

**Issue 67
April 2020**

The care review's promise

An update from
Fiona Duncan

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The role of a reviewing officer

Their involvement
in child care
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Fostering Excellence Awards

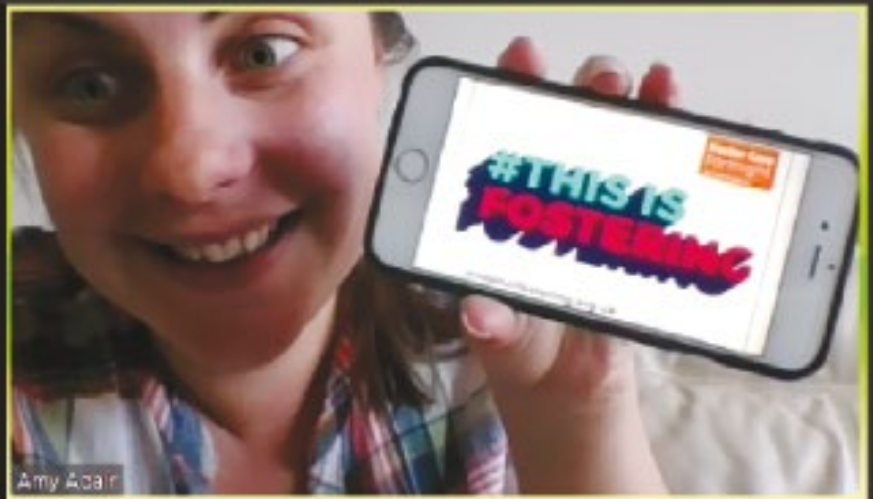
Nominations are
now open

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Welcoming a new member to our team

Amy Adair joins
us as our Young
Advocates worker

And more!



Hello everyone



Fiona Duncan, chair of the independent care review, has provided an update on page 3.

I'm also pleased to introduce our new Young Advocates worker, Amy Adair, who is doing a fantastic job of inspiring care experienced young people and the sons and daughters of foster carers to reduce stigma and create positive change within the education sector in Scotland. To find out more about this project, please turn to page 4.

Another project which is progressing well is our new Capturing the Voice project which started in December. This aims to ensure the views of disabled children and young people are heard at decision making meetings and panels and is an extension of the work we carried out as part of our previous Walking Tall project. If you are interested in hearing more about this, please don't hesitate to contact Sarah McEnhill on **0141 204 1400** or **scotland@fostering.net**.

I was pleased to present at a recent meeting of the National Network of Reviewing Officers and look forward to working with them in the future. Derek Yeoman, their chair, was good enough to provide an article following

the meeting which I am happy to share with you on page 6.

This edition also includes information on children's savings accounts, an update on our upcoming training courses and a call for nominations for our Fostering Excellence Awards.

I love the photo on our newsletter cover, taken at the launch of the care review recommendations! On my right is the inspirational Denisha Killoh, co-chair of the Care Review Stigma Group and a member of our Young Advocates Steering Group. On my left, is our much-welcomed new member of staff – our Young Advocates project worker, Amy Adair.

Finally, it is not long until our next Foster Care Fortnight! Keep an eye on our website and social media for more information on the exciting events we have planned.

And remember, if you need anyone to talk to our Fosterline Scotland service is available.

Until next time

Sara

Sara Lurie
Director for Scotland

Hello everyone.

I hope you are all looking after yourselves during these strange and unsettling times.

On a more positive note, we were delighted when after three years of consultation and hard work, the independent care review launched The Promise. We are extremely grateful for the contribution you made to the process, ensuring the views of the fostering community were heard, and we look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead to implement its findings.

Life Changes Trust funding



The Life Changes Trust has launched a brand new grants programme to support young people with care experience to take up opportunities to share their views and influence others. These 'Conference Grants' are available to young people with care experience between the ages of 18 and 35. Funding can be used for attending seminars, workshops, roundtable events and conferences – wherever they can join the conversation and make their voices heard.

