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Hello everyone



This edition will be with you just before Foster Care Fortnight™, our annual campaign to raise awareness of the incredible difference that fostering (and you as foster carers) make to so many children, young people and families across Scotland. We would be delighted to hear what you are planning for Foster Care Fortnight. Do get in touch to let us know.

In March, we welcomed 85 members of the fostering community to our member conference in Edinburgh. It was a fantastic day which is captured perfectly in our cover photo which shows Maree Todd, Minister for Children and Young People, in between two of our young presenters: Paula McPhail and Astroknot's Sandi Pentland. Take a look at page 6 for more information on the day.



A report specifically assessing the Scotland results of our 2018 State of the Nation survey can be downloaded from our website at thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/sotn.

We will continue to work closely with the care review to ensure we address the issues raised by it. An update on the care review can be found on page 3.

Our Fosterline Scotland service receives frequent enquiries relating to Continuing Care, and as a result of some of these we invited Clan Childlaw to write a feature article for us which you can read on page 5.

We'd love it if you encouraged the children in your household to enter our competition at the bottom of page 3, offering the chance to win one of the beautiful quilts which were made especially for us.

Until next time

Sara

Sara Lurie, Director for Scotland

Keep Connected



When children leave a foster family to return home or move placement, they and their foster families often want to keep in touch but are prevented from doing so. We believe it is critical that when a child moves on, the team around them should provide support to identify and maintain important relationships.

There may be times when it is not in a child's interests to keep in contact with previous foster families or others, but these cases are the exception rather than the rule. We need a culture shift to ensure that the starting position in any transition planning is for ongoing contact.

The results of our 2018 State of the Nation survey revealed that in Scotland:

- 22% of foster carers told us that they rarely or never stay in contact with their former foster children.

- Almost a third (30%) of foster carers said they have been prevented from keeping in contact with a child they had fostered.
- By far the most likely parties to have prevented ongoing contact were the local authority, fostering service or social worker.
- 65% of foster carers told us they received little or no support to maintain contact with their former foster children.

Our results show that systemic change is needed to create an environment where children can easily stay in touch with the people that are important to them. We now know that forming and maintaining attachments in childhood makes it easier for young people to have stable relationships in later life, which highlights the importance of bringing about change.

The Fostering Network has developed a set of principles in consultation with foster carers, fostering services and organisations in the care sector, including those working with young people. The principles shape how transitions from and within the care system are approached across the UK. The aim is for all children and young people who are moving on from foster families to be enabled to keep in touch with them – and with other significant people in their lives – through better understanding of the importance of this, planning and support.

For more information on our Keep Connected campaign and to see the principles, please visit thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/keep-connected.

Update from the care review

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

Hello, I hope you are well and looking forward to Foster Care Fortnight!

I was delighted to attend The Fostering Network's conference in March and, as usual, it was a brilliant event. How wonderful to see young people taking such a central role in the event programme - Amy skilfully co-chaired the day and the closing rap performance by Astroknot was thought provoking and so insightful - what a star.

It was a great opportunity to meet with lots of foster carers and hear about your experiences and views on many of the issues that affect you and the children and young people that you care for. I am extremely grateful for the contributions so many of you have already made to this review and look forward to continuing those conversations.

Rosie Moore, who is a co-chair of the Love work group, and Liz

Brabender of the secretariat team were also at the event. They ran a workshop exploring the critical role that love has in the care system and what that means for children and young people in foster care and their carers and families. Groups considered the barriers that people face in being able to love the children in their care including the real challenge of working within some practices and expectations that actively detract from love.

There is still time to get involved. The care review is here to listen and recognises that it has lots to learn from foster carers. There will be many more opportunities to have your views heard over the year ahead and, by taking part, you can help to make the future of foster care the best it can be.

Your children and young people also have a huge role to play too and it is easy for them to get involved. Throughout 2019, the care review will be out and about, visiting groups and arranging fun and engaging activities for children and young people to take part in safe and supported ways. Keep an eye on the care review events calendar online to find out



more and please spread the word [carereview.scot/get-involved](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/carereview/scot/get-involved).

