but also, the realisation that these are not 'add ons' to keep them entertained, but are really the essence of quality residential child care.

I will not list specific activities as there will be too many I do not know about, but as there is increasing recognition of the role of social pedagogy, so there is recognition that what it brings about is change with young people. It is not (just) words, but sharing time together in music, stories, art, sport, cooking, and having fun. It also makes the job far more interesting and dare I say enjoyable – bring out the paint brushes and bang the drums.



Enjoying the mess with Action for Children

Moyra Hawthorn, Lecturer, SIRCC & Depute Unit Manager, Action for Children

Are you sitting comfortably?...

Once upon a time in a land far away, a group of handsome professionals working with looked after children and young people, gathered around an old multi-agency rickety desk and talked about a magical power known as resilience. They had a wealth of creative ideas to develop this across the children's houses but they needed some money to do this. The little group was disheartened as there was no money to be had; but as time moved on and the bitter cold winter snapped at the heels of the Scottish Executive, an incredible opportunity arose for the enthusiastic professionals to take their research and hard work forward. They were offered a small pot of gold to raise educational attainment for looked after children and young people!

They trawled the land far and wide before falling upon professional storytellers from a special voluntary island known as Children 1st. Together they embarked on an eight week programme travelling to all the children's houses and training staff in storytelling techniques and practices. They opened children's minds to the unimagi-

nable and special world of fables, fairy tales, songs and poetry. Together they used their feelings and emotions to compose unique sets of story images through music, poetry, art and even cookery.



The results were better than any of the little group of handsome professionals could have dreamt. The children and young people loved taking part and staff from the houses eagerly volunteered to take on special roles as literacy co-ordinators. More and more books,

papers and magazines appeared in the houses, visits to the local libraries became common and those children sitting their English exam that year at school? Well, it was the best year ever for results in that particular far away land!

THE END

Carol Edgar
Principal Teacher, South Lanarkshire Council
'Storytelling Initiative 2005'

A RIGHT blether

a RIGHT blether

What's important to you?

A RIGHT Blether is a significant conversation between children and young people in Scotland and their Commissioner. It's a chance for children and young people to share their opinions and experiences, to say what is important for them, and to help the Commissioner Tam Baillie take the action.

CREATE: As part of the national consultation, as well as highlighting the areas where children and young people think there needs to be change, the Commissioner wants to recognise and celebrate the good practice that is happening in Scotland too. The Commissioner is asking all children and young people to tell him about what their 'RIGHT brilliant thing' is. This should be something in their lives, their learning or community that respects their rights. An example of this could be where a young person in care is actively encouraged to take part in outdoor activities, or is supported to enable them to spend time with their families. The Commissioner wants to hear about what the successes

are, where a rights agenda is a reality and is positively changing children and young people's lives.

Could you support a child or young person or a group to tell the Commissioner about their RIGHT brilliant thing? They can use words, photography, art, drama, poetry, film (anything really). The contributions will be displayed in the window

of the Commissioner's office and also at national external events (unless the contribution is confidential). There is a Wii up for grabs for a contribution from a child up to 11 years old, a young person aged 12 and over, and from a group

The other elements to the consultation are:

PARTICIPATE: Five free rights workshops with creative extras have been created – you can request them from the Commissioner's office on 0131 558 3733 or download them from the web. *Could you run one or more activities for children and young people?*

VOTE: All children and young people in Scotland under the age of 18 or up to 21 if they have ever been looked after can vote on the areas they most want to see change in. This vote takes place throughout November 2010. *Do you have a venue that could become an accredited voting centre for a RIGHT blether in November?*

MEET: The Commissioner and his team will be touring every local authority before the vote in November to meet and have blether with as many children and young people as they can.

CELEBRATE: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child turns 21 this November and the Commissioner wants to support you to celebrate.

Could you organise a big or small UNCRC 21st Birthday Celebration Party? Maybe you could link it to a voting session? To sign up to support children and young people to have their voices heard and for more information please visit:

www.arightblether.co.uk

To get in touch with the Commissioner's office: Tel: 0131 558 3733

Address: 85 Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AU Web: www.sccyp.org.uk

Ezmie McCutcheon,
Communications Manager, SCCYP

Tam Baillie



10 years of Young People's Participation and Consultation Work

The last ten years has seen a strong collaboration emerge between Who Cares? Scotland and SIRCC on a wide range of projects and issues. This has enabled both to collaborate and combine their key strengths – SIRCC in terms of academic training and direct link to policy and practice improvement and Who Cares? Scotland having a clear focus on advocacy and young people's involvement.

successful model developed by SIRCC staff member Jeremy Millar and the Aberdeen based Voice of Reason Group, a national training team has emerged supporting a core group of young people to deliver with confidence. Young people from this team are active in RGU and Langside College and have presented at a range of conferences. This work will grow and develop over the coming years to ensure consistency of approach across Scotland.



