

Fostering

in Scotland

Issue 44

Winter 2013/2014

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- **Supporting young people into independence – latest developments**
- **Festive e-card design – our winning entry!**
- **Introducing our new Fosterline Scotland worker and more!**

the fostering network
the voice of foster care



Hello and welcome...



...to this latest, winter edition of *Fostering in Scotland*. It's been quite a busy time since our last quarterly newsletter and as you will see as you read this edition there have been a lot of discussions around young people transitioning to independence. The Fostering Network's *Don't Move Me* campaign has been pushing for young people to be able to remain with their foster carers beyond the age of 18 and we were delighted to see an amendment to the proposed *Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill* that

would enable this. You can read more about this, as well as the fantastic support we have had for the campaign from MSPs later in the newsletter.

We also loved receiving festive images from children and young people for our e-card competition. All the designs are showcased in the newsletter including the winning entry from McKenzie.

We have also had a range of meetings ongoing over the winter months including our recruitment and retention forum and our discussions around adult placements. We look forward to more meetings and events on a range of themes taking place as we go through 2014 so please don't hesitate to get in touch to find out more!

I hope you enjoy this latest edition. We would love to share more of your news, stories, experiences and artwork so please keep in touch!

Until next time,

Sarah McEnhill
Operations manager



Fosterline Scotland – your vital support

Hello, my name is Mirren and I am the new Fosterline Worker in the Glasgow team. I'm delighted to be part of the team and I'm settling in very well. Since starting in November I have been busy supporting members with a number of different issues including benefits and tax; allegations and complaints and preparation for reviews and panels.

An issue which has come up lately is how to respond when an allegation is made and a child is removed without notice. This can be a very worrying time and you may feel unsupported during the investigation process. The Fostering Network have a signpost booklet called *Allegations against foster carers* which can be accessed through the member's area of our website. This has information about how to prepare if an allegation is made against you or your family. Also it is very important that as soon as you are made aware of an allegation made against you that you contact our Legal helpline on 0845 013 5004 for legal advice.

Please contact me if you need any advice or support. Fosterline Scotland is open from Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm t 0141 204 1400 e FosterlineScotland@fostering.net.



Tax – are you registered?

All foster carers are expected to register as self-employed with HMRC whether you have tax to pay or not. To help ensure you keep your tax affairs in order the Fostering Network's signpost leaflet *Income Tax and National Insurance* is updated each year. This provides information about registering as self-employed, national insurance contributions, qualifying care relief for foster carers and more.

All foster carer members of the Fostering Network will have received this in their welcome pack when they joined. It is also free to download

online by logging into the members' area of our website: **www.fostering.net/community**. Copies can also be purchased by contacting 0844 335 1892.

For further information or advice please don't hesitate to contact Fosterline Scotland.

There is also an online training tool from HMRC available online: **www.hmrc.gov.uk/courses/syob2/fc/** This helpful tool guides you through the tax issues you should be aware of as a foster carer.

While you will have to register as self-employed and complete a tax return, this does not necessarily mean you will have tax to pay on your fostering payments.

Dear Members,

It is hard to believe that we are now into 2014 and before we know it February half term will be upon us!

At the end of 2013 we received the final report of the Review of Foster Care which included a number of recommendations for the Government on the way forward for foster care in Scotland. The Government will now respond to these recommendations and I know that the Minister for Children and Young People really valued the responses from foster carers and young people that helped inform the Review. I am sure the Scottish Government will look for more contact with foster carers and young people across the country as they decide how to take forward these recommendations.

There are many areas of foster care still needing attention but it is good that the Review notes an acceptance that fees for foster carers are essential to recognise the work foster carers do. In addition, there is a commitment to look at the realistic costs of caring for a foster child and some work around allowances will be undertaken to explore this further.

At the Fostering Network we will be working to ensure that the voices of foster carers, young people and all those involved with looked after children in foster care can contribute to the ongoing debate.

2014 will also see the Independence referendum and as a UK wide organisation the Fostering Network have to discuss what the different outcomes of this may mean for foster care in Scotland. Remember that children and young people who are 16 by the date of the Referendum can also vote – further information on this is elsewhere in the newsletter. Whatever the political scene may be the commitment, consistency and care that foster carers can provide will continue and the Fostering Network will want to be alongside carers and workers in giving the message that foster care services need to be supported through the tough times we are facing financially if Scotland is to be the best place in the world for children to grow up.

