

REACH

facebook.com
/CELCIS

twitter.com
@CELCIStweets

ISSUE 3 Autumn 2013

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

NEWS

Permanence

The vision of the CELCIS
Permanence and Care Team

News

ADSW Adoption and Fostering Sub-Group

News from the Chair

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE...

PAGE 16 Recent research

PAGE 17 We Can and
Must Do Better

PAGE 19 Recent publications
and useful resources



Progress, Priorities and Permanence

The Scottish Government's Care and Permanence Plan

Continued on page 4 >>>

Foreword



Welcome to this new issue of Reach. Our focus in this issue is on 'securing permanence for children'. We

remain passionate about improving the welfare of our looked after children and securing timely placements with early decision-making is critical to this.

We have been overwhelmed by the willingness of people to share articles about their permanence activities for Reach; thanks very much to everyone. We hope you find the supplement a useful showcase for the volume and variety of this important work going on

across Scotland. Our enthusiastic engagement alongside Local Authorities and the third sector continues to result in positive and fruitful outcomes as we work hand in hand with those committed to our common aims: to reduce unnecessary delays and drift in the decision-making around permanence.

In this issue, Liz Brabender, who leads the Permanence and Care Team at CELCIS (PaCT), will tell you more about our work in partnership with the sector, which is helping to disseminate good practice.

In other news, Romy Langeland, the Independent Chair of CELCIS, recently announced her intention to stand down in the summer at the end of her current

term, and we will miss her wise insights and steady leadership style. We are delighted that Alexis Jay, OBE, has stepped up to the challenge and is now working with us. Until recently Chief Social Work Adviser to Scottish Ministers at Scottish Government, Alexis was previously Chief Executive and Chief Inspector of Social Work with the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) and brings with her extensive experience at practice, policy and government levels.

We are pleased to be engaged with many in the sector in some exciting work and you can read about a number of meaningful projects in this magazine.

Jennifer Davidson
Director, CELCIS

Would you like to submit an article or story to Reach?

Email us at celcis.comms@strath.ac.uk

What do you think about our new magazine?

Email us at celcis.comms@strath.ac.uk

What would you like to see on our website?

Email us at celcis.web@strath.ac.uk

Contents

For more information, visit www.celcis.org

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

- 03** Permanence
- 04** Progress, priorities and permanence
- 05** Care planning and permanence
- 05** ADSW Adoption and Fostering Sub-Group
- 05** Adoption Service Plans
- 06** Achieving permanence
- 07** Appointment of Safeguarders
- 08** Permanence 2011: Follow up
- 09** Supporting birth mothers
- 10** Achieving permanence: a Panel Chair's perspective
- 11** Supporting adoptive parents
- 12** Scotland's Adoption Register
- 13** Falkland House School
- 13** Social Pedagogy
- 14** Aberlour Sycamore Services
- 19** CELCIS NEWS
- 19** CELCIS EVENTS DIARY
- 19** RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND USEFUL RESOURCES
- 20** SIRCC Residential Child Care Awards

Permanence

The PaCT vision is to secure sustainable improved outcomes for looked-after children, achieved through systemic, strategic and practice changes in processes, procedures and planning to ensure that safe, stable and appropriate permanence is secured for children and young people who require this. Liz Brabender, Lead of CELCIS PaCT explains more.



As the Lead of the Permanence and Care Team (PaCT) within CELCIS, I have the privilege of working in partnership across the whole of Scotland to improve outcomes for looked after children. The task is complex and my team have been fortunate as there has been a tremendous response and effort from everyone involved in permanence work. We are supported by Scottish Government, LACSIG, Local Authorities, third sector organisations, national bodies and colleagues within CELCIS.

The PaCT programme plan is firmly based on the delivery of a change programme founded on the principles of improvement, stakeholder engagement, local ownership of issues, and national sharing of good practice. This approach provides opportunities for stakeholders to show where they add value to permanence and to understand the differences which they can make. We work in partnership at all times.

The PaCT provides the following interventions:

- Research – short-term and long-term research into care and permanence issues.
- Peer review – process by which learning from discussion of case work is promoted.
- Process mapping – intervention to assist in understanding blocks/duplication in processes and to suggest improvements to reduce timescales and to support data sharing.

- Knowledge exchange – promotion by PaCT of relevant articles and research through use of local events and e-mail.
- Road mapping/visioning – the process to assist teams/organisations to reach consensus on their vision and the steps required to achieve this.
- Consultancy – a partnership approach to support individual Local Authorities and organisations to continue to improve and secure change.
- Learning and development –provision of Learning and Development interventions nationally and locally, tailored to suit the needs of individual organisations/Local Authorities.
- Stakeholder engagement – a programme management approach to engaging and working with stakeholders.
- Practice exchange workshops – opportunities to promote emerging practice across Scotland.
- Transformational change support –the application, in partnership, of programme management approaches to change and improvement which secure lasting impact.

This issue of Reach focusses on permanence and highlights many new developments and approaches. I hope you find the detail as inspiring as I do. We have concentrated on developments at a national and strategic

level which have set the context for the work of the PaCT. We have also published a permanence supplement alongside this magazine which highlights the fantastic work going on in Local Authorities, the voluntary sector and other key organisations around permanence.

As we move forward with this ambitious programme, our intentions for the future include focus on the following strategic areas, which will deliver support to practice improvements across Scotland:

- Legal issues in permanence in a support role to the Looked After Children Unit Scottish Government
- Concurrency planning
- Promotion of the use of Permanence Orders with BAAF and TFN
- Ongoing support to the development of effective permanence practice for all staff
- Promote quality assurance through independent review systems and leadership support
- The development of permanence practice for children and young people affected by disability

If you would like to know more about the work of the PaCT at CELCIS, or if you have any ideas or feedback, please contact us at celcis.pact@strath.ac.uk. We are particularly interested in hearing about any challenges you are facing with regard to permanency.

Progress, Priorities and Permanence

The Scottish Government's Looked After Children Unit is focused on helping more children to find safe, stable, permanent and nurturing homes at an earlier stage to ensure that these children have the best start in life. David Blair, Unit Head at Scottish Government, outlines progress and priorities in relation to permanence.



The Scottish Government's Care and Permanence Plan makes a commitment to improve the timescales and quality of decision making for looked after children. We are promoting the need for **early decisions** to be taken about permanence, so that a young person is found a safe, stable, nurturing and permanent home with the least additional disruption in their lives. We are working to shift care planning towards fewer placements for children, early permanence decisions for every child and a system that puts the child at the very centre.

As part of this work, we are increasing engagement with colleagues in Criminal and Civil Justice and the wider justice community (including the Scottish Courts Service, the Judicial office, as well as the Scottish Legal Aid Board and the Judicial Institute) as well as with those involved in the Children's Hearings System. Their support and influence is crucial to address a number of the issues that have been raised by stakeholders.