The group who went to Skye

Over the years staff from SIRCC and Who Cares? Scotland have undertaken residential events with young people to help them express their views on a range of subjects such as: the care journey, importance of relationships, the ideal residential worker and positive media representation. This enabled the young peoples' views to be fed into professional conferences and events. This work continued in April when staff from both organisations undertook a residential visit to Columba 1400 with 13 young people on Skye. This was to enable them to train the young people, build them as a team and capture their thoughts and views to be used for training inputs to residential childcare staff, as well as undertaking a photography project. This is designed to allow them to express their thoughts and feelings on their journey through care for the SIRCC National Conference through photographs which will be blown up onto canvas and form a travelling art exhibition across the country.

During this time, SIRCC has funded a post within Who Cares? Scotland to cement the relationship between organisations and ensure a direct link to young people's views feeding directly into policy and practice.

The recent national anti-stigma campaign led by Who Cares? Scotland involved young people from the outset in the design and style of the campaign. Both Scottish Government and SIRCC funded the campaign.

Both organisations are currently working on their participation strategy to ensure that young people's voices and involvement continue to inform practice and policy now and into the future.

John Paul Fitzpatrick
National Development Manager (Policy,
Research and Training)
SIRCC and Who Cares? Scotland

This highlights the commitment of both to creating lasting societal and attitudinal change.

Involving young people in teaching has been a key priority and continues to grow. Based on the



GIVE ME A CHANCE
Be fair to a child in care

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT



Learning

Practice Learning

The SIRCC GSSW
Practice Learning Team

Glasgow School of Social Work, (GSSW) and The Robert Gordon University (RGU) were the first higher education institutions to have residential child care (RCC) pathway students on undergraduate programmes. The Practice Learning Team was established in 2002 in GSSW to provide supervision for RCC students and to develop new and diverse practice learning opportunities. Link worker training for staff has been provided to support these placements. SIRCC funded practice teachers worked with SSSC in providing guidance on *Getting Involved and Getting Started with Practice Learning* (2007). We aim to provide supervision in one practice learning opportunity for all RCC students. We have developed a model of group supervision further to enhance and support student learning.

Success with Flexible Learning

Lorraine Togneri,
LAC Teacher, North
Lanarkshire

One of the key successes in the residential child care sector in North Lanarkshire has been the introduction of the flexible learning initiative. This educational initiative provides disengaged young people with the opportunity to combine their studies with an individualised programme of learning which takes place outwith school. The young people are allocated a coach who works closely with the students to ensure that they maximize their educational and employability potential. 23% of the pupils on flexible learning are looked after away from home. Attendance, attainment, achievement and post school destinations have all improved greatly as a result of this initiative.

Three Cheers for Specialist Training Courses

Jacinta Birchley,
LAC Education, Aberdeen
City Council

As an affiliated professional to the residential child care sector I find the bespoke short courses excellent. Not only are they very practical but they help explain everyday issues which not only looked-after children have to deal with but all individuals. The research and publications about residential child care help other professionals understand the sector, its triumphs and challenges and ways of working. They aid teachers undertaking continuing professional development and explain what “working in the life space means”!

I wish SIRCC all the best for the next ten years and hope the excellent work and in particular the training that they offer can be rolled out and offered to professionals in the education sector. As SIRCC has excellently illustrated, a deeper understanding of behaviour helps with the management of behaviour and reduces stress for all.

The Meaning of Success

Iain McLeod,
Lecturer, SIRCC

‘It’s fine to celebrate success but it is more important to heed the lessons of failure.’
(Bill Gates)

In reflecting on our achievements over the last ten years, I am inclined to disagree with the (successful) Bill Gates. In the last week or so I have been reading fourth year students’ reflections on residential child care and what they have learned. Almost without exception, these students are positive and passionate about residential child care. I get a real sense that they are workers who are committed to positive practice and not trapped in a fear of failure. This is certainly evident in the creative and imaginative research that they have been undertaking in their final year. So, after ten years of SIRCC, I am grateful that our partnership has created opportunities for a degree education where residential child care can flourish.

