

FOSTERING in Scotland

Issue 62
Summer 2018

**Review of
foster care
allowances**

page 2

**A letter from
the Minister
for Children &
Young People**

page 3

**Your foster
care review**

page 5

And more!



Hello everyone

I am delighted that the Scottish Government's review of allowances will be concluding its work this summer and making recommendations to Maree Todd, the Minister for Children and Young People. Thank you to all foster carers who completed the Government's allowances survey. The Fostering Network is still very concerned that continuing care allowances are not within the scope of the allowance review. We have been hearing from foster carers across Scotland who have had their allowances drastically reduced when a young person's placement changes from foster care to continuing care. We have written to the First Minister, the allowance review group and the care review to raise our serious concerns and will continue to campaign. If you have concerns about your allowance for continuing care please email me, as we will collate these and campaign for this matter to be urgently addressed and resolved. Please also email Maree Todd, whose details are on the opposite page.

Read more about the independent care review on page 5, and get involved by logging onto the link they provide.

Are you a foster carer or social worker supporting a young person into adulthood? Have you attended our



Moving into Adulthood training course? It has been highly praised by social workers and foster carers from across Scotland. The next date for this course is 28 August. Find out more on page 5 and the back cover, where free tax workshops, and more, are listed.

And lastly, don't forget to complete The Fostering Network's State of the Nation Survey thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/sotn - your responses are critical for ensuring we get as broad a picture of what is happening across Scotland for foster carers!

Until next time,

Sara

Director for Scotland
e sara.lurie@fostering.net

Review of allowances

Iona Colvin, chair of the national review of care allowances in Scotland, explains the process of the review and what her role is within it.

Sara has invited me as chair of the national review of care allowances to introduce myself to you all and also provide you with a bit of an update on the progress we have been making on the review of allowances.

I have been Chief Social Work Adviser to the Scottish Government since 1 April 2017, which has involved working with colleagues across government including Health and Social Care, Justice and Children and Families. In my previous roles, I have been Director of Health and Social Care, Director of Social Work and Chief Social Work Officer at North Ayrshire Council. I was invited to chair the national review of care allowances in October last year.

The first meeting of the review took place in November last year and we

have met regularly since then to consider how feasible it will be to introduce a national approach to foster, kinship and adoption allowances in Scotland. Members of the review group include representatives from local authorities, Social Work Scotland, The Fostering Network, Citizens Advice Scotland, CoSLA and Scottish Government policy colleagues. So far we have discussed what equivalence between the different care settings looks like, what the needs of looked after children and young people are, what foster and kinship allowances should cover and the complex links with the benefits system. In all these discussions we have been keen to take a children's rights based approach.

We have recently carried out a range of consultation exercises including a detailed survey, which I know many of you contributed to, and for which I am very grateful.

When we last met on 7 June we discussed the feedback we received from foster carers, kinship carers, adoptive parents, service providers and most importantly care experienced children and young people. We are now analysing all of what we have discussed and heard, with a view to concluding the review by the end of this summer when we will be presenting our recommendations to the Minister for Children and Young People, Maree Todd MSP and CoSLA. Once these are agreed we will publish and share a full report of the review with you all.

A letter to foster carers

Earlier in the year **Maree Todd**, the Minister for Children and Young People in Scotland, sent this letter to foster carers.

**Minister for Children and Young People
(previously know as Minister for Childcare and Early Years)
Maree Todd MSP**



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot
To all foster carers in Scotland
14 May 2018

Dear foster carers

I had the pleasure of meeting with some foster carers at a recent visit to Inverclyde Council and I admired the love and commitment they obviously had for the children they care for. I certainly hope that there will be more opportunities like this in the months that lie ahead.

I am aware that Ministers have previously written to foster families during foster care fortnight and I also wanted to join them in ensuring that you know how much I too appreciate all you do in caring for and supporting some of our most vulnerable children. I would also like to give you a bit of an update on some work that is underway that will be of interest to you.