We are currently awaiting word on funding for a very imaginative project on creating and supporting Foster Care Champions. We believe that this

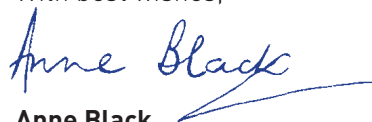
development could help to attract and retain many more foster carers and to let the wider public know of the great work done by all involved in fostering. Keep your fingers crossed and hopefully we will have some more news on this in the next newsletter.

I look forward to meeting some of you across Scotland at focus groups or Committees in the year ahead.

I want to say a very big thank you to the staff in the Glasgow office for their commitment through a hard year to providing responsive services to all our members.

This should have been my last letter as Chair of the Scottish Committee but you never know you may get another one as the search for a replacement continues!!

With best wishes,



Anne Black
Chair, Scottish Advisory Committee

Symposium on achieving permanence for disabled children and young people

26 February 2014
Glasgow

Following joint work between CELCIS, the University of Strathclyde, Quarriers and the Fostering Network a one day symposium will be held in Glasgow on Wednesday 26 February. The event will explore how we can work together to raise awareness around providing a disabled child with the foster or adoptive care they may need.

The day will bring together a range of academics, practitioners and foster

carers to discuss and share current experiences and practice.

We will be holding various participatory workshops covering a range of highly relevant topics, from legal issues to navigating financial support. We are keen to hear your direct experiences and learn from each other.

Places are free but are limited and must be booked in advance. To find out more or to secure a place please contact Andrea Moulding
e andrea.moulding@strath.ac.uk
t 0141 444 8523.

Fostering service looking for panel members

Due to recent and forthcoming retirements, East Renfrewshire Fostering & Adoption team is currently looking to expand their panel members for their joint fostering and adoption panel.

The panel meet in Giffnock, so travelling distance will be a consideration for potential interested parties. To find out more or to discuss further without any commitment, please contact Mary Deward, Team Manager, 0141 577 3367.

A foster carer's experience – balancing caring with studying...

Colin Brough is a single male foster carer who completed his Masters in 2012 and has now embarked on a self-funded PhD at Edinburgh University in September.

Can you tell us about your journey through fostering and into studying?

In 2006 I made the decision to become a full time foster carer and give up my life in marketing. This raised a few eyebrows amongst my friends and family but, to be honest, I've never looked back. I had a few years as a respite carer under my belt when I made this decision and it was a few more years before I had another 'big idea'. With three full time teenage lads in placement I decided to head to university. I also decided to move right out of my comfort zone and to move outside marketing and into education. A few weeks later and I was enrolled in the Masters in Education at Edinburgh University. I graduated in 2012 although I seem to have caught the academic bug, as I started my PhD in Education this September. My research is not a million miles from home. I'm studying 'The formation of identities in looked after children and how these identities impact on educational engagement and attainment' – catchy I know! I'm self-funded and this puts a bit of pressure on us as a household, but it's definitely having a knock on effect, as my middle lad has just submitted his UCAS form for Business and Marketing at Edinburgh.

How did you strike a balance between studying, caring for young people and running a house?

It was a bit of an adjustment. Balancing lectures, assignments and the dissertation was challenging in amongst looked after and accommodated children (LAAC) Reviews, social work and school meetings etc. It just seemed to work, I used my support network (Mum and Dad and friends) if the lectures finished after school times, but there weren't many of them. We (the boys and I) did homework together sometimes. It was difficult over the Christmas holidays when I had a lot of writing to do, but we got there and the dissertation, called 'In Loco Parentis - The local authority as a corporate parent and its ability to meet higher order needs in looked after children' (another catchy title) seemed to be the base on which I could build the PhD. The PhD is less stressful time wise as you are kind of in charge of your work commitments, but still challenging.

What have you learned so far in terms of your research into the identities of young people?