To find out more about how to apply, please follow **@LifeChangesTrst** on twitter or contact Lindsay Brown, funding manager, **lindsay.brown@lifechangestrust.org.uk** or **0141 212 9609**.

At the time of writing we are aware that the coronavirus is having a significant effect.

Our helplines are open as usual and we will keep members informed of any changes to our activities and you can also keep up to date with us via social media and our website:
thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/coronavirus

Update from the care review

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

Independent
Care Review

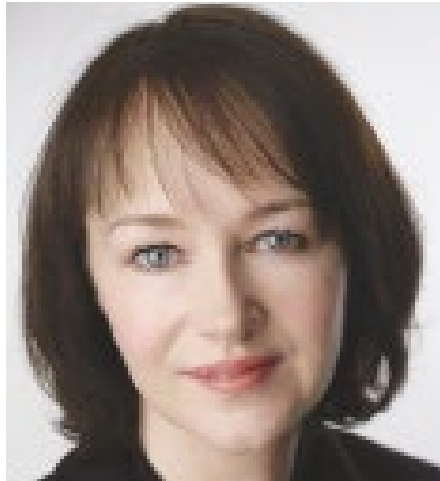
Hello, I hope this finds you well. A lot has happened since my last newsletter update from the care review, which was back in August 2019.

On Wednesday 5 February 2020, the independent care review published its final reports and on the same day Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, made a commitment in the Scottish Parliament to implement the findings. That crucial day was the culmination of three years of listening to people from across Scotland who had views, ideas and hopes on Scotland's 'care system'.

The care review's main report, called The Promise, reflects what over 5,500 care experienced children and adults, families, and the paid and unpaid workforce shared in the hope that Scotland is listening and ready for positive change. The Promise tells Scotland what it must do to make sure its most vulnerable children feel loved and have the childhood they deserve.

A significant input into the care review's reports of course came from children and young people with experience of foster care and many dedicated foster carers. Thank you so much to everyone who contributed and took the time to inform the conclusions.

To fully understand foster care in Scotland, it was important to listen to a range of perspectives, especially from children and young adults.



For some, foster care has been a positive place of healing through relationships that become a family. For others, it has been temporary, disruptive and where they have felt the monetisation of their care and been excluded from parts of the foster family's lives.

The care review is clear that Scotland must better support its foster carers to be the best parents and that foster carers must feel valued, cared for and supported to care. It's vital that anyone who looks after children and young people can build and develop nurturing, patient, kind, compassionate, trusting and respectful relationships so that the children in their care feel loved and safe

You can learn more about what Scotland must do around foster care

by reading from page 77 of The Promise report.

The independent care review has now delivered its findings and will formally conclude at the end of March 2020. In many ways, this is just the beginning of the journey for Scotland, as is detailed in The Plan report. You can read all the reports via our website [carereview.scot/destination/independent-care-review-reports](https://www.carereview.scot/destination/independent-care-review-reports).

Scotland must not aim to fix a broken system but set a higher collective ambition that enables loving, supportive and nurturing relationships as a basis on which to thrive. To do that requires collaboration and a new independent approach to implementation, which has been given the backing of the Scottish Government.

Updates on this new approach should be available in the coming weeks and months.

Once again, a huge thank you to everyone who spoke about their experiences of foster care and helped the care review gain the understanding it has.

Thank you to all the foster carers who took the time to speak to me personally. Your compassion and commitment has always inspired me and symbolised the care that Scotland can and should deliver.

The Care Review has listened to over...

5,500



...experiences.

Over half of the voices were children and young people with experience of the 'care system', adults who had lived in care, and different types of families.

www.carereview.scot



Help us advocate for change

We are pleased to officially introduce our new project worker, Amy Adair, who is leading on the delivery of our Young Advocates project and started in November. The project aims to reduce stigma within education in Scotland and raise awareness amongst educators, and, most importantly, is led by young people themselves. Have a look at our website for more information: thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/policy-practice/projects-and-programmes/young-advocates.

