

**The  
Fostering  
Network**

# FOSTERING IN Scotland

issue 60

The newsletter of **The Fostering Network** in Scotland

Winter 2017/18



## **In this issue:**

- **Walking Tall events**
- **Independent care review**
- **Upcoming roadshow**
- **And more!**

# Hello everyone

I am delighted to announce that our membership roadshow will be held on 13 March in Edinburgh. It will be a day of learning, sharing and meeting foster carers, social workers and others, bringing together our members from across Scotland. We will hear from the Children's Commissioner, Bruce Adamson on his vision for foster care and the role of the Commissioner. We will get an update on the care review from their chair, Fiona Duncan. Helen Minnis, Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry will speak about the impact of trauma on the mental health of children and the resulting behaviors. We are encouraging all fostering services to send foster carers and social workers and further details are on the back page of this newsletter. Our legal helpline are also attending and there will be opportunities to share thoughts, questions and ideas throughout the day.

On page 6 there is an update from Fiona Duncan. If you have not been in touch with the review, she is inviting carers to do so. We have had a number of meetings and opportunities to engage with the review team and I know many foster carers and fostering services have as well. We have also submitted written evidence and recommendations and this can be found on our website: [thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/carereview](http://thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/carereview)

We are delighted to share an update from the Scottish Government (page 3) and extend a warm welcome to Maree Todd, the new Minister for Childcare and Early Years. We look forward to the Minister meeting with foster carers and young people from across Scotland and to seeing her at our events and activities. We are very disappointed to note that the Scottish Government has confirmed that the draft Decision Making Guidance for Foster Carers will not be published as a Government endorsed document. We will continue to urge the Scottish Government to produce this promised guidance and have also raised this with the review. The Government has advised The Fostering Network that the guidance will remain on their website in draft form and can be used as a steer. There is a tremendous amount of very helpful information in the guidance but we strongly advise that it should only be used as a 'steer', if there is open communication and a written agreement between a foster carer and their fostering service.

Sarah McEnhill, our operations manager is pictured below with her new baby, Kit - huge congratulations to her and her family. Very sadly, Sarah's dad, Ed Crangle passed away in December. Ed was known to many of our members, as together with his wife



Marion, they fostered for over 30 years and attended many of our events throughout that time. We send our warmest condolences to the family.

Foster Care Fortnight is quickly approaching and will be from 14 – 27 May. Stay tuned to our website, Facebook page and Twitter for further updates.

There is lots more news and updates in the newsletter, do enjoy reading!

*Sara Lurie*

**Sara Lurie**  
Director for Scotland

## Staffing changes

We are delighted to announce that Sarah McEnhill, operations manager, has given birth to a wonderful baby boy and is now on maternity leave. We have recruited for maternity cover and Sara Smith, project worker for the foster carer champions, has taken up the post so we will now be recruiting to fill the champions post.

Speaking of her new role Sara Smith says:

'You don't have to be called Sara but it helps!

'I am very excited to take on the role of operations manager. Sarah McEnhill's shoes are big shoes to fill but I will aim to ensure the continuity of the projects managed by Sarah.

'I bring to this role my experience of fostering, having fostered for 15 years, and knowledge of the projects being run within

The Fostering Network, having been involved with the champions projects both as a volunteer and more recently a staff member.

'I also have a background in management within the charitable sector, having managed a large Riding for the Disabled facility, with a staff team of 10 and 100 plus volunteers.

'I am passionate about the training and development of people and have experience of delivering training - not only here at The Fostering Network, but also to equestrian and sports coaches throughout Scotland. I have also delivered the first ever coaching course for equestrian coaches in the United Arab Emirates which was very exciting.

'I hope to bring to the role a passion for fostering, and a lot of drive, determination



**Sarah McEnhill with baby Kit**

and hard work. Alongside this I will continue to foster, support my family and take part in triathlons (training is my ME time).

'I will be attending events run by The Fostering Network over the coming nine months and look forward to meeting many carers and fostering services.'