Some of you may be aware that the 2017/18 Programme for Government contained a **commitment to review foster, kinship and adoption allowances, bringing forward proposals for national kinship care and foster care allowances in summer 2018**. I am pleased to let you know that the National Review of Care Allowances Group is Chaired by Iona Colvin, Chief Social Work Adviser and comprises of Scottish Government, COSLA, local authorities, Social Work Scotland, third sector stakeholders and Scotland Excel. In taking forward the Review, the Group have recognised that the needs and rights of the child are paramount and that there is an opportunity to provide consistency and transparency to foster and kinship allowances across Scotland.

I am pleased to report that the Review is progressing well and the Group have been taking a systematic approach to gathering evidence and discussing each of the sectors in turn along with how the benefits system impacts. You may be interested to note that the Review has also agreed a programme of consultation, which includes Communities of Interest in a number of local authorities and an online questionnaire, both of which are due to conclude on 22 May. The online survey can be accessed via the following link and if you haven't already done so, I would very much encourage you to participate in and share your views with us: response.questback.com/scottishgovernment/surveyofcareallowances

The findings of the consultation will help inform the Group's recommendations, and I look forward to receiving their report in due course.

You may also be aware of the Independent Care Review underway in Scotland which is due to publish its first set of findings very soon. Please keep an eye on their website: carereview.scot for this and future updates of that Review.

Some of you may also remember last year we reported that we had developed a final Learning and Development Standard for Foster Carers with the help of the Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC). The Learning and Development Standard is an excellent example of collaborative policy development, in this case, as an action from the Foster Care Review. The effort and expertise invested in this work has contributed to the extensive policy mapping work undertaken by the Care Review. In due course we will be better able to consider how best to take this forward in a way which complements the Care Review findings.

In the meantime, can I take this opportunity to encourage you to reflect on the crucial support you provide to our looked after children and why you find it so fulfilling? Anyone thinking about becoming a foster carer will undoubtedly welcome your valuable personal perspective. The Fostering Network's web page: thefosteringnetwork.org.uk provides you with some simple suggestions on how you can go about this.

I would like to offer my own personal thank you to you and your families for the loving relationships that you are building day to day to ensure our children and young people know that are an integral part of your family.

Maree Todd

Dynamic Earth – A Walking Tall celebration



13 May 2018 was a day to remember for all the fostering families who attended our celebration event at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh. We were joined by 70 adults and 71 primary school aged children, helping us to celebrate our Walking Tall project.

This fun-filled day saw children involved in craft activities, creating puppets and building a room for their ideal foster home, as well as having their faces painted. The Glasgow office staff team was out in force managing the day, supported by our young champions.

We were delighted to be joined by Bruce Adamson, children's commissioner for Scotland. Bruce spoke with foster carers and children and was very creative with the crafts! We express our thanks to him for taking the time to meet with foster carers and the children to ensure their voices are heard.

Also getting involved were Liz Brabender and Lynne O'Brian from the care review; again Liz and Lynne involved themselves with the foster carers and children. This is a vital link with the care review and ensures the voices of children and young people of all ages are heard and they have an input in the review.

The most important part of this day was bringing together children in foster care and sons and daughters of foster carers. It is a real support to children to know they are not alone, that they are not the only child in foster care. Having craft activities allows children to express themselves and to interact with each other in a safe way.

One activity encouraged children to build rooms for a foster home they were working together to create. Their enthusiasm and comments showed that they have a great desire to express their views and ultimately to 'walk tall'.

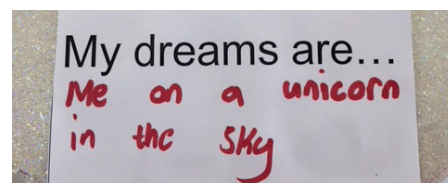
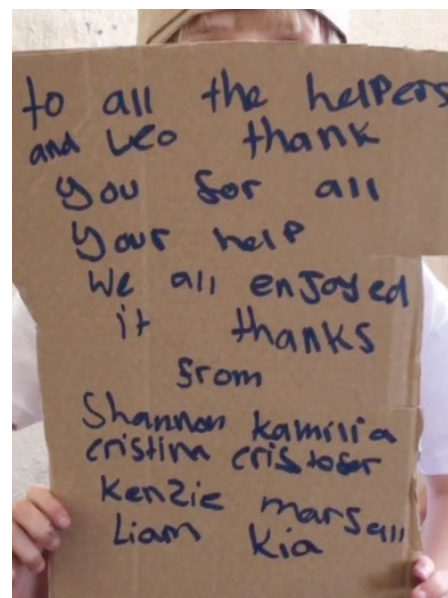
Thank you to everyone who came and especially to Dynamic Earth for hosting us.