Our work with the **CELCIS Permanence and Care Team (PaCT)** continues to look at how we can make improvements across all systems in local areas to ensure they work

together to deliver better outcomes for children. The team is already working with a number of Local Authorities on a range of improvement projects, to help reduce their outstanding permanence caseloads, and to develop and disseminate good practice across Scotland. We know that if we all share our knowledge about what works, and bring this together across a child's journey through care, we can deliver earlier permanence, stability and better outcomes without necessarily expanding the total resources spent on care because early permanence also means that children leave care sooner.

We realise the importance played by foster care in providing stable, nurturing and enduring environments for looked after children and have set up a review of **foster care**, led by independent chair, Sandra Paterson, to help find ways to put in place the recommendations from Moving Forwards in Kinship and Foster Care. The review group have now published an interim report and will produce a final set of recommendations for action by the end of this year. Following the review, we expect to see foster care become ever more focused on providing the highest quality care.

The new Children and Young People Bill will put **Scotland's Adoption Register** on a statutory footing and will help speed up the adoption process and promote a consistent approach to matching, once adoption is identified as the best way to secure a permanent home. Set up in 2011, Scotland's Adoption Register is already achieving real success with over 60 matches to date, and we are looking to build on this through the continuation of Adoption Exchange Days

We are working to secure even **earlier interventions** so that young people at risk of coming into care are provided with the (preventative) support needed in their family environment to go on to lead positive lives without coming into care. The new Children and Young People Bill will help to ensure that all children's services have a strong focus on prevention and early intervention and that the child is always placed at the centre; however, the Bill itself will not work alone and it will be everyone's duty to work together to implement these principles in everyday practice.

David Blair
david.blair@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Care Planning to Permanence: The role of LACSIG

Alistair Gaw, Co-Chair of the LACSIG Care Planning group

Over the past couple of years the LACSIG Care Planning Hub – which I co-chair with Romy Langeland – has helped to establish ‘permanency planning’ as a priority across Scotland. We’re proud of what’s been achieved so far, but there is still a long way to go. Decision making can remain subject to unnecessary drift and delay and not all children find the secure, nurturing placements they need.

At a series of regional events on permanence in 2012, practitioners identified issues around professional confidence, the complexity of handling contact (between children and birth parents) and the interaction between Children’s Hearings,

social work and the Courts. All of these are resolvable problems and the CELCSIS PaCT Team is working closely with Local Authorities and national agencies to address them. The Scottish Government’s Care and Permanence Plan puts in place a number of additional initiatives which should help increase rates of adoption and the availability of permanent carers.

In 2013 the Care Planning Hub will continue to support the Government in implementing the Care and Permanence Plan. We are also taking a keen interest in how the new joint inspections of children’s services will work as a force for improvement among community planning partners. We will also be looking

closely at the system of ‘home supervision’.

As a mix of strategic, operational and front-line professionals from across Scotland’s public services, the Care Planning Hub is in a strong position to identify problems and work out feasible solutions. LACSIG as a whole continues to push service leaders to get it right for Scotland’s most vulnerable children. That pressure from above is important. But when it comes to care and permanence planning, it is often individual actions at the front-line that make a dramatic difference. The improvement agenda genuinely belongs to all of us.

ADSW Adoption and Fostering Sub-Group

The Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW) has a sub-group which focuses on adoption and fostering. This is a forum for taking forward professional management issues relating to fostering and adoption in local government.

The sub-group works closely with partner agencies in the voluntary sector, particularly the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), CELCSIS and the Fostering Network, as well as with the Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

In relation to permanence for children, the group has been keen to look at the ‘Whole Systems Approach’, and has promoted the notion of analysing how delays in achieving permanency for children occur in the ‘system’ and how these can be overcome. A number of Local Authorities are looking at the processes they have in place for assessing the needs of children, undertaking parenting assessments in shorter timeframes and getting the paperwork completed and agreed more quickly. Some Local Authorities are also developing parallel planning for children who may or may not return to the care of their birth parents, and concurrent planning, where children are placed in infancy with carers who can go on to adopt

them if this is needed, or who can work towards supporting them to return to the care of their birth parents. There is a real sense in the sub-group of ambition on behalf of children.

There are lots of examples of good practice and sharing of ideas. There is a determination to find families for children who need permanency so that their life chances can be maximised. The contribution of the voluntary adoption agencies is important in this, as is the success of the programme of Information Exchange days, hosted by BAAF, to promote links between children and families, as part of the developing work of the Scottish Adoption Register. A successful national strategy for meeting the needs of children in need of permanence has to include all partners and must also address legal impediments to adoption, including operational difficulties with Permanence Orders with Authority to Adopt.

Robert Swift, Chair

Adoption Service Plans

The Scottish Government approached Local Authorities for the first time last year requesting copies of their adoption service plans, as per section 4 of The Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007.

The Scottish Government’s Looked After Children Unit is now considering the helpful analysis of these responses and will shortly be determining what national level information they will request of Local Authorities for the next set of Adoption service plans.



Achieving Permanence: Tackling Barriers and Developing Solutions for Disabled Children and Young People in Foster Care

Over the years there has been very little focus on disabled children and young people in care. Yet, in Scotland, an estimated 15 % of looked after children and young people have a disability.

There is very little evidence on achieving permanence for disabled children in Scotland. Permanence planning aims to support children's reunification with their birth families following an episode of care, and when this is not possible or safe to do so, the aim is then to ensure that children have a secure, stable and loving family achieved through long-term foster care or adoption. As a seminal study in England found: 'There is evidence that disabled children are more likely to be looked after, remain in care for longer and have a higher risk of being placed inappropriately in comparison with non-disabled children'. Therefore, we want to consider what barriers exist to achieving permanence for disabled children and young people and to develop solutions together.

In May 2013, CELCIS secured funding from the University of Strathclyde for a series of 'knowledge exchange' events in partnership with The Fostering Network and Quarriers. We aim to:

- Increase knowledge about the numbers, characteristics and needs of disabled children in foster care across Scotland;
- Share research, policy and practice expertise to identify barriers and develop solutions;
- Explore 'what works' in achieving permanency for looked after children in foster care;

- Creatively work with organisations, children's social workers and foster carers to improve outcomes for looked after disabled children in foster care settings.

Knowledge Exchange Symposium

On 12-13 June 2013, we held our first two-day event to share our knowledge and expertise about disabled children and young people in foster care in Scotland. This interactive symposium involved foster carers, researchers, social work practitioners and policy makers. A second event will be held in late 2013.

Questions for you

We would really value hearing about your professional or personal experiences to inform the events:

1. What are the issues you face in supporting disabled children and young people in foster care?
2. What are some of the difficulties in achieving permanence for disabled children and young people?
3. What ideas do you have for ensuring disabled children and young people can achieve long-term care in secure, stable and loving families?