Foster Care Fortnight is such an important recognition of the crucial role that foster carers have and a brilliant way to acknowledge the amazing people who each day make a HUGE impact on the lives of children and young people. During the fortnight, the care review will be seizing the opportunity to get as many foster carers and families involved and will be linking into The Fostering Network's events to do this.

So until the next time, let's keep in touch and I hope to see you during the events of Foster Care Fortnight!

Best wishes,
Fiona

Independent
Care Review

Competition time!

We are delighted to be offering foster families the opportunity to win one of our new quilts, which have been kindly donated by Di Davidson.

We are asking children from foster families across Scotland to either write a short story or draw a picture with the theme of 'what comfort means to me.' The winning entry will be announced in our next newsletter and rewarded with a beautiful quilt.

Please email your competition entries to scotland@fostering.net by Friday 7 June.

Good luck!



Fostering Excellence Awards 2019 nominations now open!



Do you know an exceptional foster carer, social worker, care experienced young person or son or daughter who you would like to recognise? Nominate them for a Fostering Excellence Award 2019 today!

The Fostering Excellence Awards are the UK's most prestigious foster care awards. They celebrate outstanding achievement in fostering and recognise some of those who make exceptional contributions to foster care every day.

It doesn't matter if you've nominated someone before and you can also nominate more than one person, as well as couples and sibling groups aged 18 and under.

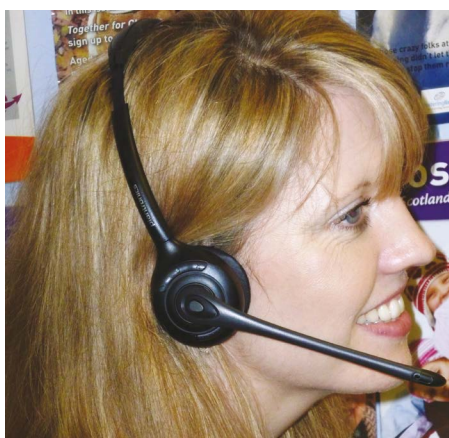
Winners and their nominators will be invited to a special ceremony in London in October.

Help us celebrate the transformational power of foster care. Submit your nominations today at thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/awards by Friday 7 June.



2017 Scottish winners: Daniel Pauley won the Outstanding Achievement in Education Award – he used Slaters vouchers to buy his suit which he won through our competition – Nathan Fleetwood who won Outstanding Achievement Award and Caitlyn Dodd who won the Outstanding Contribution by Sons and Daughters Award

Fosterline Scotland update



Hello everyone, we hope this finds you well.

We regularly receive enquiries relating to Continuing Care and we often hear that discussions around Continuing Care are not taking place early enough with both young people in foster care and their foster carers. We also hear that Continuing



Care is not being offered as an option for young people to choose.

Young people and their foster carers are experiencing far more issues than this, which is why we have included information from Clan Childlaw on their new Care Leavers Law Service in the article that follows. Please contact the Care

Leavers Law Service for further advice if the young person in your care is experiencing difficulties with Continuing Care. You can telephone them for free, confidential legal advice on **0800 328 8970** (from a landline) or **0300 3301421** (from a mobile). We would also like to hear from you if you are experiencing any issues around Continuing Care, so please get in touch.

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.



Clan Childlaw

Hello to all of you, my name is Ashley Cameron and I am the project co-ordinator for Clan Childlaw's Care Leavers Law Service. Clan Childlaw is a law centre for children and young people.



We provide a unique legal outreach service giving free, confidential legal advice and representation to children and young people in Edinburgh, the Lothians and Glasgow. Our lawyers are experienced child lawyers who only represent young people. We meet young people in the community at a time and place that works for them and where they feel comfortable. We help children and young people up to the age of 18, or 21 if they have been looked after (Continuing Care). The Care Leavers Law Service can work with care experienced young people up to the age of 26 (After Care).