It is still very early. I've been doing lots of reading and there are gaps in our



knowledge about how LAAC negotiate their identities. In fact, the first piece of learning is the fact that most LAAC literature works on the singular 'Identity' as something attainable and fixed when in actual fact identities are plural and multiple as with any child, although more complex in looked after and accommodated children. It's a subject very close to my heart and I'm keen to understand why some of my own looked after kids make it to University while others drop out at the end of education and seem to give up on themselves. It's not an easy question, but as corporate parents we need to know what's motivating them and where things like self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-awareness play a part in the development of these young people's identity.

Our thanks to Colin for sharing his study journey. Do you have an experience to share? If so, we would love to hear from you – please get in touch!

Congratulations to Champion gymnast David

David Rae (17) has been with his Fosterplus foster carer Ann Regan for six years. David competed in the Special Olympics in Bath 2013 as a member of the Scotland West team where he won five gold and two silver medals for gymnastics. The team of ten gymnasts collectively managed to accumulate 15 gold, 18 silver and 13 bronze!

Training three times a week for 12 hours, David competes on all six pieces of men's apparatus: vault, rings, high bar, pommel horse and

parallel bars and has been Scottish and British champion. David has now been chosen to represent Great Britain in the European Special Olympics 2014 in Belgium.

He now uses his talents to coach other children, some of whom are on the autistic spectrum and can present as challenging. David also gained the President's Badge from the Boys Brigade earlier this year.

Well done David!



Discounts for members of the Fostering Network

- Plans for February mid-term?
- Wondering what to do during spring break?
- Looking forward to summer already?

Remember that the Fostering Network has negotiated discounts at Merlin attractions across the UK as well as with cottages4you and Hoseasons Lodges and Parks.

Our partnership with Hoseasons Lodges & Parks and cottages4you provides our foster carer members with 10% off holidays for your foster family. Choose from a wide range of holidays across the UK and Europe.

Members of the Fostering Network can also get up to 52 per cent off entry to the UK's top attractions, saving you and your family money on a range of great days out. Attractions in this offer include:

- Alton Towers, Thorpe Park and Chessington World of Adventures theme parks
- Madame Tussauds
- SEA LIFE centres and sanctuaries
- Blackpool Tower Circus and Eye
- Warwick Castle
- The Dungeons.

Hoseasons



To take advantage of these great membership offers you need to book tickets in advance using the discount code which can be found in the members' area of the website.

Go to www.fostering.net/membership/foster-carer/new-offers-for-members to find out more about how to book your tickets. For any enquiries, please contact our membership team by phoning 020 7620 6400.

cottages4you

Have you ticked the box?

The Fostering Network's *Tick the Box* awareness campaign aims to encourage young people who have spent time in care to *Tick the Box* on their UCAS form saying they are care experienced, and get the extra support they are entitled to and may need while at university.

Ticking the box means that these young people can access a range of services and extra provisions to support them as they start and progress through university. What

is offered will vary from university to university, and can range from additional financial support in the form of a bursary to practical support to help them settle into university, find accommodation or manage finances.

To find out more visit www.fostering.net/policy-and-campaigns/campaigns/tick-the-box



Housing Options protocol for care leavers

The Scottish Government recently launched guidance to assist local authorities and their community planning partners in the development and implementation of local 'Housing Options protocols for Care Leavers'. These Protocols should detail the processes by which young people are supported through their transition out of care and provided with a range of appropriate and sustainable accommodation options.

Securing suitable accommodation options for care leavers is about much more than finding them a place to stay. Care leavers should be made aware of the full range of options available to them including having the opportunity to remain in their care setting until they are ready to move on. Community Planning Partners as corporate parents need to ensure that care leavers have the skills and support needed to make a success of their choice as the journey out of care is a particularly important and challenging transition.

The guidance aims to:

- Ensure Community Planning Partnerships/Corporate Parents have a Housing Options protocol for Care leavers.
- To assist with the development of a Housing Options Protocol.
- To ensure consistency in the development of Housing Options Protocols.
- To ensure care leavers are regarded as a priority group.
- To promote current practice that enables care leavers to make successful and sustainable transitions out of care.

To read the full protocol visit www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00435939.pdf

Two days at Parliament

Mercy Morrison is a former care-experienced young person. In November the Fostering Network invited Mercy and another young person, Shannen, to support our Don't Move Me campaign. Mercy tells us more...

