

**Issue 70**  
**May 2021**

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**And more!**



# Hello everyone



I hope this letter finds you well and looking forward to the summer ahead.

This edition will arrive with you just days before Foster Care Fortnight™, and our theme for 2021 is **#WhyWeCare**. We have an exciting array of online events to celebrate the fortnight, and you can read about what will be happening on page 3.

You will be aware that we have been campaigning for foster carers to be prioritised for the Covid-19 vaccine, along with the social care workforce. We wrote to Jeane Freeman, cabinet secretary, including case studies highlighting the risks foster carers face as part of their role, but were disappointed with the response. We then wrote to the chief medical officer and the director of the Covid-19 vaccine delivery team, but received an equally disappointing response. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to add their voice to the appeal. We are also continuing our campaign to secure national minimum allowances for all foster carers, and you can read about this and our other campaigning work by visiting our website.

On a more positive note, Betty Falconer and her foster son Reuban, shown on our cover photo, have had a busy lockdown in the Scottish Borders. Reuben's school sent a challenge every week which involved exploring the area to find objects including a sun dial, tadpoles, and to

count steps. They achieved an impressive 426 miles in just 17 days! Another foster family shared their experience of a very creative lockdown which you can read about on page 7 - we would love to hear what you have been up to as well.

We will continue to work closely with The Promise in the months ahead, and this will be driven by the new post of implementation manager thanks to recent funding from The Promise Partnership. There is an update on the progress of The Promise by their chair, Fiona Duncan, on page 3.

Finally, I would like to extend a very warm welcome back to Sara Smith, who started as our head of operations in January. We are delighted to have her as part of our team again.

*Sara*

Sara Lurie  
Director for Scotland



## Introductions

### New head of operations Scotland

Hi I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Sara Smith and I am the new head of operations for The Fostering Network in Scotland.

A number of foster carers may already know me as I previously worked at The Fostering Network as a project worker on the Fostering Community Champions and Walking Tall projects. I also did some work around disability inclusion and covered this post when our previous operations manager, Sarah McEnhill, was on maternity leave.

I bring to the role 18 years of fostering experience so have a good understanding of foster care and I am fully aware of the vulnerability of foster carers especially during Covid-19.

When not at work I can be found out walking and cycling and love nothing more than wild swimming even if it means breaking the ice!

# An update from The Promise Scotland

We are pleased to be able to share with you this update from Fiona Duncan, who is now chair of The Promise Scotland. We look forward to working more closely with The Promise in the months and years ahead.

'This is my first column for Fostering in Scotland since becoming chair of The Promise Scotland and you'll be hearing from me regularly in these pages.

'Spring is the season of new growth and The Promise Scotland has seen many green shoots over the past few months. In April, The Promise Scotland transitioned out of Scottish Government and into its permanent home, retaining independence and continuing to drive change. The team has really listened and learned since it was set up in July 2020 and shaped itself in light of that learning.

'The Plan 21-24 was published at the end of March. The Plan is phased across ten years and this first iteration begins with a focus on urgent and immediate changes. These are the things that will have the greatest

impact on the lives of children, young people and their families. One of the most important aspects is properly listening and responding to what children and their families want and need. The Promise Scotland asked organisations across Scotland how they would **#KeepThePromise** and the response was heartening and full of hope. Over a 100 organisations responded, including The Fostering Network Scotland, and the thoughtful, reflective submissions that were received allowed The Promise Scotland team to pull together Plan 21-24.

'I hope you will see it is what matters to children and families that is the focus at all stages of change. Organisations and systems must strive to start from the perspective of you and the children you care for and not the perspective internal to the "system". Scotland must work to build a country that cares, made up of services that work to meet the needs of children and families and stand ready to be accessed where and when they are needed. By



following Plan 21-24, by 2024 Scotland will have worked to transform its services and be ready to create a Scotland that cares and continues to care, by 2030 and beyond.

'I encourage you all to read Plan 21-24 - it can be found on The Promise Scotland website [thepromise.scot](https://thepromise.scot).'

## #WhyWeCare – Foster Care Fortnight™ 2021

Despite the challenges this year has thrown us, the love and support you provide to children and young people in foster care has never wavered, and we are proud of the way the fostering community has come together to achieve this. We would like to recognise the contribution you all make through our theme for this year's Foster Care Fortnight **#WhyWeCare**.