# An update from the Scottish Government



Maree Todd MSP

## The new Minister for Childcare and Early Years

We would first of all like to introduce you to Maree Todd who was appointed Minister for Childcare and Early Years in November 2017. She supports the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills and has specific responsibility for adoption and fostering, childcare implementation, children's hearings, child protection, children's rights, children's services, early years, looked after children, protection of vulnerable groups and the social services workforce.

A pharmacist by profession, Maree worked in NHS Highland for 20 years, mainly as a mental health pharmacist in a psychiatric hospital.

## The review of care allowances

The first meeting of this review took place on 20 November 2017 and a series of

further meetings is planned for 2018. The focus of the next meeting planned for January, will be on the needs of a (looked after) child and members of the review are keen to learn from existing research, which has informed experiences elsewhere. The group will then consider the complexities of the situation in Scotland and the interplay with local authority and national carers/benefits systems. Consultation is vital in taking this agenda forward. When developing options, a reference group as well as partners, organisations and members will have a key role to play.

## Decision making guidance for foster carers

We would like to thank the foster carers who helped us to develop the draft of this guidance. Unfortunately, after considering several possible courses of action, we have come to the decision that the guidance, as currently drafted, is not in a format that can be published as a Government - endorsed document. This is largely because its comprehensive content carries a risk of quickly becoming out of date and therefore potentially misleading to those who may use it. Due to other pressures on Scottish Government resources we are unable to divert legal and policy expertise to service regular necessary changes on such a substantial document.

## The learning and development standard for foster carers

In April 2017 a learning and development standard for foster carers was published and can be viewed on the Scottish Social

Services Council's website at [sssc.uk.com/consultations/consultations/current-consultations/standard-for-foster-care-consultation](http://sssc.uk.com/consultations/consultations/current-consultations/standard-for-foster-care-consultation)

The implementation of the learning and development standard for foster carers is on hold while we give careful consideration to the progress and findings of the independent review of care currently underway and any possible implications there may be for the learning and development of foster carers.

## Council tax exemption for care leavers

Scottish ministers share stakeholders' ambition to provide support to care experienced young people as they develop into adulthood and are aware of the challenges they face as they adapt to life in independent accommodation. That is why at the SNP Conference on 10 October the First Minister announced the decision to exempt all care leavers from council tax.

During the coming months the Government will liaise with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) to work through the detail of the implementation of the exemption as, what ministers hope will be, a shared priority. It is intended, subject to the will of Parliament, that legislation will be introduced which ensures this mandatory exemption will take effect from the beginning of the next council tax year in April 2018.

We hope you find this update helpful.

## 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 focus group meeting or event, do get in touch! Our rates are very competitive.

For more information, please contact Linda Curran from our Glasgow office:  
**t** 0141 204 1400 or **e** [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net)



# Fostering Community Champions



## Our young champions out and about

The young champions have been busy over the last few months. One of the biggest passions for the champions is changing people's perceptions of participation with young people, and they have spoken eloquently about this at two events recently.

At the independent care review meeting in October, Amy and Adam spoke to the Discovery Group about their own experience of foster care and how the effect of a permanent placement has allowed them to progress through school and university successfully. Both also spoke about their experience of stigma and how the negative view some people still have of children and young people in care needs to be challenged at every level of society. The young champions are pleased to be involved with the independent care review and will be staying involved throughout the process.

Lauren joined Amy and Adam in Livingston in November when they made a presentation to members of the Foster Plus Panel Group. The champions again highlighted that the voices of young people are strong and, if listened to, can make a significant impact on policy and practice of agencies working with families.

This has been a very busy time for the young champions, with some moving into university halls at the start of their higher education journey, and some working on a dissertation for an honours degree. But, they have still found the time (and energy!) to travel the country speaking to agencies and challenging perceptions of young people in fostering families.



Young champions Amy and Adam meet with Fiona Duncan, chair of the care review at the Discovery Group

If you would like to have a young champion speak to your agency or group of foster carers, then please do get in touch with Sue McKellar: [e scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net) **t** 0141 204 1400

## Champions update Winter fun for champions

Over the winter our foster carer champion group have been battling the elements to attend meetings and training and much fun was had at our festive fun day. The group have met with Scottish Children's Reporter Administration on two occasions, discussing the legalities within children's hearings and the role foster carers can play, even if not relevant persons. These were two very useful sessions and we all came away with more knowledge to share.