Update from Walking Tall

We are pleased to announce that our series of Walking Tall workshops has now concluded, and what a fantastic time we had. It was an absolute pleasure working with all of the amazing children who joined us for the eight workshops across central Scotland. Amazingly, we had families join us all the way from Stornoway to the Borders. The consultation workshops enabled the children to have their voices heard, while enhancing their self-esteem and helping them 'walk tall'. The children provided us with invaluable information that we will

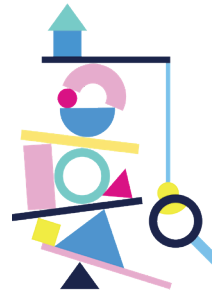
use to create child-friendly resources that will benefit our members. Look out for updates on resource development.

We would just like to take the opportunity to thank all of our "Walking Tall heroes" (the children of course) for taking part in the workshops. We would also like to thank the carers and fostering services who referred and brought the children along to the workshops. Lastly, we would like to thank our steering group for their continued commitment to the project's development.



Update from the care review

Fiona Duncan, chair of the independent care review, has sent the following message to foster carers:



Independent Care Review

So much has happened here at the care review since the last update and so I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to be sharing news with you.

The **journey** stage started on 1 June 2018 and it is in this third stage that the learning from the **discovery** stage will be embedded in change. The care review team has been busy planning and having conversations with lots of people and organisations to create opportunities to work together to make this change happen now and in the future.

The work ahead will be guided by the **journey** group - 12 individuals who have lived and have professional experience of the care system. By the time you are reading this the co-chairs will have been announced and so you can visit: carereview.scot/journey for more information on the group members.

There will be six work streams in **journey** and each will have a co-chair who has care experience and one with professional experience. Together they will lead the work to better understand a range of the issues across:

- edges of care
- health and wellbeing
- components of care
- justice and care
- workforce
- best place in the world.

This work will be guided by a series of 12 **intentions** that were developed following the discovery stage, during which the care review heard the voices of 854 children and young people who have care experience and 789 people who work with and care for children and young people.

The **intentions** were taken to a 'go-to' group of care experienced children, young people and adults who rigorously sense-checked and improved them. More information can be found at:

carereview.scot/intentions and a video is also available which has been made with voiceovers by members of the go-to group. If you haven't already seen this please take a few minutes to watch it - it is really lovely to hear the voices behind those words.

Members of the go-to group were also involved in peer reviewing the care review's new publication 'A journey imagined with care' which is also on the website. There will be copies available in The Fostering Network's Glasgow office or you can request a copy by emailing your name and address: info@carereview.scot.

There will be lots of ways for foster carers and their families to be involved in **journey** as the stage progresses. So do make sure you are receiving updates from the care review either by email or by following on social media.

There has already been a fantastic response from many foster carers who have said they want to take part and told the care review how they would like to be involved.

If you would like to take part please go to: carereview.scot/get-involved.

You can also share an online pledge on our website or using social media by visiting: carereview.scot/pledge. Huge thanks to those who have already made their pledge - you can see these on the pledge wall.

Until the next time, I hope you and your families have a fantastic summer and I look forward to seeing you during the **journey**.

Best wishes,
Fiona

Moving into Adulthood training

28 August 2018

Continuing care gives young people the right to stay with their foster carers until the age of 21.

More and more foster carers will be caring for young people beyond the age of 16 to 18 years as they become young adults. This brings about challenges for foster carers as they are no longer caring for a child but are now supporting an adult to gain the independence and skills they will require for the future.

Are you ready for this? Our Moving into Adulthood course explores the legal differences between young adults and children as well as the changes foster carers may need to make in practice, from house rules to holidays and expectations.

Working with young adults is very different to working with children and foster carers need to know how they are going to adapt to their needs and allow them to develop their independence. Foster carers are often a young person's safety net if they make mistakes, but also their guide and support.