SIRCC - A Learning Organisation

Amanda Lawler,
Specialist Training Co-ordinator, SIRCC

SIRCC aims to be at the forefront of providing learning experiences which further the professional development of residential child care. This commitment to professional development is also reflected within SIRCC, where all staff are encouraged to grow in ways which can support their own development, whilst also furthering the goals of the organisation.

In supporting the sector's development we have also been committed to our own. SIRCC staff have been learning in many ways and on many levels. Over the years staff have achieved PhDs, MBAs and Degrees and attended various courses, e.g. graphic design, leadership, first-aid, photography, film-making/editing and I.T. to name but a few.

I believe the measure of a social care organisation such as SIRCC is in its values and it seems to me that the values that SIRCC hopes to instil in residential workers are deeply held by us as an organisation and that we 'practice what we preach'.

Specialist Training

Andrew Hosie,
Specialist Training Manager, SIRCC

When SIRCC was formed ten years ago, the Centre for Residential Child Care transferred six short courses to SIRCC:

- Caring Safely for Children and Young People
- Managing Difficult Behaviour (Children and Young People)
- An Introduction to Principles and Concepts in Residential Child Care
- An Introduction to Working in Residential Child Care with Children and Young People who have been Sexually Abused
- Approaching Adulthood: Preparing Young People in Residential Care for Adulthood
- Positive About Parents

Only two of the original six courses remain in our current training catalogue. We now offer 41 short (specialist) courses; reviewing changes annually and striving to be responsive to the changing needs of workers in the residential child care sector.

Sometime back we were challenged about what we offered workers in the disability sector. While we strive to ensure that all of our courses are suitable for all who work in the sector, we decided to highlight specifically what courses we offer colleagues working in this sector. As a result, six specific courses were asked for and are now provided.

SIRCC is able to be responsive to the changing demands of the residential child care sector due to a committed team of lecturers based in the National Office and in Robert Gordon University, and a team of dedicated 'Associates' who are recruited for their specific knowledge and expertise. We also appreciate our dedicated administrative staff both in the National Office and in the Robert Gordon University.

We are very grateful to staff in the sector for their kindness and hospitality while we deliver the short courses – thank you.

From Reflection to Understanding & Articulation

Laura Steckley,
Course Director,
MSc Advanced Residential Child Care
Glasgow School of Social Work

One of the experiences that characterises the last ten years of residential child care, for me, is bringing tacit knowledge to an explicit, explainable level. When I was a student on the MSc, I remember those moments when literature, research findings or other students' discussion in class so strongly resonated with my own experiences that I felt my pulse quicken at hearing things I 'knew' (though in an unarticulated way) actually spoken aloud. Bringing knowledge from the tacit to the explicit enables practitioners to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions, to deepen their understanding, and to articulate their views more persuasively. This, then, aids in the development of a stronger voice and professional identity for the sector. I now have the privilege to facilitate a similar process through teaching, consultancy and research. It has been just as exciting to witness students and workers grow in their confidence and reflectiveness as they become more articulate residential child care practitioners.

Developing Evidence-Informed Practice in Residential Child Care



Developing the research and evidence base for residential child care has been one of SIRCC's central goals. Staff have carried out empirical research, published widely and embedded research into the whole range of training and courses. The *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care* has established itself as an essential source, and it has published articles by the leading researchers in the field in the UK, as well as papers by international authors. Very importantly, much of its content is written by residential child care practitioners and managers themselves and by young people. Research has been embraced by communities of practice, and we should celebrate this as a key achievement.

Andy Kendrick, Professor of Residential Child Care

Publications, Research and Development



I feel pleased that together with SIRCC colleagues we have managed to contribute to the development of some great textbooks on various aspects of residential child care. I think these have all been collaborative ventures of one sort or another.

There have been two edited collections; *Facing Forward; residential child care in the 21st century*, edited by myself and David Crimmens from Lincoln, and more recently Andy Kendrick has edited *Residential child care: prospects and challenges*, published in the highly respected 'Research Highlights' series from Jessica Kingsley. Also Irene Stevens and I have written *Residential child care: collaborative practice*. Other staff have contributed to these and many different types of publications, of course. One former SIRCC lecturer, Mark Smith, has also published a textbook, *Re-thinking residential child care*. So all in all I think we are doing well by presenting critical thinking and book resources and thus contributing to the ongoing professional development of the sector.