Foster carer champions, or the listening and support group as they like to be known, are a service for foster carers. This now established group of foster carers, supported by The Fostering Network, are on hand to give carers support and be a listening ear when times are tough and fostering just seems hard.

It can be very useful for a foster carer to talk to another foster carer when they are struggling, as the chances are they have been there and understand. Champions have supported carers through allegations; when a child moves on; when relationships between carer and support workers are difficult; when they are dealing with difficult behaviours; when the carer is struggling to present themselves at meetings; supporting young people struggling in education and working with special needs.

The list is long but for every call there is help and many carers have felt they can continue as a result of the support they receive - they go from feeling they have to give up fostering to continuing in this very fulfilling and rewarding role.

The foster carer champions project is now in its final year of funding and, as we look ahead to create new projects, we will be sharing the learning from this project and holding a series of celebration events over the autumn. More details and dates coming in our next newsletter.

'There is never a wrong time to talk'

Don't forget, if you would like to have more support and talk to a champion call us on: **t** 0141 204 1400 **e** [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net)

# Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) – workshop for foster carers

## A foster carer shares her views on the course:

This was a very informative day with the main theme of the session looking at the effect drinking alcohol has on the development of the foetus and the impact once a child is born, leaving them potentially with FASD.

The research from NHS Ayrshire & Arran on making sense of FASD showed that the consequences of drinking alcohol on the development of a child in the womb were far reaching, not just the facial features that have so often been highlighted as the main symptom. In fact only 10 per cent of children with FASD have the classic facial features. The complex range of symptoms a child can display are broad and can be multi-layered with other conditions such as ADHD and attachment issues, so the diagnosing of

FASD is not easy and usually involves having a good history of the mother during pregnancy.

The group of carers were challenged to pour units of alcohol. They generally over estimated – what they thought was one unit, was in fact two. We also explored the units in wine compared to spirits.

This is not just an issue for parents of children in care, but an issue for everyone in society. It is about the binge drinking culture in some young people, the availability of wine and spirits drunk in the home and a general lack of education around the amount of units we drink and the potential impact that can have.

The research from NHS Ayrshire & Arran really highlighted the issues there are for children diagnosed with FASD. It has to be hoped that this is rolled out in the NHS, awareness raised and diagnosis

of children made easier. Alongside this we need to consider developing training for foster carers on how to work with children with FASD, as it is known that there are a number of children in care with FASD and carers seeking diagnosis for the children they are looking after.

The highlight of the session was where a young woman with FASD spoke about her journey with her foster carer, the difference it made having a firm diagnosis of FASD and how her life had changed with better understanding of her and her condition. This was an excellent example of collaborative working; carer, young person, NHS and education working together for a positive outcome.

This was a great session, delivered by Lorna and Rachel from NHS Ayrshire & Arran; Maryelen, foster carer and her adopted daughter, Paula.

Thank you to The Fostering Network for hosting this.

The Fostering Network will look to hold more sessions on FASD – register your interest with us on: **t** 0141 204 1400 or **e** [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net)

**“ This was one of the most interesting courses for me as we are living with FASD within our family. ”**

## Moving on to adoption – supporting foster carers in their role

The purpose of Scotland's Adoption Register is to make the process of finding adoptive families for children work as well as possible. Unsurprisingly this is often a complicated and emotional journey for all concerned and we have been discussing with them some of the concerns which foster carers have shared with The Fostering Network.

To consider how Scotland's Adoption Register can improve the support and resources they offer, they are very keen to hear foster carers' views about what works well, what could be improved and the best ways of supporting foster carers.

They would like to make a range of resources available to better support children, adopters, foster carers, practitioners and agencies to prepare and talk to children about adoption and prepare the adults for what the linking and matching process will involve.

In order to get as many views as possible, Scotland's Adoption Register has asked us to share their survey with our foster carer membership. The questionnaire is open until 28 February and can be found at: [surveymonkey.co.uk/r/7P5MGV9](https://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/7P5MGV9)

If you have any queries or if you would like to do the survey by phone or be sent a paper copy, please contact:  
Pascaline Mollard:

**e** [pascaline.mollard@adoptionregister.scot](mailto:pascaline.mollard@adoptionregister.scot)

  
**Scotland's  
Adoption Register**  
Funded by the Scottish Government

# Fosterline update

Hello everyone.