For more information or any questions, please contact: Liz Brabender, CELCIS, University of Strathclyde
Liz.Brabender@strath.ac.uk
Telephone: 0141 444 8537

1. Schofield, G., Beek, M & Ward, E (2012) Part of the family: Planning for permanence in long-term family foster care. Children and Youth Services Review, 34: 244-253.
2. Baker, C (2011) Permanence and stability for disabled looked after children, Glasgow: IRISS.



Understanding the reasons for the appointment of Safeguarders by Children's Hearings

Dr Andressa Gadda, Research Fellow PaCT

The CELCIS PaCT has a research project which will find out more about the reasons for the appointment of safeguarders by the Children's Hearings and the impact of this on decision making processes.

Local Authorities Safeguarders were introduced in the Children's Hearing and Sheriff Court systems in 1985, as a consequence of an amendment to the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 made in 1975.

Initially, there was considerable scepticism about the value of safeguarders to the Children's Hearings and in the first year of operation (1985-6) safeguarders were appointed to under 1% of possible hearings. In the years that followed, attitudes shifted and safeguarders become an integral part of

Children's Hearings. This was reflected by the incorporation of the safeguarder position into the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the widening of circumstances for the appointment of safeguarders.

Section 41 (1) (a) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 identifies the overall remit of the safeguarder as 'safeguarding the interests of the child at a Children's Hearing or before the sheriff'. This is, as observed by the Scottish Safeguarders Association (SSA) on their response to the Scottish Government's

consultation on the Children's (Hearings) (Scotland) Bill, a wide-ranging remit. This may have led to inconsistencies across Local Authorities on how safeguarders were performing their role. The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 and accompanying regulations has sought to clarify the remit to ensure consistency across Scotland.

We do not know how many safeguarders are appointed to Children's Hearings in Scotland today, the reasons for, or the outcomes of these appointments. In the 2000 study, The role of safeguarders in Scotland, commissioned by the Scottish Executive, it is reported that safeguarders were appointed to 9.3% of possible hearings in 1999/2000. At the time of their study, they noted considerable difficulties in gathering data – a difficulty still present today as there is no centrally collected data. This may partially explain why, to date, there have been only two studies exploring the appointment, remit and role of safeguarders in Scotland: Curran (1989) and Hill et al (2000).

This new study is an important addition to our understanding. This is particularly relevant as the Children's Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011 is bringing about a number of changes to how safeguarders are organised and appointed.

The initial phase of this study is being carried out by CELCIS PaCT in partnership with staff from Midlothian City Council and Clackmannanshire Council. This will allow for some comparison between different areas to be made.

 **If you would like more information about the research, or would like to get involved with it, please contact Dr Andressa Gadda; andressa.gadda@strath.ac.uk telephone: 0141 444 8500.**



Permanence: following up our 2011 report

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) published the Care and Permanence Planning for Looked after Children in Scotland report in March 2011. This report considered the pathways and decision-making processes through the care and court systems in Scotland for 100 looked after children from the point they were first identified as at risk, to the point of adoption or permanence.

The Scottish Government responded to the SCRA report in June 2011 outlining clear expectations for improvement across permanence practice in Scotland. CELCIS was commissioned to recruit a Permanence and Care Team (PaCT), charged with the development and delivery of a transformational permanence improvement programme.

So where are we now?

SCRA has been pleased with both the activity and publicity around the report and the recognition that the challenges posed in the report belong to all agencies connected with planning and decision-making for children.

Since the report was published, SCRA has followed up with a report on children on supervision for more than five years, where similar themes emerged especially around delay and the number of changes of placement for children. (All research can be accessed at www.scra.gov.uk). One of the purposes of that report was to highlight that permanence and stability for children is not just achieved through the adoption route and that work done by foster and kinship carers, supported by social work and a number of other agencies, can provide that critical element of security for children, even where no legal order is sought.

One of the essential messages of the permanence report was that while much attention is paid to delays in the legal process, the most significant delays occur at the beginning when decisions have to be taken about initiating permanence planning.

SCRA has a role to play here, as future planning for a child may depend on our decisions about when to refer children to

hearings; delay, especially in relation to cases of neglect, was highlighted.

The report predated the introduction of a decision making framework for reporters which helps to focus their decisions on areas of risk. Over the next year SCRA will be reviewing and reporting on our decisions including attention to:

- Why we take the decisions which we do
- What information we get to inform those decisions
- Why cases are referred to us.

While the significance of delays at the initial stages of planning for a child is of fundamental importance, there is recognition that once within the legal system, delays occur which could be avoided. The proposed Children and Young People's Bill may give an opportunity to tackle some of those. For instance, does the giving of advice by a children's hearing in permanence cases justify the minimum three months which we calculate is added to the timescale?

We have been pleased to take part in the events organised by LACSIG and CELCIS around the country, which have given agencies

a chance to look at local improvements they can make in practice. Local events between panel members and social work are important in teasing out some of the problems encountered in decision making on contact where permanency is being considered.



**A view from Malcolm Schaffer,
Head of Practice and Policy at
SCRA**



Taking the chance to change: supporting birth mothers: Scottish Adoption

In 2010 Scottish Adoption and Capital City Partnership agreed to jointly fund an innovative project working with a group of birth mothers in Edinburgh who had previously experienced the adoption of their child(ren) and were at risk of having subsequent children adopted.

Losing a child, particularly through contested adoption, where the local authority has removed the child from a birth parent's care, has a personal and social impact. Birth mothers can have strong feelings of shame and guilt. There is a complexity to their grief, which can be seen by others as self-inflicted, reflecting their failure as a mother. Alongside this, they grieve for a child who is lost but still exists: absent yet present.

Support for this group of birth mothers tends to be ad hoc and issue-based through, for example, criminal justice and addiction services. The chaos some birth mothers present makes intervention difficult. The thinking was that an initiative like Chance4Change might shift intervention from being crisis-driven to being focused, sustained and ultimately, preventative.

Over a 24-month period a core group of 12 women engaged with the service. They allowed workers to take them back through their childhood and help them make sense of history. They explored the reasons behind their children being adopted and also what would be required to care for a child safely. They were challenged to make better choices. Building a safe, trusting relationship with a worker was reparative for some birth mothers who began to form a more positive sense of self.

There were four outcomes set for the project:

1. Reducing the number of birth mothers in the group who had subsequent children removed from their care.

2. Improving the birth mothers level of participation in positive activities – training, community opportunities, etc., with the aim of enhancing their confidence and life skills.
3. Increasing the level of engagement with other agencies / community-based services.
4. Helping the birth mothers make a positive contribution to the lives of their children who had already been adopted, by providing family history information and providing a written explanation to the child regarding the circumstances of their adoption.