This year's campaign takes place from 10-23 May and we have organised a series of free virtual events in Scotland during the fortnight. We hope you will be able to join those of most relevance to you:

**Tuesday 11 May** – Meet the Team: 10am – 11am. A chance to find out about our work in Scotland and ask questions.

**Thursday 13 May** – Capturing the Voice: 10am – 11am. An informal coffee and chat about the challenges for foster carers with children and young people with disabilities and complex needs during the pandemic – lessons learned for the future.

**Saturday 15 May** – A family-friendly special event for Foster Care Fortnight, 7pm. A chance to come together in recognition of the work of foster carers and fostering services, and to remember those in our community who

tragically lost their lives during the global pandemic. You can book a free ticket by visiting [thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/foster-care-fortnight](https://thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/foster-care-fortnight).

**Tuesday 18 May** – Young advocates' CPD resource and music video launch.

**Thursday 20 May** – Understanding Trauma and Helping Recovery, delivered by Anne Wilson, Children's Health Scotland, 10am – 11.30am.

We would love if you got involved and supported Foster Care Fortnight as much as you can in May. Share our content on social media, ask your fostering service whether they need a media case study if you are happy to share your experiences and spread the word far and wide. This is not only a great chance to raise awareness of foster care and the vital role you are playing, but also an opportunity to get more people to come forward to foster and make foster care the very best it can be.

To find out how you can get involved, please visit our website [thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/fcf21](https://thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/fcf21).

To register for any of the events, please contact us at [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net).

# Young advocates update- eLearning module for educators

Our young advocates have done a fantastic job of working with us and Children in Scotland to create an online eLearning module for educators in Scotland. It has been designed to raise awareness of care experience within educational settings with the aim of reducing stigma for care experienced children and young people.

The main body consists of excerpts from Sam's diary. Sam is a care experienced young person who identifies as gender neutral and is referred to as their preferred pronouns 'they/them/their'. Sam makes their journey through primary, secondary and higher education. Their experiences consist of composite stories taken from lived experiences shared by young people, foster carers, educators, social workers and other professionals. Paintings, drawings, digital art and poetry created by the young advocates bring the diary to life and encourage emotive responses. Opportunities to reflect and hear suggestions from people we spoke with are part of the journey.

Other creative aspects include a song and music video created by the young advocates and a digital and virtual reality 'Tree of Positive Change' which captures a selection of voices highlighting positive changes for care experienced young people in education in Scotland.

We are excited to be launching this moving and inspirational resource as part of Foster Care Fortnight™ in May. #WhyWeCare

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**An example of a piece of digital art and written description by one of our young advocates, Rosie Campbell, is included in the eLearning module.**

**This drawing depicts a young child holding a balloon, their hopes and aspiration for a home reflected within. As a balloon is let go, it can be frightening at first as we don't know where it can go. But it rises higher and higher, if it reaches high enough, we can even reach the stars.**



## Watch this space!

We have in the past run open days in the Glasgow office to allow new social workers, new staff in fostering services, new supervising social workers and student social workers to visit and find out what we do at The Fostering Network.

This has not been possible over the last year and looks unlikely for some time, however we would like to offer an online open house via Zoom. It's a chance to meet the team and find out about our projects and campaigns, the Fosterline Scotland service and your membership benefits.

To register your interest, please email [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net) or call 0141 204 1400. We will announce a date and send invitations in the coming weeks.

## Funding success

Moving On: Supporting Positive Transitions is a two-year project funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. It aims to provide support both to children to help them stay in contact with a foster family after they have left their care, and to foster carers and their own children when a child moves on. We look forward to starting this exciting new piece of work in July.

We have also recently received funding from The Promise Partnership which will enable us to work more closely to implement the recommendations from the independent care review. The new post of implementation manager will help us to achieve this.

For more information, please email Sara Smith at [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net).

# Mockingbird in Scotland



It's an exciting time for the team at Barnardo's Scotland Fostering Edinburgh and The Fostering Network's Mockingbird programme. January 2021 saw the launch of the first Mockingbird constellation in Scotland.

Mockingbird, led by The Fostering Network, delivers sustainable foster care. It is an evidence-based model structured around the support and relationships an extended family provides. The model nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families, supporting them to build a resilient and caring community.