Ian Milligan, Assistant Director, SIRCC

An Emerging Looked After Children Research Network

A research network which began informally in early 2009 to support PhD students at Strathclyde and Edinburgh universities, now includes students and supervisors at six Scottish universities, the Medical Research Council and Trinity College Dublin. The common interest is the education and well-being of looked after children. With over 15,000 children looked after by local authorities in Scotland - a number that has grown each year since 2001 - this is an area of concern for politicians, policy-makers and practitioners in health, education and social work.

The network was started by Dr Graham Connelly of Strathclyde University, Dr Ian Milligan of the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care and Dr Joe Francis of Edinburgh University. There are now five PhD studentships supported by the network, as well as staff projects. The network provides a forum for support, discussion and potentially for research collaboration.

Dr Graham Connelly, Senior Lecturer, University of Strathclyde



I-r: Dr Graham Connelly, Ms Trish McQueen, Prof. Robbie Gilligan

Residential Worker of the Year

This photo was taken of Greig Bryce (right) senior residential worker at Sunnyside. Greig was awarded the prize of 'Residential Worker of the Year' by BASW at a recent ceremony at Edinburgh Castle. Greig was nominated for this award by a young person and myself for his contribution towards the care and support offered during night shift within the house. This includes a new co-keyworker system, activities (such as ghost walks, ice skating, etc.), team meetings, quality assurance and developing relationships with the young people. This was highlighted through the endorsement of the nomination by a young person. They highlighted his problem solving-skills, communication skills, commitment and haircut as all being positive!! Being a national award this gives recognition to what can be achieved on night shift which is often a very difficult time for young people who are accommodated.

Scott Campbell, Unit Manager, East Ayrshire



Behind the Scenes

The range of services offered by SIRCC would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of a strong underpinning support system.

The 'Admin Team' works endlessly to meet the increasing expectations of SIRCC, and is constantly reviewing their practices. Several staff have obtained degrees and higher degrees and their heightened professional service and communications have been recognised by SIRCC's stakeholders. Some of the improvements include:

- the overhaul and quality assurance of specialist training materials
- on-line booking forms for specialist training & events
- systematic updates of our databases
- designing our own promotional materials
- filming – significant developments in this area are still to come.

Sandy Moyes, National Office Administrator, SIRCC

Oscar Day

As part of the East Ayrshire Council Montgomery Intensive Support Development Plan, we had an Oscar Theme Day for the young people. This day was a fantastic success that all our residents really enjoyed. We have four young people staying at Montgomery Place. They were collected by a limo and taken to Glasgow. The young people then walked down a red carpet before taking part in a development day to gain their views on Montgomery Place. All the young people received a large goody-bag, which was full of amazing surprises. During the day the young people were presented with their own Oscar for their individual achievements.

**Graham McCall,
Senior Residential Worker, East Ayrshire.**



Event-ualities



In the beginning we typically had a few frantic volunteers, masses of photocopying, brown folders, overhead projectors, a dodgy ceilidh band and a few display tables. When we started using PowerPoint we were scared and prayed hard!

We are now challenged by a huge choice of presentations. Young people have grown more confident about speaking out. People come to network and exhibitors vie for space. I love the delegate bags and pens I have collected.

SIRCC has built up many valuable international links, partly through events, e-news and web sites. Eventually the SIRCC Annual Conference became the SIRCC National Conference. What next?

Wendy Cox, Events and Communications Manager, SIRCC

Away with Words

A seminar looking at non-verbal approaches including music, rhythm, patterns, rituals, sensory approaches and neurosequential therapeutics and touch in relation to dealing with trauma of all kinds, including people with impaired communication skills

Autumn date and venue to be announced.

Research into Practice

The next SIRCC research update event will take towards the end of this year. If you have something that you would like to contribute, whether a researcher or practitioner with an interest in putting research into practice, please contact:

sirccevents@strath.ac.uk

Making the Margins Mainstream

An Education Conference relating to all looked after children

Keynote Speaker: Robbie Gilligan, Trinity College Dublin

Wednesday 10th November

Westerwood Hotel – near Cumbernauld and Croy

Please check the SIRCC website for upcoming events or contact the SIRCC National Office for more information.

Some Past Conferences



Don't Forget It's Our Lives! FICE Conference, 2004