These outcomes were mostly met. The average financial cost for the 12 birth mothers receiving this service was £4241 per person. Providing this service to one birth mother costs approximately the same as six weeks of local authority care for an accommodated child. It is envisaged that the need for services of this kind will grow rather than diminish as the numbers of children being accommodated and adopted rise. Ignoring this need will mean greater financial costs for Local Authorities and greater emotional costs for birth mothers, their adopted children and the children they may go on to have and possibly lose.

The evaluation report for the Project is available at:

www.scottishadoption.org/uploads/downloads/Chance4Change%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf

For more information contact Maureen Kinnell:
maureen@scottishadoption.org



Achieving Permanence: a Panel Chair's Perspective

Pat Hutchinson

BAAF staff in Scotland chair seven local authority adoption/permanence panels and two voluntary agency panels; both of these agencies recruit permanent carers.



Panel members are often drawn from a narrow pool of professionals, substitute carers and adult adopted people. More community representation from adults and parents who have experience of the care system would bring a wider perspective, and perhaps a more authentic range of experience.

The SCRA report, mentioned earlier in this edition of REACH, confirmed how protracted permanence planning for children in Scotland can be. It identified that it takes an average time of over two years for children to achieve permanence in substitute families. Even for those babies assessed as 'at risk' at birth, (the majority of whom were also placed at birth), none was placed for adoption under one year old.

The Government's response to the SCRA report led to the establishment of the CELCIS PaCT team and a renewed focus on identifying areas for improvement and implementing the necessary changes. BAAF's observations do not lead us to believe that the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 has led to improvement in timescales across Scotland, although some Local Authorities have improved significantly in their planning and implementation as a result of determined policies and commitment of resources.

From a panel chair's perspective, what do we see on a weekly basis and how might adoption/permanence panels support the work of Local Authorities in improving

timescales and outcomes for children?

Scrutiny of assessments of children for whom adoption is planned is part of the regulatory process; most agencies also submit their plans for children for whom permanent fostering is the plan, to their adoption/permanence panel. Panels make recommendations to agencies and often include comments on the information they have scrutinised, sometimes favourably, but also about delays and other shortfalls in the assessment and planning processes.

The panel is the first external opportunity for the Local Authority to demonstrate the robustness of their assessment and plans for children. What do we find? There is great variability across agencies in the quality of reports, covering for example: a child's history, the impact on the child of their experiences, sibling assessments, exploration of kinship options, and the gathering and interpretation of health assessments and information from educational and psychological services. The GIRFEC approach is often far from evident in children's reports. Perhaps the most serious concern for panels is the 'drift' in decision making most often noted in delays in accommodating children and protracted rehabilitation attempts. Retrospectively there is little that panels and chairs can do to influence delays that have already occurred, but BAAF colleagues certainly feel it their responsibility to draw the attention of senior agency managers both to individual case concerns and perceived systemic issues.

Greater impact can be made in prompting workers to gather and analyse information which, whilst not of immediate significance in 'making the case', may be of inestimable value to children at a later stage in making sense of their lives. This also helps to demonstrate the need for post-adoption support in the form of tangible plans for continuing services to all parties to permanence, children, birth and adoptive families.

Foster care: a viable route to permanence

Sandra Paterson, Chair of the
National Foster Care Review

For most children that need to be looked after away from their birth families, foster care represents their best chance of securing permanence. Just over 270 looked after children found new homes through adoption last year, and although important work is underway to increase that number, it is never likely to be an option for the majority. By contrast, nearly 1,100 children in Scotland have been living with the same foster carers for three years or more. It is in foster care that many of our looked after children discover that all-important sense of 'belonging': belonging to a family, a place, or a circle of friends. It is in foster care that many children find the secure, stable placement that underpins success at school, college or employment.

Scottish Government's ambitious agenda around 'permanence' acknowledges foster carers' critical and central role. The National Foster Care Review, which I chair on behalf of the Government, has been tasked with identifying what needs to change in our foster care system to ensure that it can provide secure, stable, permanent placements to as many of our vulnerable children as possible. The population of children and young people entering care is changing, with the average age dropping and level of need increasing. Most will not be able to return home. Our foster care system needs to be able to accommodate these changes and the new challenges they present. The Review is exploring how to equip all foster carers with the support, skills and knowledge necessary for managing children in acute distress. We are also looking at issues around fees, child allowances and placement limits, to ensure that the system adequately supports carers in their efforts to improve outcomes for children. Finally, we're considering some broad strategic questions, to make sure that foster care is organised in a way that delivers best value for money.

We will be making recommendations to the Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group (LACSIG) and Scottish Government in the autumn of 2013. Until then, I would welcome your views and comments. Ensuring foster care is fit for purpose will require a collective effort and I hope you will work with me to ensure this Review puts us on the right course.

Tadpoles: supporting adoptive parents to build attachment with newly adopted children through play

Since January 2013, Scottish Adoption has been running a new programme that aims to support the development of attachment between adoptive parents and children through play. Maureen Kinnell, Practice Manager, explains the programme.

The Tadpoles programme consists of six sessions delivered to groups of up to six families over a six month period. In the first session one of four Senior Practitioners from Scottish Adoption visit the family to explain and demonstrate the play techniques to be used. This is followed by four group-work sessions during which parents are taught the play techniques. During the final session, Senior Practitioners visit families at home to offer further support in integrating the techniques they learned into their daily routines.

By the end of the six-session programme, adoptive parents will hopefully have strengthened the attachment relationship with their child and be left with techniques

and resources to continue this work at home. Many of the children at the point of the adoptive placement will have a pattern of disorganised attachment. Unless they can become securely attached to a parent or caregiver their physical, emotional and social development will be compromised. Building a secure attachment with their adoptive parents as early as possible will improve their short-term and long-term outcomes.

The programme is being funded by a grant from the Communities and Families Fund and will initially be offered to 30 families. Scottish Adoption has asked the CELCLIS PaCT to evaluate the program. The PaCT researcher has worked closely with staff at Scottish Adoption to develop questionnaires for senior

practitioners and parents at the start and end of the programme. Additionally, parents were also asked to keep a diary throughout the duration of the programme and will be interviewed two months following completion. The diary entries will highlight the impact of the programme on parent-child daily interactions, whilst the interviews will provide an understanding of the impact of the programme over time.

This information will provide the basis for a report to funders and hopefully assist Scottish Adoption in securing further funding to extend the programme to all the adoptive parents they support.



Scotland's Adoption Register

Sue Brunton, Project Leader, Scotland's Adoption Register

Scotland's Adoption Register is working with adoption agencies across Scotland and with prospective adoptive parents to increase the opportunities for some of the children we know will wait a long time to be placed for adoption.

We provide three main services: the national linking service; the Scottish Children Waiting newsletter, and events that allow prospective adoptive families direct access to information about children waiting to be adopted.

National Linking Service

This brings together children in one part of Scotland with adoptive families in another. The linking service is a database of children with a plan for adoption and approved adoptive families. Using established matching criteria we are able to identify potential links. Information about these possible links is sent to the agency responsible for the child and for the adopters. Social workers can then contact each other to share more information and decide whether or not the child's needs are likely to be met by the adoptive family.