On Tuesday 19 & Wednesday 20 November Shannen and I were invited along to the Parliament buildings to interview MSPs as part of the Fostering Network's 'Don't Move Me' campaign. The campaign's main aim is to push for amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill* to increase the age of care leavers from 18 to 21.

Supported by Sara Lurie, Mirren Vanko and Rob Cann from the Fostering Network, and also Shannen's foster carer Carol, we interviewed around 20 MSPs from a range of parties including Aileen Campbell the Minister for Children and Young People. I was particularly surprised with the supportive genuine responses to our questions which were:

“At what age did you leave home?”

“At what age do you expect your children to leave home?”

“At what age do you expect children in foster care to leave home?”

By making these questions personal all MSPs made the comparison of their own lives to that of children and young people in care. This led to the realisation of just how vulnerable children in care can be, especially when they are expected to leave care in their teens, and often in the middle of important exams.

An important point that arose was that any MSP who had left home at a young age, mostly to attend university, still had a base to return to and still relied heavily on their parents for support both emotionally and financially. Young



Pictured L-R, Rob, Carol, Shannen, Mercy and Mirren

people leaving care do not have this same support and often find it hard to cope without it.

Overall being involved with the campaign and interviewing the MSPs was a great experience and I hope it was enough to show the vulnerability of looked after children and persuade the right people to get the Bill amended in order to give looked after children and young people the same prospects in life as non-looked after young people.

To hear more from MSPs, visit the Fostering Network's campaign page www.dontmoveme.org.uk

The *Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill* has been making its way through Parliament. For more information visit: www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/62233.aspx

Greater rights for young people in care

Hundreds of Scotland's most vulnerable young people are to be given greater rights to continuing their care placement into early adulthood from next year, the Scottish Government recently announced.

From April 2015, teenagers in residential, foster or kinship care who turn 16 will be entitled to remain looked after until the age of 21 under new provisions proposed for the *Children and Young People Bill*.

This increased support, to be funded by £5 million a year up to 2020, is in addition to the Scottish Government's recent commitment to provide support up to the age of 26-years-old for care leavers to help them move into independent living.

Scottish Government announce raise of age of foster care

In response to the Scottish Government's announcement that from 1 April 2015 young people in care who turn 16 (i.e. those born after April 1999) will be able to stay until 21, director of the Fostering Network Scotland Sara Lurie, said:

"We are pleased that the Scottish Government has recognised the importance of ensuring young people in care can stay beyond the age of 18, and is making this change to the law.

"The Fostering Network has long campaigned for fostered young people to stay with their foster carers beyond 18 as part of our *Don't Move Me* campaign, and this move in Scotland follows the success of our campaign in England.

"However, we are extremely disappointed that the change in the law in Scotland will not help fostered young people who are aged 15 or over on 1 April 2014. We don't want to see hundreds of fostered young people



in Scotland missing out on what their peers in England will be entitled to as of this April. They will instead face the prospect of having to leave their foster homes before 18, while those just slightly younger will be able to stay until 21.

"Any delay is harmful and

unnecessary. The Scottish Government has shown the way with the principle of young people staying until 21 and we strongly encourage local authorities to start implementing this change straight away."

It is already in legislation that children and young people's views should be taken into account when it comes to their care planning. Best practice and the Scottish Government's policy as described in 'Staying Put Scotland'

would clearly indicate for young people to remain in settled placements until they are able to demonstrate a good level of independence.

To find out more about our *Don't Move Me* campaign visit our website: www.fostering.net

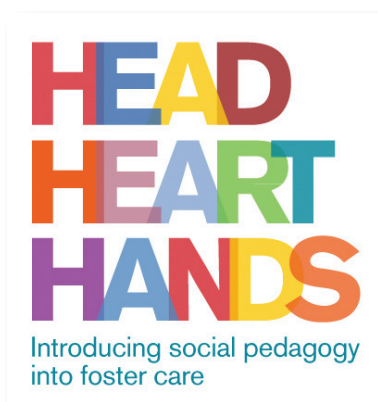
The Fostering Network's *Don't Move Me* campaign has received support from a number of MSPs. You can read more about when Mercy and Shannen met with them in Holyrood elsewhere in this newsletter.