Feedback from this popular course has been very positive: 'A useful course as I currently support young people in adult placement services through my fostering agency.'

'Legal aspects of age limits - good to hear other foster carers/professionals experiences.'

To date we have run courses for foster carers, social workers and managers within fostering services in our own training room in Glasgow. Our next course in Glasgow is on 28 August 2018. For a booking form or further information contact Joy Crawford: joy.crawford@fostering.net

Fosterline update – foster carer reviews

Hi everyone

We hope you are enjoying the lovely summer. We have had a number of queries lately about foster carer reviews, especially from foster carers seeking advice about what their service is recommending. The carer may want to discuss the circumstances which has led to the service's recommendation and how they can prepare for their review.

The main provisions for reviews are contained in Regulations 25 and 26 of the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009. It is also useful for foster carers to read the guidance on these regulations, in particular Chapter 12 Foster Carer Reviews And Termination of Approval.

Not all foster carer reviews are considered by the fostering panel, however, panel involvement will be required, for example, where deregistration is being considered, where there is a request to change the carers approval or where there has been an allegation. Similarly, an early foster carer review may be required if there is any significant change such as an allegation, a significant practice concern or placement disruption.

Who should be consulted?

Regulation 25 indicates those who should be consulted and asked to provide views in advance of the foster carer review. Importantly, foster carers should be asked to provide their comments in writing in advance of the review, and the foster carer's social worker/child's social worker should be required to provide a report for the review. If the review is considering termination of approval, the foster carers should understand this in advance. Foster carers should also get a copy of the review report at least two weeks before their review so that they have time to prepare and submit a response. Foster carers can also bring someone with them for support.

The requirement of these reviews is to refer the case to the fostering panel

for a recommendation in considering whether the foster carer continues to be a suitable person with whom to place a child or children. In making its recommendation, the panel may vary the terms of the approval, terminate the approval or confirm the decision to approve a person as a foster carer. After the review has taken place the agency decision maker will write to the foster carer with the decision. If the decision is a change or termination of approval and the foster carer does not agree with this, they have the right to appeal against this decision.

Requesting a review

Regulation 26 states that the foster carer may request a review of a decision not to approve them as a foster carer, to terminate their approval or to vary the terms of their approval within 28 days of the date of notification of the decision. Where the agency receives a request for a review of the decision, they must refer the case to a differently constituted fostering panel for a recommendation, and it is good practice for authorities to use a different agency decision maker. There is no timescale within which the panel must be arranged; however it is recommended that the review panel should be held within a period of one to three months after receipt of the request.

Regulation 26 also details the information that must be provided to the review panel. This includes the



original decision and the reasons for it, the information provided to the panel which made the assessment, and any further representations from the carer in order to put forward their case. Further representations could include references and statements from others supporting him or her. As stated earlier, foster carers can also bring someone with them for support.

When the agency decision maker receives a 'fresh' recommendation from the fostering panel they must make a decision within 14 days from the date the recommendation was made. The agency decision maker must notify the foster carer in writing of the 'reviewed' decision within seven days of making that decision.

Further support

The above is not exhaustive, so please do contact us on: **t** 0141 204 1400 so we can offer further advice and support based on your present circumstances. If you need legal advice about a recommendation of deregistration please contact our legal helpline: **t** 0345 013 5004.

Remember, Fosterline Scotland is here to assist with any query. The service is open from Monday to Friday, 10am until 4pm. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you have a query you would like help with.

Thanks, Mirren and Julie

Moving Images: using video clips in finding adoptive families for children

The University of Glasgow and Adoption and Fostering Alliance (AFA) Scotland are working on a new research project about the use of video clips in family finding, called the Moving Images Project.

If you have been involved in helping a social worker prepare a video clip of a child, or have done some filming yourself, they would love to hear from you: **t** 0141 322 8490 or **e** info@afascotland.com.

Sara's Foster Care Fortnight message to foster carers

'You need a superhero in every family'...the insightful words of a five-year-old boy, telling us how to make foster care the very best it can be.