We believe the law needs to work better for children and young people. We act to make this happen through our direct legal work with children and young people, including cases which change the law and practice. We provide free information and guidance about children's rights and the law to family members, carers and adults who work with children or young people in Scotland. We provide training about children's rights and the law which affects children and young people across Scotland. We use what we learn from our legal work to identify how the law could work better for children and young people and we work to make changes to the law.

Working with care leavers

I am very happy that Esmée Fairbairn Foundation has granted us five years

of funding to use the law to help care leavers realise their rights and hold decision makers to account when they do not meet their legal duty towards them. For example, since 2015 young people who are in care have been entitled to accommodation and support to help them make the transition into adulthood. Young people are entitled to stay on in the homes where they have been cared for until they are 21. Care experienced young people are entitled to advice, guidance and support from their local authority until they are 26. However, we have found in our work with care experienced young people that these rights are not always being respected or realised - many care leavers are not being provided with the support they are entitled to. This can mean that they struggle as they are moving into adult life and, as a care experienced individual myself, I know first-hand just how hard this struggle can be.

Unfortunately, some young people are even experiencing drastic outcomes such as falling into homelessness. It is because of this we have set up a dedicated Care Leavers Law Service. We want to help make sure care experienced young people get the support and home life they are entitled to. We hope that we find cases that lead to challenging and changing bad practice.

The Care Leavers Law Service will provide legal advice and representation to care leavers across Scotland. The project will additionally provide practical training and step-by-

step guidance to those who are working with and supporting care leavers so they can help them to assert their rights and easily access legal help where it's needed. We will also take what we learn from the project and feed it back to people with an influence in making the law work better for care leavers.

The potential of Continuing Care

Sara Lurie, director of The Fostering Network in Scotland, and I were talking recently about Continuing Care and she informed me that Fosterline Scotland has been inundated with calls from foster carers, that young people are not being made aware of their entitlement and social workers are often unwilling to explain it to them either. That's really sad because Continuing Care has so much potential to provide security and support, if it is implemented correctly.

As foster carers, you are the ones who may be able to identify when the child in your care is unsure what will happen when they leave care, is concerned about plans being made, doesn't understand what they are entitled to, feels their views are not being heard, or is worried that they won't get the support and stability they need. You as a foster carer are the mum, dad, advocate, nurse, mentor, educator and all-round champion. As foster carers, I am sure that you all want the very best for the young people in your care and will want to help them access help to resolve these problems.

If you would like to chat more about the issues the Care Leavers Law Service could help you with in your role as foster carers feel free to contact me with your questions by emailing ashley.cameron@clanchildlaw.org.



Our member conference



Our annual member conference, held on Thursday 21 March in Edinburgh, was a huge success. Foster families from across Scotland were joined by Maree Todd, Minister for Children and Young People, Fiona Duncan and other representatives from the care review, Clan Childlaw and other key decision makers.

We were honoured that Amy Davidson, one of our former young champions, agreed to co-chair the event which featured workshops exploring topics such as 'what love means to children and young people in care' and a foster carer and her daughter sharing their experience of living with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

One of the highlights of the event was the closing rap performed by Sandi Pentland, also known as Astroknot, a care experienced young person who rapped from the perspective of a foster carer:

'How can you say I'm not relevant
When my involvement is so prevalent
You say I need to say no, well if you say so
It's not you who gets the blame though...'

Keep an eye on Sandi's website to stay updated with her powerful work - astroknot.co.uk.

Thank you so much to everyone who participated and helped make it such a fantastic day.

School exclusions - know your rights

We regularly hear from foster carers that the children and young people they care for are being sent home from school and they are unsure what to do. A child should not be sent home from school because of their additional support needs, this is called an unlawful exclusion. Enquire (the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning) suggests the following five steps if that does happen to you:

1. Ask for a meeting with the school to discuss why your child is being sent home.
2. Highlight that sending your child home without formally excluding them is against the law.
3. Identify triggers: Ask the school if there is a pattern of when incidents happen that results in your child being sent home, for example the time of day or activities.
4. Ask for a review of their support so your child is not sent home again.
5. If your child continues to be sent home contact your local authority's additional support for learning officer (Enquire can help you find the right person to speak to).