Social pedagogues get together at networking event

At the end of November a team from the Fostering Network travelled to Kirkcaldy to attend the Social Pedagogy Development Network. With the Fostering Network's own Head, Heart, Hands programme exploring how social pedagogy can support foster care, this was an exciting opportunity to meet with other professionals from across the UK who feel that implementing the approach will improve the lives of the people they work for.

An impressive 180 people gathered over two days to share their inspirational work and learn more about initiatives and organisations

working to embed social pedagogy as an approach. The Head, Heart, Hands team delivered two workshops at the event and added the Fostering Network's voice to this growing UK conversation.



Staying Put guidance from Scottish Government

Launched by the Scottish Government in October, the 'Staying Put Scotland' guidance was produced following work undertaken on behalf of the Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group.

The guidance has been prepared to support practitioners and managers in continuing to ensure that the right supports are in place when looked after children transition to independence.

The guidance can be downloaded from the Scottish Government website: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/10/7452/0

Hundreds of new foster families needed in Scotland in 2014



At least 850 new foster families are needed across Scotland during 2014 to provide stable, secure and loving homes for the record numbers of fostered children, according to recent figures from the Fostering Network.

Currently, almost 5,300 children are living with over 4,375 foster families across Scotland. More foster families are needed not only to replace the 12 per cent who leave each year, but to ensure that children who come into foster care find foster carers who are right for them, have the skills and qualities they need, and are available now.

More foster families are particularly needed to provide homes for teenagers, children with disabilities and sibling groups. Without enough foster families willing and able to offer homes to these groups, some children will find themselves living a long way from family, school and friends, being split up from brothers and sisters, or being placed with a foster carer who does not have the ideal skills and experience to meet their specific needs.

Research by the Fostering Network in 2013 found that in the previous two years one in three foster carers had

felt under pressure to take children – usually teenagers – who they were not trained or supported to look after. One in 10 had felt under pressure to take in a child, again usually a teenager, when they felt they had no more capacity. Two in five had looked after children temporarily because the fostering service could not find a suitable long-term home.

Fostering can be a challenging job, and when the match between foster family and child is not ideal, it becomes even more difficult. Too many fostering relationships break down as a result; a wider pool of foster carers makes it more likely that fostering services can find the right foster home for each child, first time.

Sara Lurie, director of the Fostering Network Scotland, said: “Children and young people come into care for a wide range of reasons, but all come needing professional, dedicated and compassionate support. Foster carers are remarkable people who open their homes to some of society’s most disadvantaged children and young people.

“Fostering services are working really hard to find more foster carers, but recruitment remains an ongoing challenge. We need to attract a diverse range of foster carers who can meet the needs of children in care and who can offer as much choice as possible so that they can find the right home for each child, first time.

“We urgently need people who believe that they have the right skills and qualities to foster to come forward and make a long lasting positive difference to the life of a child. In particular, foster carers are needed to provide homes for teenagers and children with disabilities, and to help sibling groups stay together.”

In addition, 7,000 foster families are needed in England, 200 in Northern Ireland and 550 in Wales during 2014.

To find out more about becoming a foster carer people should contact their local fostering service. Details of fostering services and more information about fostering and becoming a foster carer are available from couldyoufoster.org.uk

We need to attract a diverse range of foster carers who can meet the needs of children in care and who can offer as much choice as possible



Carers talk about transition from foster to adult care

A meeting in Perth on 14 January brought together eleven foster carers representing six local authorities. The theme for discussions was the transition for young people from foster care to adult placements. The day was particularly timely as the Scottish Government had recently announced an amendment to the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill*, currently making its' journey through Parliament, to enable young people to remain in their care placement until aged 21.

Some of the key issues arising included: ensuring young people,

and their siblings have stability and security of placement, particularly those who are born before April 1999; working with throughcare and aftercare teams to agree roles and responsibilities where there is throughcare involvement; exploring the practicalities around supporting a young person into independence, laundry, budgeting, cooking, managing own tenancy etc...

The day generated a great deal of lively debate and we would be keen to hear your thoughts on this. Be sure to get in touch and share your experiences.

Young voters to cast their vote in referendum

Each year households across Scotland receive an annual canvass form. The latest forms were circulated at the end of 2013. This years' Independence referendum on 18 September will give young people who are aged 16 on the date of the Referendum the opportunity to vote (along with adult voters) on whether Scotland should be an independent country or not.