When this arrives in your postbox the tax deadline will have been and gone – we hope you managed to submit your tax return in time! We delivered four tax workshops from September to November in 2017. At the tax workshops, and also through our Fosterline Scotland service, we informed foster carers that from 6 April 2018 Class 2 National Insurance contributions will be abolished and Class 4 National Insurance contributions reformed to include a new threshold, which will be called the Small Profits Limit.

This information was updated after the tax workshops were held and the Government has now delayed the abolition of Class 2 National Insurance contributions until 6 April 2019. Therefore, you can continue to pay Class 2 National Insurance contributions as part of your self assessment tax bill for the tax years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. For those with profits over £6,025 in 2017-18 and £6,205 in 2018-19



Class 2 National Insurance will be collected with any tax due. For those with no profit or a small profit you can continue to make voluntary payments through your tax return.

You also have the option of applying for a National Insurance credit for each week you are approved as a foster carer and you can do this at the end of each tax year: A National Insurance credit will count towards your National Insurance record. Applications for National Insurance credits can be made on form CF41 IA. Use the postal form to apply and include a copy of a letter from your local authority or fostering agency confirming your status as a carer.



We will update you again with information prior to the abolition of Class 2 National Insurance, however please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss this further.

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 & Julie

## Letter from Fiona Duncan

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

2017 was an incredibly busy and rewarding year for the independent care review as myself and the team engaged in discovery events and meetings all over Scotland asking people to help define the vision and scope of the review.

My thanks to those of you who have taken part in the review so far – the support received and interest in the review has been phenomenal!

I have had the privilege of meeting with so many children, young people, their carers and the people who work with them. The lived experience and knowledge that you all have shared is so important to ensuring this review delivers the change that children and young people in care need.

The review will be reporting on our findings from discovery early in the new

year and entering into the next stage which is 'journey'. During journey, there will be recommendations about practice and experiences that occur in the care system that needs to stop or change; we will encourage more of the things that are working well and explore some complex issues we think need more understanding.

Throughout 2018, there will be a series of events with partners of the review in celebration of the Year of Young People, raising awareness about children and young people's experience of care and the work of the review.

Crucially, there will be opportunities for children and young people to continue to be involved in a range of ways. The review is currently bringing together a group of children and young people who will be involved in the review, testing of ideas and decision-making.

It is so important that the experience and perspectives of children and young people



in foster care continue to be included as well as those of their carers, so I would urge you to please get involved in 2018.

More information about how you can do this is available on our website: [carereview.scot/getinvolved/](http://carereview.scot/getinvolved/)

# SAVE THE DATE

## - Walking Tall workshops



We are delighted to announce that our very first series of Walking Tall workshops will be kicking off in Glasgow, Fife and South Lanarkshire. Now is your chance to sign up for this amazing opportunity to be part of something innovative and informative; something that will enhance the fostering experience for children who live in fostering households.

The workshops are open to our members - both children in foster care and the sons and daughters of foster carers - with the aim of developing a shared understanding of each other's perspectives. We will also be running simultaneous supports for foster carers. For more information about this please contact the project worker on the details below.

The information that the children offer at the Walking Tall workshops will be used to create resources which aim to enhance the fostering experience for the whole fostering household. We will also be doing outreach work to ensure that the voices of children in fostering households who have additional support needs are also heard and valued. If you feel that your child could be a part of this outreach work then please contact the project worker on the details below.

### How do I register my interest?

Spaces are limited and will be snapped up quickly, so to help secure your child's place in the workshops, please contact the project worker as soon as possible using the details below. You will then be sent a brief assessment document, which will determine if the workshops will be suitable for the child.

It is possible to register more than one child from the same fostering household and, as previously mentioned, they are open to both children in foster care and the sons and daughters of foster carers.

Workshops are completely free for our members. Lunch and refreshments are provided.

### What is Walking Tall?

Walking Tall is a two year consultation project, funded by The Big Lottery Fund, which aims to hear the voices of primary school aged children living in fostering households. We are facilitating a range of consultation workshops across central Scotland, which will use dance, drama, art and play as a means of helping the children explore and express their views and experiences.