Scottish Children Waiting

Scottish Children Waiting is a publication featuring children who are referred to the Register. This is the first ever solely Scottish family-finding publication to feature children with photographs. Our aim is that as many children as possible are featured using a photograph and that the publication is shared with all approved adopters who are awaiting placement.

Adopte-led Matching Events

Last autumn we hosted Scotland's first two national Adoption Exchange Day events.

At an exchange day approved and prospective adopters are invited along to find out about children who have particular needs that mean it is likely to be more difficult to find them a family. It is hoped that by learning more about the children from their profiles, photographs and DVDs and from talking to social workers and foster carers,

adopters will be encouraged perhaps to consider a slightly older child, or a child with a particular special placement need.

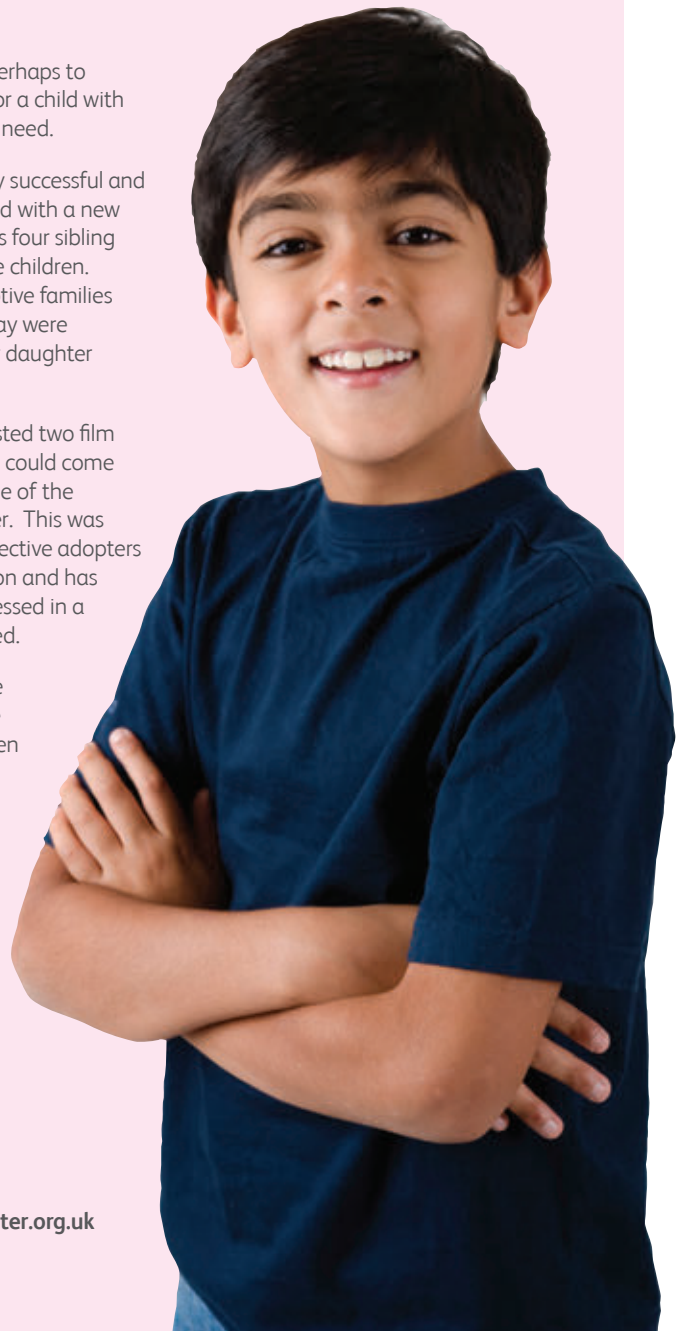
These events proved to be very successful and 16 children have been matched with a new family as a result. This includes four sibling groups of two, and eight single children. Around one in five of the adoptive families who attended an Exchange Day were matched with their new son or daughter following the events.

In February of this year we hosted two film feature events where adopters could come along and watch DVDs of some of the children referred to the Register. This was another occasion where prospective adopters had direct access to information and has resulted in interest being expressed in a number of the children featured.

As we approach the end of the second year of the Register we are delighted that we have been able to facilitate adoptive placements for 33 children. We have also supported developments in practice which have led to much more proactive and adopter led matching opportunities for some of our hardest-to-place children.

For more information, please contact Scotland's Adoption Register, call: 0131 226 9279

www.scotlandsadoptionregister.org.uk



Sector News

Falkland House School gains accreditation from the National Autistic Society

Falkland House School in Fife has become the first independent school in Scotland to be awarded Autism Accreditation by the National Autistic Society.

In order to achieve this recognition the school was tasked with providing evidence to the National Autistic Society and engaged in a lengthy process of self-evaluation against the 27 standards set by experts in the field of autism. These were split into 15 core standards and 12 specialist residential school standards. This evidence was submitted to the National Autistic Society prior to the formal review of the school. The findings of the review team were scrutinised by an independent panel before a final recommendation was made.

The National Autistic Society's standards are unique in the fact that no other organisation in the world has developed such detailed and comprehensive standards for the education and care of people with autism.



Social Pedagogy: Recapture the joy of what we do



Social pedagogy puts foster carers at the heart of the child care team, recognising and supporting the pivotal role they play in the development of fostered children.

Head, hearts and hands

A ground-breaking new programme that promises to transform the lives of children in foster care in Scotland has been launched by leading charity the Fostering Network.

Over the next three years, the Head, Heart, Hands programme will establish an innovative approach to fostering called social pedagogy, which is a way of working that already shapes how children in care are looked after in many countries across Europe.

Through Head, Heart, Hands foster carers and social workers at the City of Edinburgh Council, Orkney Islands Council and Aberlour Fostering will be trained on the use of social pedagogy to change and improve the way they look after children in foster care.

In the current system, processes and procedures typically determine how children in foster care should be looked after, which too often holds children back and prevents those who work with them from providing the best possible care.

In contrast, social pedagogy puts more emphasis on encouraging and supporting children to explore the world around them in their own individual way and to build positive relationships that lead to a more stable and fulfilling experience of life.

Head, Heart, Hands is led by the Fostering Network in partnership with Jacaranda Development, ThemPra Social Pedagogy and Professor Pat Petrie from the Institute of Education. It will be evaluated by a team led by the Centre for Child and Family Research at Loughborough University.

On completion of the programme, the Fostering Network hopes to work with other fostering services and the Scottish Government to encourage and promote the development of a wider social pedagogic approach.

Sector News continued

Social pedagogy within Aberlour Sycamore Services

Aberlour Sycamore Services have developed an evidenced-based practice model and over the past four years have worked to establish Social Pedagogy as an overarching approach which can help deliver excellent outcomes for children and young people.