Anyone aged 16 or over should have been registered using the main household canvass form. Anyone who is 15, but will be 16 by the time of the referendum should have been registered using the Young Voter Registration form sent out. Detailed guidance on how to complete both forms was included in the household canvass pack. Anyone can also apply using the form available at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/referendum_scotland.aspx.

The Fostering Network are aware that young people in foster care (and other care settings) may not have been registered on the forms, or may be registered at a different address, due to their individual circumstances.

If a young person requires to change the address at which they are registered, for example because they have moved house, they should fill out a new Young Voter Registration form which is available either from their Electoral Registration Office or at: www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/PDF/Scotland-young-person-registration-form-v3.pdf

Anyone who has not been registered through the annual household canvass can also use the above form to register at any time throughout the year. The deadline for registering to vote in the referendum is midnight on 3 September 2014.

If there are any concerns that inclusion in the Register of Young Voters may affect the personal safety of the young voter, or they do not wish to register using their current address, other registration options may be available. They may be able to use a previous address or to register anonymously. Please contact the Electoral Registration Office in your area to discuss. You can find contact details for your local Electoral Registration Office at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/make_it_local/search_for_a_local_authority.aspx?returnURL=0

Foster Care Review Group's recommendations

The National Foster Care Review group submitted their final report and recommendations to the Scottish Government in December. In summary the recommendations are:

- Placement descriptors for the different types of foster care placements should be clearly established by the Scottish Government to enable consistency and clarity over the purpose of the placement.
- The proposal for a national foster carer database should not be taken forward at this time.
- Placement limits should be introduced, preferably through national care standards, by the Scottish Government.
- A learning and development framework for foster carers should be developed that includes mandatory courses at preparatory and induction stages as well as opportunities for ongoing learning and development.
- Research into allowances should be undertaken.
- Local authorities should initiate discussion about the future of fostering fees.

The full report can be read online: www.celcis.org/media/resources/publications/Foster-Care-Review-Final-Report.pdf

The report will now be considered by the Scottish Government and the Fostering Network look forward to their response.

Far From Home - game for young people living in care

A new online 3D adventure game has recently been launched by the Care Inspectorate. Far From Home allows young people to explore the themes of trust, consequences, danger and unfamiliarity in an action-packed and strange alien world.

Starring Sid, a blue-headed alien, the game was conceived by young people as a fun character to engage with youngsters living in care and help discuss their rights under Scotland's National Care Standards. The Care Inspectorate worked with young people from Who Cares? Scotland and the Aberlour Childcare Trust to develop the ideas behind Sid into a full-scale game which was developed by University of Abertay Dundee.

Far From Home provides young people in care with an opportunity to explore how the right decisions in life can keep them from harm. The game promotes the rights of young people in care, and helps them understand what they should expect from the services they engage with.

To find out more visit meetsid.co.uk



MEET SID...

Learning and Development update



We're a month into 2014 and already the learning and development diary is filling up fast. We have requests for various training courses such as *Caring for Children Who Have Been Abused: a male perspective*, *Fostering Panels: training for panel members* and *Safer Caring: a new approach* among those in demand from fostering services across the country.

In January we held an open course presentation of *Fostering in a Digital World* in Glasgow which was well received by those who attended. We also have some places remaining on our next open course:

Men Who Foster*

Saturday 29 March 2014
Glasgow

Price: members £98.00 + VAT/
non-members £196.00 + VAT
(includes lunch)

* **Please note: this course is for men only.**

Future dates for other courses will be coming soon so please keep an eye out for these, or get in touch with Joy Crawford
t 0141 204 1400
e joy.crawford@fostering.net
to find out more!

SSSC recognition for Cornerstone's Fostering Service

Cornerstone's Fostering and Family Placement Service differs from the traditional fostering model of support in that it enables children to remain living at home with regular overnight support at the home of their foster carer. The work of this service was recognised with a nomination as finalist in the 'Children and Young People' category at this year's SSSC Care Accolades, which award Scotland's outstanding social service projects and services.

As well as this nomination, Cornerstone won this year's SSSC Chair's Award, which commends organisations that demonstrate exceptional achievement and excellence across all services.