Alma Cope, operations manager at Barnardo's Scotland Fostering Edinburgh, led the implementation of Mockingbird in the Edinburgh service and shared her excitement following the first two months of the constellation being up and running. 'We are delighted to be leading the way by being the first fostering provider in Scotland to adopt the Mockingbird model. We are also the first Barnardo's service UK wide to have taken the lead on this. To have launched this new initiative during a pandemic is a huge achievement for the children, the foster carers and staff who made it happen. I am so incredibly proud of their efforts and I look forward to seeing this model grow stronger. Early indications have been very encouraging with carers avoiding placement breakdown and starting to feel connected and able to seek support from one another as well as the service.'

Tanya, an experienced foster carer of some 10 years and Barnardo's Scotland Fostering Edinburgh's first Mockingbird hub carer said, 'We hope to empower families to support each other and overcome problems before they escalate, but more so see children thrive and build long lasting relationships.'

If you would like to know more about Mockingbird please contact [Mockingbird@fostering.net](mailto:Mockingbird@fostering.net). If you would like to hear more about how Mockingbird is working in Barnardo's Scotland please contact [FamilyPlacementService@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:FamilyPlacementService@barnardos.org.uk).



## Capturing the Voice of disabled children and young people

How do we ensure that the voice of disabled children and young people is heard during their time in foster care and into Continuing Care or adult services?

We are looking to explore this issue further with foster carers and supervising social workers in terms of what plans are in place, what has

worked well during Covid-19 and how The Fostering Network can better support them in the future?

This very important project has been put on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions and the pressures people are experiencing during lockdown. As we are now coming out of lockdown and the vaccine is being rolled out, we

are intending to restart this project in June.

We are looking to meet online and we have a number of foster carers already wanting to engage, but we need more. We are hosting an introductory meeting on Thursday 13 May, 10am until 11am. If you would like to join us for this or future discussions, please get in touch by emailing [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net) or calling on **0141 204 1400**.

Please register your interest so we can plan future dates.

# Fosterline Scotland update



**Hello everyone**, we hope this reaches you well.

In our last newsletter, our legal team Levy & McRae wrote about the legal support they offer in the event an allegation is made against you. When an allegation is made this often causes a huge amount of stress and worry. We are hearing from foster carers who are feeling isolated and unsupported; they face uncertainty of what will happen

during and after the outcome of an allegation. One foster carer told us she was 'made to feel like she had committed a crime.' This can become stressful and difficult to manage.

Please know that Fosterline Scotland is here to help you, so don't hesitate to give us a call anytime for advice and support. If our operating hours of Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm, are not suitable we can arrange to call you

outwith these hours by appointment. In addition, if you feel you are not able to cope and need to chat with someone for additional support, please contact our stress support helpline on **01384 889 549**, 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

The Fostering Network also runs a Managing Allegations Against Foster Carers training course which includes input from our solicitors. This can be purchased by fostering services as an in-house course. Please get in touch for more information.

You can also read through the guidance The Scottish Government has produced: **gov.scot/publications/managing-allegations-against-foster-carers-approved-kinship-carers-agencies-respond**.

Thanks,  
Mirren and Julie.



## Training update – courses now online!

*'We had a great session today! It has been very helpful and encouraging to know that what we are doing is in the right direction for the children. Even social workers are learning as they go as well, it's been lovely to hear their side of things. Thank you.'*

### Foster carer, Life Work training course

Our training programme is now running successfully online, with the added benefit that you don't need to leave your home!

Don't miss out on our upcoming Zoom courses:

#### Men Who Foster

Wednesday 2 June 2021

£102 plus VAT for members and £204 for non-members

### The Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers

Wednesday 22 September, Tuesday 28 & Wednesday 29 September 2021

£395 plus VAT for members and £790 for non-members

Our popular Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers course is now also available to be purchased by fostering services as an 'in-house' course, in addition to our other courses: Moving Into Adulthood, Life Work, Moving On and the Role of the Supervising Social Worker. Do get in touch if you would like more information on this, and keep an eye on our website for future dates as they become available.

To book a place on one of our courses, or to find out more about purchasing an in-house course, please call Joy Crawford on **0141 204 1400**, email **scotland@fostering.net** or visit **thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/events**.