Have your voice heard by adding a leaf to our 'Tree of Positive Change.' Some wonderful and inspirational comments have been made by foster carers, social workers and young people describing the positive change they would like to see in education. Contact Amy (details below) to have your say!

Our young advocates will bond as a group and be proactively involved in making a difference for young people. They have been enthusiastically developing exciting ideas and plans to create positive change within education. They are eager to get involved at the CELCIS Education conference on 14 May and have had some fantastic ideas for a fun-filled Foster Care Fortnight™.

We are still looking for new members, so if you are aged 16-25, care experienced or part of a foster family, and would like to make a positive change in education while building friendships and having fun, please contact Amy at scotland@fostering.net or phone **0141 204 1400** for more information.



Meet Amy

'Hi, my name is Amy Adair and I am the project worker for the Young Advocates project. My background involves psychology, education and community work, so I am passionate about the project and excited to be working with creative and inspirational care experienced young people.

To any young people reading this, it is so important your voices are heard when providing learning opportunities for teachers, foster carers and others.

You know first-hand what it feels like to be a young person with care experience, or part of a fostering family caring for care experienced young people. Your experiences, views and ideas are so important to helping inform and influence those who may not know or understand about care

I am looking forward to seeing the positive changes you create in Scottish education.'

Training update – upcoming dates for your diary

'The course was calm, relaxing and welcoming with a very motivational and experienced trainer who drew from her own fostering experience.'

Foster carer who attended The Role of the Supervising Social Worker course

Our training programme, as well as being delivered in our Glasgow training suite, is available in-house for fostering services to purchase. Courses that are currently available in-house include: **Managing Allegations, Moving On, Life Work, Safer Caring, Tax workshop** and the courses listed below. We will be reviewing our training offer in due course following recommendations from the care review.

In light of the impact of coronavirus, we are also assessing our upcoming training courses (listed below). Please get in touch to express your interest using the details below.

The Role of the Supervising Social Worker

Tuesday 5 & Wednesday 6 May 2020

£225 plus VAT for members and £450 for non-members

Men Who Foster

Wednesday 27 May 2020

£120 plus VAT for members and £225 for non-members

Moving into Adulthood

Wednesday 10 June 2020

£120 plus VAT for members and £225 for non-members

The Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers

Tuesday 25 & Wednesday 26 August 2020

£225 plus VAT to members and £450 for non-members

For more information, or to express your interest in one of our courses, please call Joy Crawford on **0141 204 1400** or email scotland@fostering.net or visit thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/events.



Capturing the Voice of disabled children and young people in foster care

Through our Capturing the Voice work in Scotland we are seeking to connect with foster carers, and where appropriate the children they care for. We are keen to hear how we ensure that the views and wishes of disabled children and young people are included in day to day decisions, as well as when making longer term plans. We know that many meetings young people attend rely on verbal forms of communication, but for those children who use a range of communications we would like to hear more.

We also welcome conversations with staff working in fostering and other services as we work together to help address some of the challenges we know are experienced by disabled children and young people in foster care.

This is an area we have previously explored with our members through our Walking Tall project work, thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/policy-practice/projects-and-programmes/previous-projects/walking-tall. Through Capturing the Voice we want to build on what we learned from this.

If you are a disabled care-experienced young person, or have experience of caring for disabled children and young people, we would be keen to hear from you. We want to learn of some of the challenges, and how you have worked to overcome these challenges so that other young people, and those caring for them, can learn from you.

For more information contact Sarah McEnhill on **0141 204 1400** or scotland@fostering.net.



What is a reviewing officer and how are foster carers involved in child care reviews?

All children looked after by foster carers in Scotland have children's reviews where their care plan is discussed. These reviews are often chaired by reviewing officers who are not generally involved in the day to day care of the child and should be independent. Some services may have a social work manager who chairs reviews, as opposed to a reviewing officer who has been recruited specifically to chair reviews.