The fostering service was further commended this year internally by winning the Going for Gold Cornerstone award, which recognises top performing services through their internal Quality Appraisal process.

Jacqueline Lamb, who has been fostering Toni for almost a year, is well aware of the positive impact of fostering for both the children and families supported. She said, "We are here to support Toni's mum and give her a break. I love it when Toni comes to visit; I take her swimming and love to see the smile on her face from her achievements."

Cornerstone's Children Services Manager Susan Lorimer said, "We are delighted that our fostering service has received such positive recognition, it is testament to the ongoing commitment of the team in making a real difference to the lives of the children and families that we support."

Christmas greetings from children and young people

We are delighted to announce that 5 year old McKenzie's image of Rudolf the Reindeer was voted by our judges to be the winning image.

Congratulations to all the fantastic artists who submitted their festive images for our e-card competition. We were so pleased to receive all the artwork before Christmas which added some festive magic to our office in Glasgow!

Well done McKenzie and all the young people who submitted their pictures.

Remember, we love seeing your artwork and hearing your stories so please share your pictures, poems etc with us and we may publish them in the newsletter too!



JoJo (10)



Iona (7)



Jamie Lee (10)



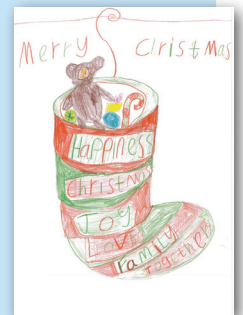
Hayley (7)



McKenzie (5)



Steven (7)



Lucy (7)



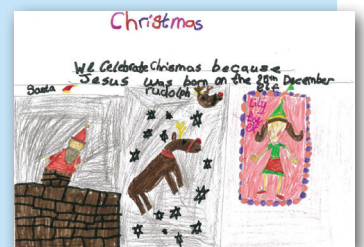
Vick (13)



Steven (7)



Dylan (13)



Murron (8)

Hi everyone,

I always take great pleasure in receiving the winter edition of *Fostering in Scotland*. It heralds lighter nights, plus end of year reports for funders, which are submitted between this edition and the next one. It allows us to take stock of the many achievements over the past year and to set objectives for the next year.

As reported elsewhere in the newsletter, the Fostering Network has campaigned relentlessly for placement limits and to increasing the age of leaving care to 21. Both of these have been achieved and it is thanks to the unwavering commitment from foster carers throughout Scotland who have supported these changes that the Fostering Network has been able to so effectively be your voice! I am keen to hear of any young person who, along with their foster carer, has asked to remain in placement beyond age 18,

and to know what the response of the local authority has been.

The next 12 months bring new challenges and delights. We have submitted various funding applications, and in our next newsletter I hope I can share the outcomes of these. To assist with these developments, we will be establishing a young person's steering group, and I welcome hearing from any young people who would be keen to be involved. Just text me on 07590 928 476 or email me directly, sara.lurie@fostering.net or pick up the phone and call the office on 0141 204 1400!

It is an exciting time for young people who will be 16 by September, as they will be able to vote in the referendum and have their vote counted! Please make sure all young people in your home know that you have registered them and that they know what to do if they move on. We would love to share their views on how they will vote and why! Please ask them to get in touch with me.

It is always a pleasure to share good news, and I am overjoyed to report that Sarah McEnhill and her husband Gary are expecting their first baby in April! We are so excited for them and love watching Sarah grow!

As many readers know, our small staff team has had three weddings in the past two years, and I am delighted to report a fourth wedding is approaching. Our recently appointed Fosterline Scotland worker, Mirren Vanko, will be getting married in August and we congratulate her and Martin!

To be kept up to date with the Fostering Network news as it happens, I suggest you follow me on [Twitter@tfn_sara](https://twitter.com/tfn_sara) and 'like' our facebook page!

Until our next newsletter,

Sara Lurie
Director

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For queries relating to membership, or how to access the members' area of the website.
t 020 7620 6400

For help with membership queries
e membership@fostering.net

Legal and stress helpline
24 hours, 365 days a year

Your first point of call if an allegation arises. Queries are answered by fully qualified experts with years of experience helping our members. Members are free to raise any legal query, not just relating to foster care.
t 0845 013 5004

Publications & Resources

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