# Webinars with Children's Health Scotland – join us now!

We are pleased to be working with Anne Wilson, head of development at Children's Health Scotland, once again to offer you the opportunity to join the following free webinars for foster carers:

## Understanding Trauma and Helping Recovery

Foster carers may find it hard to understand their children's behaviours - running away, locking themselves in their rooms, becoming violent (especially just now in lockdown). It can help to understand that these may go back to a child's experiences early in life, and something in their present has triggered that trauma memory. The behaviour is a reaction to this.

'We will look at what trauma is and where it comes from and while there are no magic bullets, we will talk about some approaches to support children who are affected by developmental trauma and/or resurfacing trauma'.

The session will explore children's challenging behaviour as a result of early life trauma and discuss some practical approaches to support children who are affected.

The free session will take place on Thursday 20 May 2021, 10am until 11.30am. To register, please email [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net).

## Adolescence Matters - a webinar for foster carers

Adolescence Matters for Young People in Foster Care will take place over two sessions, with some resources to read in between the sessions. This is an opportunity for carers to reflect on what adolescence is, some of the specific challenges

associated with this period, and why it is sometimes more challenging for care experienced young people.

Adolescence is a difficult time for all young people as they navigate the path to becoming independent while also struggling with conflicting emotions as they strive to form attachments to their carers. This workshop will explore how foster carers can best support young people through the storm and stress of this period.

Session one will take place on Tuesday 1 June 2021 from 10am until 11.30am, and session two will take place on Tuesday 8 June from 10am until 11.30am. To register for these free sessions, please email us at [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net).



**Children's Health Scotland**

Promoting the healthcare rights and needs of children and young people

## Getting creative in lockdown

We are delighted to share with you the creative time one foster family has been having during lockdown:

'When Katie returned to school in August, she was really worried about catching Covid-19 in school and bringing it home to me as I was high risk. We had been keeping her busy doing art and crafts and making light up bottles for Christmas but we were buying the decals to stick on online.

'I decided to look into buying a cricut machine that would enable us to make so many different things and keep Katie's stress and worry levels as low as we could. Learning to use the machine was like going into a rabbit hole, the ideas of things to make were endless and we spent hours together scrolling through FB groups and Pinterest.

'This started as a hobby but before long people were seeing photos of what she had made on FB and started to buy from her. It started at Christmas with Rudolph chocolate ball holders of which she sold 130 at £1 each so you can imagine how delighted she was to realise people liked what she made and were buying lots from her. It was a great confidence boost for her.

'Katie is now saving up to buy the machine that cuts wood, metal and engraves which would allow her to learn to make new things.

'She also donated £40 of shopping to our local food bank as she remembers growing up with very little food and wanted to give something to help others who are struggling.

'Needless to say, we are very proud of her.'



## Getting a National Insurance number when in foster care

Looked after children are not automatically given a National Insurance number when they turn 16, as National Insurance numbers are linked to child benefits which is not awarded to foster carers.

It is the responsibility of the child's social worker to apply for this when the child is over 15 years and 9 months and they should do so by writing to HMRC using official local authority headed paper. More information on this can be found online: [gov.uk/guidance/national-insurance-number-applying-for-a-number-for-a-looked-after-child](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-insurance-number-applying-for-a-number-for-a-looked-after-child).

We recommend that at a young person's LAC review, when they turn 15 or around that time, the reviewing officer should check this is in hand and then follow it up at the next review to check the young person has safely received their National Insurance number.



## Dates for your diary...

### Tuesday 11 May 2021

Meet the Team  
Zoom (page 3)

### Thursday 13 May 2021

Capturing the Voice  
Zoom (page 5)

### Saturday 15 May 2021

Special event  
Zoom (page 3)

### Tuesday 18 May 2021

Launch of CPD training resource  
Zoom (page 4)

### Thursday 20 May 2021

Understanding Trauma and Helping Recovery  
Zoom (page 7)

### Tuesday 1 June 2021

Adolescence Matters, part one  
Zoom (page 7)

### Wednesday 2 June 2021

Men Who Foster  
Zoom (page 6)

### Tuesday 8 June 2021

Adolescence Matters, part two  
Zoom (page 7)

### Wednesday 22 September, Tuesday 28 & Wednesday 29 September 2021

The Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers  
Zoom (page 6)

If you would like more information on any of the above, please contact us on **0141 204 1400** or [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net).



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### Publications & Resources

t 0844 335 1892  
e [orders@fosteringresources.co.uk](mailto:orders@fosteringresources.co.uk)


### Legal and Stress Helpline

t 01384 885 734

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