Foster carers should be invited to attend review meetings and provide an update on the child in their care. Foster carers are best placed to share information on how the child is getting on, discussing their routines, commenting on their day to day activities, likes and wishes, friendships and relationships, and updating on any health or education issues that are pertinent to the child's care plan. Some local authorities request information in writing and have a pro forma report to be completed. Your supervising social worker should support you to prepare and attend reviews.

In many instances, children can attend their review meeting with your support, and you should discuss with the child's social worker whether it is appropriate for them to do so, this may depend on their age and

understanding, generally secondary-school-aged children attend and primary-school-aged children after agreement. A child's view should be included in any meeting discussion and minuted, whether they attend or not. There are many ways a child can give their views, which varies according to their placing local authority. More recently, online questionnaires are being used and face to face meetings with the review chair can be requested and arranged prior to the full review.

Many children in care have contact with their parents, siblings and other family members, and it is important to have information on this within a review to ensure a clear understanding of its benefits, how to make it positive for the child, and to agree a plan for ongoing family time in the best interests of the child. Your feedback is vital in relation to this, particularly when permanent planning is being taken forward.

It is important that venues are held in an atmosphere that is conducive to ensuring all views are heard, as well as the best time, attendees and format. You can discuss this with your supervising social worker to make sure the venue and time is the best option for all.

When a care plan is agreed and tasks given to those attending, there is

an expectation that these are discussed at each review and progress noted. Progress can be slow, and there should be clear notes in the minutes to explain why. CAMHS assessment and permanency planning often drifts and this can be challenged and noted by reviewing officers and questions raised with senior managers.

Reviewing officers know how frustrating it is when plans are not working and in discussions we have at the National Network of Reviewing Officers Scotland, which I chair, we are open to contact outwith review meetings to clarify any issues and you should know the name and contact details for the person who chairs the child's review. If you don't have these, then don't hesitate to ask your child's social worker for this information.

Sara Lurie attended and spoke at a recent national network meeting which has resulted in the writing of this article. It was agreed, looking ahead, we will work together to ensure that reviews involve the right people and gather relevant information as required. If you would like more information on any of this, you can call Fosterline Scotland on **0141 204 1400**.

Derek Yeoman,
Chair of National Network of Reviewing Officers Scotland

Fostering Excellence Awards nominations now open!



Calling all members in Scotland! Don't forget to submit your nominations for the Fostering Excellence Awards.

The Fostering Excellence Awards are the UK's most prestigious foster care awards. They shine a spotlight on the outstanding achievements and exceptional contributions of all those involved in fostering across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Why not consider nominating the young people you have fostered, your sons and daughters, your social worker or another foster carer?

Remember, it doesn't matter if you've nominated before or if you would like to nominate more than one person - help us to celebrate the transformational power of foster care!

Winners and their nominators will be invited to the annual award



ceremony in London in October.

Nominations close on **Friday 15 June 2018**.

Submit yours at
thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/awards

Fosterline Scotland update: Children's Savings

We thought it may be useful to provide some information on savings accounts for looked after children, as it is something you have been asking us about.

All services handle savings differently, so it is worth checking with your fostering service in the first instance. Some services have a central account for savings, while others leave it to individual foster carers to put in place for the children in their care. It is worth noting, however, that there may be better savings options elsewhere, some of which will allow children and young people to manage their own accounts. Wherever possible, children and young people should be consulted about these accounts.

Foster carers should check with the local authority if the young person already has a Junior Individual Savings Account (ISA) or Child Trust Fund (CTF), a child can only have one. You cannot apply for a new Child Trust Fund, which has been replaced by Junior ISAs, but can continue with an existing one. Setting up a savings account means the child has money for the future. It encourages children to save as they can watch their savings grow. It is particularly relevant when a young person moves on from care. Foster carers should also look into opening a bank account for the children in their care. Please contact Fosterline Scotland if you would like further information on this.