There are procedures all schools should follow if they formally exclude a child from school, which Children in Scotland has shared with us:

1. On the day, tell you about the exclusion and check it is safe to send your child home.
2. Write to you within eight days to tell you the reason your child was excluded.
3. Arrange a meeting with you to discuss the exclusion within seven days.
4. Tell you how you can appeal the decision.

For more information, download Enquire's factsheet on exclusions from their website at enquire.org.uk/publications/exclusion-school-factsheet, or you can telephone their helpline directly on **0345 123 2303**.

You can also, of course, contact our Fosterline Scotland service for advice. Don't hesitate to get in touch with us on **0141 204 1400**.

Celebrating success!



March marked the end of our amazing two-year lottery funded Walking Tall project.

Walking Tall enabled us to bring together primary school-aged children from fostering households to work with us in sharing their experiences of fostering and foster care.

The children were incredible and co-produced resources to help others to speak about places, spaces and feelings in foster care. The children also put forward recommendations for those working with children, all

contained within a report summarising the workshops. The children who participated found taking part to be empowering. It enabled them to share their views and helped increase their self-esteem.

Guided by a steering group including children, carers and social workers, Walking Tall has also produced a training workshop and podcast.

The project strived to capture the voice of children with complex



disabilities, and through conversations with services, carers and children, it was able to identify ways we can work to address any barriers in communication and accessibility that may be preventing children with complex disabilities from participating.

The steering group will be celebrating the achievements of Walking Tall and sharing these with invited guests at an event at the Scottish Parliament during Foster Care Fortnight.

All materials are available on thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/walking-tall or by contacting scotland@fostering.net



Child internet safety

The National Crime Agency recently published their new resource, *Jessie & Friends*, a new Thinkuknow education resource which will help keep four to seven year olds safe from online sexual abuse. The resource highlights links to the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, including Relationships and Sex Education, Health Education and the Computing Curriculum.

All Jessie & Friends education resources are now available to download free at thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/resources/jessie-and-friends, with content for parents and carers thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/jessie-and-friends.

Have you been to The Skills to Foster yet?

'I thoroughly enjoyed the course, learned loads from formal training and informal discussions with other participants.'

Held over three days, The Skills to Foster™: Train the Trainers provides essential skills, knowledge and confidence in delivering foster carer training. Bringing foster carers and social workers together, the course is regularly oversubscribed so make sure you secure your place now!

The course will be delivered in our training suite in central Glasgow and includes lunch.

The Skills to Foster™: Train the Trainers

Monday 17, Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 June 2019

£320 plus VAT for members/
£640 plus VAT for non-members
Glasgow

Take a look at dates for your diary (page 8) for details of our other upcoming courses. To book a place on an open course, or for information on purchasing a course in-house, please contact Joy Crawford on **0141 204 1400** or scotland@thefosteringnetwork.org or visit thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/events.

Glasgow training suite available for hire

Our training suite is proving extremely popular with local organisations – it holds up to 20 people and is situated in a prized location in the centre of Glasgow.

If you are looking for a central venue in Glasgow for a meeting or event, do get in touch. Our rates are very competitive.

For more information, please contact Linda Curran on **0141 204 1400** or by email **scotland@fostering.net**.



Dates for your diary...

Monday 13 – Sunday 26 May 2019
Foster Care Fortnight™

Monday 17, Tuesday 18 & Wednesday 19 June 2019
The Skills to Foster™:
Train the Trainers
£320 plus VAT for members/£640 plus VAT for non-members
Glasgow

Tuesday 17 September 2019
Moving into Adulthood
£120 plus VAT for members/£220 plus VAT for non-members
Glasgow

Tuesday 24 September 2019
Men who Foster
£120 plus VAT for members/£220 plus VAT for non-members
Glasgow



If you are interested in attending any of these events, or would like to hire our training suite, please contact us on **0141 204 1400** or **scotland@fostering.net**



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