And now, during Foster Care Fortnight™ 2018, I want to thank those many superheroes, from across Scotland, who on any given day, are looking after more than 5,000 of Scotland's children. Children whose mums or dads, no matter how much they may love them, are not able to look after them. Foster carers are those superheroes and your genuine search, in the interest of providing the best possible care, has taught me more than anything else.

You open your hearts and your homes to babies, to toddlers, to pre-schoolers, to children in primary school and secondary school, and to young people beginning to navigate their way into adulthood. You open your hearts and your homes to children who hope beyond hope that they will return to their own mum or dad. You open your hearts and your homes to children who have no-one, with no plan in place of how long they will stay or where they will go. With warmth and a smile, you welcome children who arrive with five minutes' notice, children you have never met, at any time of day or night and others

at the end of a long planned journey. You provide that safe port in a stormy sea. Some children stay briefly and others forever. You can't undo a child's pain but you strive to be part of the healing.

You see strengths and a positive future for each and every one of these children. You give without expecting anything in return. Your patience is your strength, and your sense of humour and positive thinking is your life line.

You share laughter and hugs and fun and games. You give love even when some children can't accept it. You record everything, from meals eaten to toys played with, from words spoken and behaviours displayed, to likes and fears and secrets told because you know, for confused children, you are the one to help them make sense of their lives. You see children grow and flourish and you know that small steps are a huge victory. You create opportunities for children and young people to hold their heads up high and be proud of who they are. You are the superheroes to every child who comes to stay.



As we celebrate Foster Care Fortnight™ 2018, I want to personally thank all of Scotland's foster carers for the incredible difference you and your children have made, and continue to make, to every child who enters your home. I want to also thank those children, who through no fault of their own, have come to live with you and enriched your lives in ways you probably never could have imagined. Together, Scotland is stronger and prouder because of you.

Sara Lurie
Director for Scotland

Available training courses – book now!

Have you thought about running an in house course?

We tailor all our in house courses to match your specific needs. If you would like more information please contact us on the details below.

Open courses currently running in the training suite in our Glasgow office are:

Moving into Adulthood

Tuesday 28 August 2018
£110 plus VAT for members/£220 plus VAT non members
Glasgow

The Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers

Tuesday 18, Wednesday 19 & Thursday 20 September 2018
£310 plus VAT for members/£620 plus VAT for non members
Glasgow

Men Who Foster

Wednesday 26 September 2018
£110 plus VAT for members/£220 plus VAT non members.
Glasgow

Our courses book up fast, so to secure your place on one of the above open courses, or to enquire about running one of our courses in house, please contact:

Joy Crawford:

t: 0141 204 1400

e: scotland@fostering.net

thefosteringnetwork.org.uk

Free workshops for foster carers

Tax: See dates for your diary

Benefits: See dates for your diary

Time: 10am – 1pm (coffee and refreshments included)

- Are you a foster carer member of The Fostering Network?
- Would you like a reminder of how to make sure your tax (in relation to fostering) is up to date?
- Would you like to find out more about other matters in foster care finance – national insurance, pensions, savings, insurances & member benefits? (tax workshop only)
- Would you like to find out more about what benefits you can claim as a foster carer, how to apply, what the conditions are and the changes to existing benefits under Universal Credit? (benefits workshop only)

If yes then why not come along to our free workshops in September and October.

To find out more or to book a place, please contact Mirren or Julie: **e** scotland@fostering.net or **t** 0141 204 1400

Dates for your diary...

Tuesday 28 August

Moving into Adulthood
Glasgow (page 5)

Thursday 6 September

Tax workshop
Glasgow (page 8)

Wednesday 12 September

Tax workshop
Edinburgh (page 8)

Tuesday 18, Wednesday 19 & Thursday 20 September

The Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers
Glasgow (page 7)

Wednesday 26 September

Men Who Foster
Glasgow (page 7)

Thursday 27 September

Tax workshop
Livingston (page 8)

Thursday 4 October

Benefits workshop
Glasgow (page 8)

Tuesday 23 October

Benefits workshop
Edinburgh (page 8)

If you are interested in attending any of these events: **t** 0141 204 1400 or **e** scotland@fostering.net



With thanks to the funders who supported this edition.

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