What are Junior ISAs?

Junior ISAs are a tax-free way to save for those under 18 years old, but they cannot access the money until they are 18. It is a long-term way of saving rather than everyday savings. There are two types of Junior ISA: cash or stocks & shares - you can have one or both types at any one time, but only one of each type.

Junior Individual Savings Accounts (ISA) for looked after children

In 2011, Junior ISAs were introduced to support long-term savings for children who have been looked after for 12 months or more and who were not eligible for a CTF. Children born after 2 January 2011 will receive a £200 Government payment into a Junior ISA. Looked after children who were born between 1 September 2002 and 2 January 2011 have previously had support for their long-term savings through a CTF. They will keep their CTFs until they are 18 when they can access their savings.

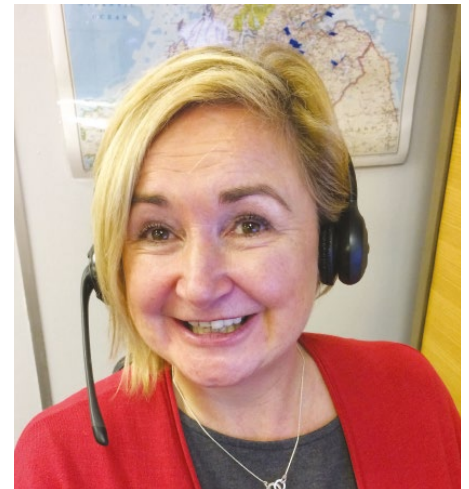
Who can pay money into Junior ISAs?

For eligible looked after children, the government will open the account and make a one-off initial payment of £200 (or pay this into existing accounts already held by looked after children). Additional payments can then be made by foster carers, friends and family, local authorities or the young people themselves. In the 2019/20 tax year, the savings limit for Junior ISAs is £4,368.

Young people over the age of 16 are responsible for managing their accounts, even though they will not be able to access their savings until they are 18. The aim is for young people to learn how to manage their savings and make the best choices for themselves.

Opening a Junior ISA

Local authorities register with the Share Foundation to enable all eligible looked after children to have a Junior ISA. There is information on



the Share Foundation website [sharefound.org](https://www.sharefound.org), click on menu and choose 'Carers/Responsible Persons'. All local authorities in Scotland are enrolled in the scheme.

Getting access

The Share Foundation can only provide you with personal information or discuss personal circumstances affecting a particular young person, if your local authority authorises you to have direct contact with them. They do this by including you on their regular information return. The 'Getting Access' letter gives them your permission to release your information in this way. This letter can be downloaded from [sharefound.org](https://www.sharefound.org).

Further Support

During this time of uncertainty due to coronavirus, Fosterline Scotland will remain open as usual for any fostering-related query - including our stress support service and legal helpline on **01384 885 734**. We will do our best to support you during this challenging time, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thanks Julie.





Glasgow training suite available for hire

Our training suite in the centre of Glasgow has capacity for 20 people (depending on layout) and comes with a brand-new AV system.

Please bear us in mind as a venue to host a meeting or small event in central Glasgow in the future.

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

'The room and facilities were great, absolutely perfect for our session, would definitely use it again.'

Lorraine, Life Changes Trust

Dates for your diary...

Tuesday 5 & Wednesday 6 May 2020

The Role of the Supervising Social Worker
£225 plus VAT for members and £450 for non-members
Glasgow

11-24 May 2020

Foster Care Fortnight

27 May 2020
Men Who Foster
Wednesday
£120 plus VAT for members and £225 for non-members
Glasgow

Wednesday 10 June 2020

Moving into Adulthood
£120 plus VAT for members and £225 for non-members
Glasgow

Tuesday 25 & Wednesday 26 August 2020

The Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers
£225 plus VAT for members and £450 for non-members
Glasgow

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



With thanks to the funders who supported this edition.

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