### When and where are they?

Glasgow – East		Fife – Falkland	
Saturday 24 February 2018	11am – 1pm	Saturday 14 April 2018	11am – 4pm
Saturday 10 March 2018	11am – 1pm	Saturday 21 April 2018	11am – 4pm
Saturday 24 March 2018	11am – 1pm	South Lanarkshire – East Kilbride	
Saturday 7 April 2018	11am – 1pm	Saturday 12 May 2018	11am – 4pm
		Saturday 19 May 2018	11am – 4pm

For further details and to book your space, please contact Kirsteen Marshall:

**t** 0141 204 1400 **e** scotland@fostering.net

## Available training courses - filling up fast!

We were sorry to disappoint so many people who could not get a place on our recently held Skills to Foster course but are pleased to be offering it again in March.

In addition to the courses below, we deliver in house courses to fostering services throughout Scotland. In house courses include: Contact, Safer Caring and Managing Allegations against Foster Carers.

We are also continuing to deliver our open courses. Upcoming open courses in

our new training suite in our Glasgow office, with lunch included, are:

### The Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers

Tuesday 20, Wednesday 21 and Thursday 22 March 2018  
£310 plus VAT to members and £620 to non-members

### Moving into Adulthood

Tuesday 15 May 2018  
£110 plus VAT to members and £220 to non-members

### Men Who Foster

Wednesday 6 June 2018  
£110 plus VAT to members and £220 to non-members

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

# Scotland Roadshow

We are pleased to announce our Scotland Roadshow event for members will take place on 13 March in Edinburgh.

Developed for foster carers, social workers, civil servants and others from across Scotland, our Scotland Roadshow event will give you the opportunity to update your knowledge and practice as well as meet others from your fostering community.

The event will be co-chaired by our director in Scotland and our young champions, providing the voice of the young people.

Speakers include Bruce Adamson, Scotland's newly appointed Children's Commissioner; Fiona Duncan, Chair of the Independent Root and Branch Review of Care and Professor Helen Minnis, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist from the Institute of Health and Well Being. More speakers to follow.

A full agenda will be released shortly.

Tickets are £46 plus VAT per person or £115 plus VAT for a group of three.

Register on Eventbrite on:  
[thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/Scotland-roadshow2018](http://thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/Scotland-roadshow2018)  
or call the Glasgow office: **t** 0141 204 1400

Spaces are limited, so book now to ensure you don't miss out!

## Dates for your diary ...

**Saturday 24 February 2018**

Walking Tall workshop  
Glasgow (page 7)

**Saturday 10 March 2018**

Walking Tall workshop  
Glasgow (page 7)

**Tuesday 13 March 2018**

The Fostering Network  
Roadshow  
Edinburgh (page 8)

**Tuesday 20, Wednesday 21  
and Thursday 22 March 2018**

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

**Saturday 24 March 2018**

Walking Tall workshop  
Glasgow (page 7)

**Saturday 7 April 2018**

Walking Tall Workshop  
Glasgow (page 7)

**Saturday 14 April 2018**

Walking Tall workshop  
Fife (page 7)

**Saturday 21 April 2018**

Walking Tall workshop  
Fife (page 7)

**Saturday 12 May 2018**

Walking Tall workshop  
South Lanarkshire (page 7)

**Tuesday 15 May 2018**

Moving into Adulthood  
Open Course  
Glasgow (page 7)

**Saturday 19 May 2018**

Walking Tall workshop  
South Lanarkshire (page 7)

**Wednesday 6 June 2018**

Men Who Foster  
Glasgow (page 7)

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

## The Fostering Network in Scotland



With thanks to the funders who supported this edition.

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For help with membership queries:  
**t** 020 7620 6400  
**e** [membership@fostering.net](mailto:membership@fostering.net)

### Publications & Resources

**t** 020 7620 6440  
**e** [orders@fosteringresources.co.uk](mailto:orders@fosteringresources.co.uk)

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### Legal Helpline

**t** 0345 013 5004

### Stress Helpline

**t** 0345 074 2799



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