This approach, which forms the basis for much of the child care practice in Europe, focuses on holistic well-being and learning. It is based on a positive concept of children as 'rich' and competent and there is an emphasis on developing strong, authentic relationships which support social inclusion.

Aberlour Sycamore Services have an excellent track record of providing quality therapeutic residential care for children who have experienced trauma and neglect. Our integrated approach to residential care, education and fostering delivers long-term stability and security for children. Located in Fife, all four existing residential services are based in the heart of the community and children are supported to enable them to integrate well into the local schools. A fifth residential service opened in October 2012, offering support to an additional six children aged from 5 to 12 years.

Within Aberlour Sycamore Services we are presently involved in a number of initiatives which aim to promote and develop the practice of social pedagogy:

- Working in partnership with Orkney Council, Aberlour Fostering, an important element of Sycamore Services, is one of six pilot sites within the 'Head, Heart, Hands' project (2 in Scotland and 4 in England). This three-year project is funded by a consortium which includes KPMG, Comic Relief, Sainsbury's and the Esmée Fairbairn foundation.



- A small group of children from Aberlour Sycamore Services discussed their experience of social pedagogy at a workshop delivered at the Social Pedagogy Development Network.
- Four staff from Sycamore travelled to Denmark and experienced social pedagogy in a cultural exchange funded by the Leonardo Mobility Project and supported by THEMPPRA.

Social Pedagogy helps create an environment within which all children and young people can flourish. There is a strong commitment to learning and reflective practice and we are always keen to share our experiences and learn from others. If you would like to know more about our services or social pedagogy follow the following links:

www.aberlour.org.uk

www.themptra.org.uk

Or contact us:

David Barr: david.barr@aberlour.org.uk

CELCIS News

From Act to Practice

Clan Childlaw and CELCIS were commissioned by the Scottish Government to run a series of half-day information seminars across Scotland for all those likely to come into contact with the Children's Hearing System.

The seminars highlighted a number of changes to the current Children's Hearing System which came into force with the implementation of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 in June 2013. These changes will have a significant impact on everyone who comes into contact with the Hearings system.

The seminars cover the following areas:

- Grounds to Intervene
- Participation of the Child
- Hearing Expectations

A series of 14 of these information seminars ran across Scotland between February and May. Further details can be found on the CELCIS website.

Further funding was also provided by Scottish Government to run a series of 'Train the Trainer' events.

Launch of a globally-relevant handbook

CELCIS has published a ground-breaking new handbook which we have developed in Scotland, with input from around the world.

The handbook will have a huge impact across the globe as it bridges the gap between policy and the country-specific procedures that are designed to support the hundreds of thousands of children around the world who do not live with their parents.

CELCIS was commissioned to develop and publish this implementation Handbook for United Nations' Guidelines, entitled Moving Forward: Implementing the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. It is the first global resource of its kind, and will guide and equip legislators, policy-makers and decision-makers, as well as professionals and care providers in the area of child protection and looked after children. It will assist in implementing much-needed policy, systems and practice changes that will improve the lives of these children, many of whom are exploited, abused or at risk of other human rights violations.

The Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (Guidelines) were formally endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2009, signalling that no country in the world had objections to their content. These Guidelines help embed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in alternative care provision. CELCIS, alongside hundreds of professionals from within Governments, NGOs, UN agencies and academia fed into the drafting process which includes promising practices from over 80 countries. The Handbook was field tested in Argentina and Malawi.

CELCIS has designed a website, available in four languages, to provide full information on the project where you can download a copy of the handbook and view examples of promising practice from around the world.

www.alternativecareguidelines.org

InterAction update

At the end of February, CELCIS and the Scottish Human Rights Commission hosted the first InterAction event in Glasgow.

The aim of the InterAction, the first facilitated negotiation within a human rights framework in Scotland, was to bring people and organisations to the same table at the same time to develop a plan to deliver justice for victims/survivors of historic abuse.

This meeting brought together victims/survivors of historic child abuse, Scottish Government Minister Michael Matheson and officials, and representatives of Local Authorities, institutions which provided residential child care, workers associations, foster care organisations, the Bishops Conference, the Conference of the Religious, and a number of religious orders. The event

was chaired by Professor Dr Monica McWilliams, an expert in transitional justice and one of the architects of the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, and was supported by staff and the Chair of the Scottish Human Rights Commission, Professor Alan Miller along with Commissioner Shelagh McCall.

The InterAction took place in a spirit of mutual respect and constructive engagement. All sides recognised that, whilst some steps have been taken to address historic abuse, victims/survivors have waited many decades for acknowledgement and accountability for

the trauma they suffered as children. Many participants underlined the severe and enduring impact this has had on them, as well as on their family and friends.

This first meeting of the InterAction process agreed a platform for further negotiations.

The February meeting was a first step with a second InterAction planned for later in the year to take these points forward in an 'Action Plan' that will then be open to public consultation.

CELCIS News continued

Research: Home Supervision requirements

CELCIS has published a report on Home Supervision Requirements (HSRs), a type of legal supervision order which is unique to the Scottish system of child legislation. HSRs have been the most common outcome from the Children's Hearings System since its inception in 1971. Despite their long history and extensive use little is known about HSRs and the children who are subject to this intervention.

This briefing summarises key findings of research on HSRs in Scotland. It includes new evidence from a recent study exploring the views and experiences of young people, their parents and social workers on this type of intervention, as well as the preliminary findings of a current study exploring young people's experiences of being subject to an HSR with a specific focus on their educational experience.

You can read all our research reports [CELCIS website](#).

Research: From Care to Uni

CELCIS, in partnership with Jamie Kinloch, a fourth year undergraduate student at University of the West of Scotland, has published a research report into looked after children and care leavers in higher education in Scotland.

The report summarises data on the progression of looked after children into higher education, and is set within the context of Scottish Government's policy on widening access.

Aimed at Local Authority throughcare advisers, key staff in the higher education sector and third sector agencies, the report highlights the lack of detail on institutional outcome agreements and the number of higher education institutions who now have the Buttle UK Quality Mark.

Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care

CELCIS has published Volume 12 of the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care and for the first time the Journal is entirely online.

The issue opens with Malcolm Hill's warm personal tribute to Professor Emeritus John Triseliotis of the University of Edinburgh who died in 2012. The main body of the issue contains six papers, representing theoretical and practice contexts, empirical research and conceptual writing.

You can read all articles at www.celcis.org/journal

Research: Recognition of Prior Learning

CELCIS was commissioned by Education Scotland to undertake a research pilot to determine whether Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) profiling could be used to recognise the wider achievements of young people who have been looked after by a local authority.

RPL is a profiling process which can be used to benchmark skills developed in informal settings against academic qualifications.

Professionals within children's services undertook RPL advisor training. They learned to benchmark the experiences and skills young people gained in the wider community with the equivalent SCQF level and Curriculum for Excellence 'experiences and outcomes', and went on to carry out profiling with young people.

Benefits of RPL profiling for the young people involved included:

- engagement with the process
- increased skills awareness
- increased self-awareness
- feelings of being nurtured
- recognition of their skills

CELCIS in partnership with Caledonian University have created a RPL-based course to help practitioners to develop their skills in this area.

Research: Still Caring? Supporting care leavers in Scotland

Approximately 1,000 young people leave care each year from a range of care settings, meaning there are approximately 9,000 care leavers aged 16 – 25 currently living in Scotland.

This briefing paper outlines the legal, policy and practice positions for working with care leavers and considers the gaps in provision and the needs of care leavers up to the age of 25, as suggested in the new Children and Young People Bill. Care leavers currently receive support until the age of 19, or in exceptional circumstances until, the age of 21.

Research shows that better outcomes can be achieved for care leavers by positively extending their time in a care placement and ensuring that their transition to independence is gradual.

We Can and Must Do Better

CELCIS has launched a new website for the revised We Can and Must Do Better training materials. The materials are relevant to anyone working with looked after children, care leavers and their families; in particular residential workers, foster carers, kinship carers, teachers, social workers and health professionals.

They may also be relevant to professionals from across the wider child care workforce who are working with any vulnerable children and families.

Originally produced on a DVD-ROM in 2008, we have now reviewed and updated these materials to reflect current research and Scottish policy and practice and made them available online.

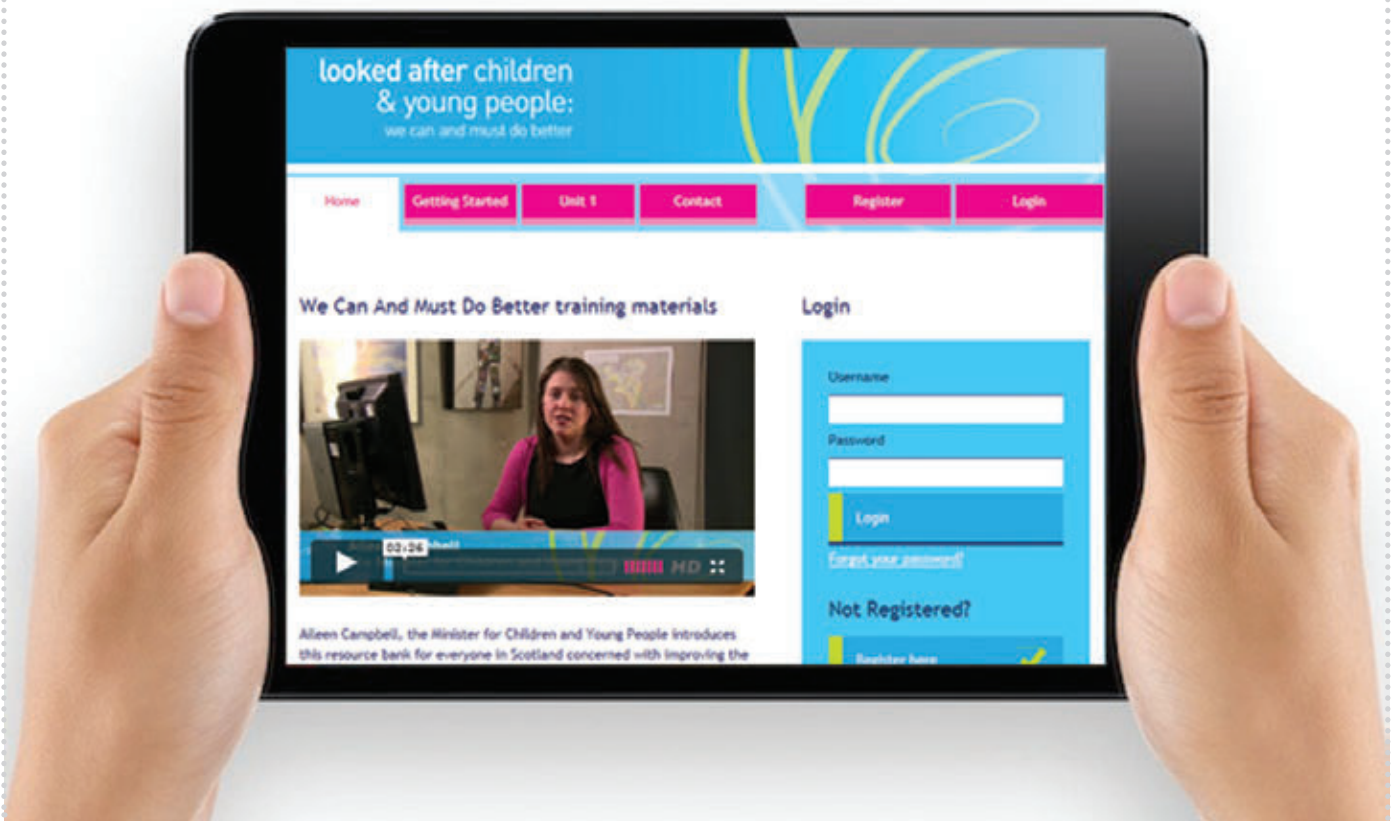
There are 20 units that can be combined in different ways to create courses of different lengths and for different audiences.

Each unit consists of trainer's notes with suggested activities linked to presentations, hand-outs and supporting videos and documents.

The materials are relevant to anyone working with looked after children, care

leavers and their families; in particular residential workers, foster carers, kinship carers, teachers, social workers and health professionals. They may also be relevant to professionals from across the wider child care workforce who are working with any vulnerable children and families.

www.wecanandmustdobetter.org



Reaching out CELCIS policy responses

It continues to be a busy time for our Policy Implementation team with the raft of new national legislation and policy being proposed. We continue to work hard to inform and implement policy developments to improve the everyday lives of all looked after children, young people and care leavers.

Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill

As part of a series of Members' Briefings with Children in Scotland, we provided analysis of consultation responses to the proposed Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill in relation to looked after children, young people and care leavers.

Summary

- There was a broad consensus for extending the right of care leavers to access support up to the age of 25. Many respondents highlighted the importance of this being a duty to provide support, rather than a right for care leavers to request support.
- Corporate parenting should be legally defined and there should be a concise shared understanding for public bodies to ensure meaningful implementation across Scotland.
- Support for kinship carers needs to be improved. It was widely recognised that kinship care can provide children and young people with a long-term, stable care environment, however, there was uncertainty about the viability of a new legal order to achieve this aim.
- There was some support for the mandatory use of Scotland's Adoption Register, although many felt voluntary use at this early stage was sufficient.
- Although not part of the proposed Bill, there was general support to reform foster care through establishing maximum foster care limits and setting national foster care allowances. There were mixed views on requiring foster carers to have qualifications and the use of a Foster Care Register.
- There was limited reflection on using a rights-based approach and, with a few exceptions, the seeking of children and young people's views on this proposed legislation. Despite a stated emphasis on 'making rights real', it is disappointing that a Child Rights Impact Assessment has not been completed. Furthermore, time-limited consultation over the summer of 2012 resulted in limited engagement opportunities for children and young people.

For full briefing see: www.celcis.org/media/resources/publications/MemberBriefingCYPBillResponsesThree.pdf

We continue to work hard to ensure legislation has a positive impact on the lives of all looked after children, young people, care leavers and families as the Children and Young People Bill was lodged in the Scottish Parliament on 18th April 2013.

Scotland's National Human Rights Action Plan: Getting it Right for Looked after Children, Young People and Care Leavers

In April 2013, we responded to the Scottish Human Rights Commission's consultation to develop Scotland's first National Action Plan for Human Rights. We recognised this as a unique opportunity to progress human rights and strongly endorse the work of the Scottish Human Rights Commission on this initiative.

We are aware of the human rights issues facing children and young people who are 'looked after' by the state and care leavers. As of July 2012, there are 16,248 children in our care system across Scotland who can live in a wide range of settings including foster care, residential care, kinship care, secure accommodation, with birth parents on supervision orders or who are in the process of being adopted. The majority of children and young people face considerable additional challenges in their lives due to the experience of abuse or neglect: their complex needs and disabilities or abandonment. The protection of human rights for this group at all stages of childhood and young adulthood is critical.

On Wednesday 13th March 2013, the Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children in Scotland (CELCIS) hosted a roundtable event on the proposed action plan to consider the key areas of concern and develop actions for looked after children, young people and care leavers. Presentations from Fiona Jones (CI@n ChildLaw, Edinburgh Law Centre providing legal advice to children and young people) and Dr Louise Hill (Policy Lead, CELCIS) informed our debates. In our collaborative response to your consultation, we have

highlighted human rights issues that require urgent action, and propose specific actions.

See www.celcis.org/resources/entry/celcis_policy_consultation_responses_2013

CELCIS gives evidence to the Education and Culture Committee at the Scottish Parliament - Wednesday 6 March 2013

The Education and Culture Committee continued its inquiry into the decision-making processes on whether children should be taken into care in Scotland. Jennifer Davidson, Director and Claire Burns, Strategic Policy Implementation Manager at CELCIS both appeared in front of the Committee to give evidence. View CELCIS giving evidence at the inquiry.

We have provided written consultation responses for the following consultations, proposing how these may affect looked after children, young people, care leavers and their families. They can all be found on our website:

- Scottish Government - Creation of a National Confidential Forum for adult survivors – Response led by Professor Andy Kendrick, University of Strathclyde (October 2012)
- Scottish Parliament – Public Petition PE1351: Time for All to be Heard (November 2012)
- Scottish Government - Tobacco Control Strategy for Scotland (December 2012)
- Scottish Parliament - Consultation on the Draft Referendum Franchise (Scotland) Bill & Response on Post 16 Education (Scotland) Bill (January 2013)
- Care Inspectorate – Improving services for children, young people and families (January 2013)
- Scotland Excel – Children's Residential Framework Agreement (January 2013)
- Scottish Parliament – Health Committee Inquiry into teenage pregnancy (February 2013)

CELCIS LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT DIARY



CELCIS has a full diary of seminars, events and workshops running throughout the year. Full details of all events and booking details for those shown below can be found at www.celcis.org.

SIRCC National Conference 2014 – Call for papers

The call for papers for the SIRCC National Conference, taking place in June 2014, is now open. Regularly attracting over 300 delegates, this conference is open to all those working within the residential child care sector and associated relevant professions.

Conference theme

As a sector we are familiar with lifelong learning, which recognises the ability for us to learn and grow, even after leaving the institutions of school and higher education. However, our children and young people in residential child care are often affected by a disrupted educational experience throughout these important years. How can we as a sector seize and use the Curriculum for Excellence as well as other informal opportunities to further contribute to their learning, play, and conversation, and nurture creative pursuits in their day to day lives?

Full details available at www.celcis.org

Recent publications and useful resources

Briefing on the Children and Young People Bill

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre has published a briefing on the Children and Young People Bill.

[www.scottish.parliament.uk/
parliamentarybusiness/65072.aspx](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/65072.aspx)

Care Inspectorate reports on deaths of looked after children

A report examining the deaths of 30 looked after children who died in Scotland between 2009 and 2011 has been published by the Care Inspectorate.

www.scswis.com

'How much is education included in the plans on Supervision Requirements'

SCRA has published a new research report looking at the cases of 250 children on Supervision Requirements, aged between three and 17 years old. The report reveals that less than a half of plans had specific actions on education and these were more likely to address children's educational problems than their abilities.

www.scra.gov.uk

New internet safety resources

WithScotland has published a new internet safety resource consisting of one research briefing and five fact sheets on topics such as Cyberbullying, Safer Social Networking and Children's Sexual Development.

www.withscotland.org

We Can and Must Do Better

A web-based resource bank for everyone in Scotland concerned with improving the outcomes for looked after children, care leavers and their families.

www.wecanandmustdobetter.org

Latest looked after children statistics

Scottish Government has published the 2011-2012 statistics on looked after children, child protection and secure care and close support accommodation.

www.scotland.gov.uk

Handbook to embed children's rights in alternative care

CELCIS has published Moving Forward: Implementing the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. You can read more on this earlier in this issue of Reach.

www.alternativecareguidelines.org

Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care, Volume 12

Produced and published online by CELCIS, The Journal provides a forum for discussion and dissemination of topical issues in residential child care research, policy and practice.

www.celcis.org/journal

10th Report, 2013 (Session 4) Report on decision making on whether to take children into care

The Scottish Parliament's Education and Cultural Committee has published a report on decision making on whether to take children into care.

[www.scottish.parliament.uk/
parliamentarybusiness/
CurrentCommittees/67750.aspx](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/67750.aspx)

SIRCC Residential Child Care Awards

In June CELCIS held the 14th Annual SIRCC Conference and hosted the Residential Child Care Awards. These fiercely fought awards recognise good, new and innovative practice in the provision of services for children and young people in residential care in Scotland. The winners for 2013 are:

1. Reaching Higher Award

Joint winners: East Park and Active Inquiry Project: Being Heard: Listening to and learning from looked after disabled children and young people in residential care.

2. Innovative Partnership Award Winner

Joint winners: City of Edinburgh Council and Police Scotland
Project: Restorative Practice

3. CELCIS Collaboration Award

Presented to: Phil Barton

4. Commended

Joint project by Renfrewshire Council and Impact Arts
Project: 'Fab Pad Programme'

5. Residential Child Care Worker of the Year

Winner: Heike Walker from Balnacraig School, Perth
Nominated by: James

