

# Fostering

Promoting Foster  
Care in Scotland

Issue 6 Spring 2003

# in Scotland



## Winners All

**Edinburgh City Council** launched their recent foster care campaign by holding a competition for all school children in the city. The task was to write either a poem or short story using the themes 'Welcome Home' and 'Fostering.' The prize for best entry in three age groups was a bedroom 'makeover.'

The Fostering Network was pleased to be associated with this and to publish one of the winning entries in the 5-7 age group :

*A little girl in the street she had no  
mum and dad  
She had no cosy place to go and this  
was very sad.  
When I come home I love to see  
My cheeky cat, my green bird – and  
my grouchy mum and dad!  
I would like to see the girl have a  
warm welcome of her own  
With friendly faces in the window of a  
place called home.  
Oriana Tait Jones, Age six*

## In this magazine

- Carers as relevant persons
- Attachment, trauma and resilience
- Sons and daughters of carers
- News and information items

We would welcome your contributions on any news, views, articles, ideas.  
Please send to Anne Fisher, The Fostering Network, 2nd floor, 227 Ingram Street, Glasgow G1 1DA  
t 0141 204 1400 e [anne.fisher@fostercare-scotland.org.uk](mailto:anne.fisher@fostercare-scotland.org.uk)



## Stop Press Tax Changes

As the Magazine went to press the Government announced its decision to introduce new and consistent rules for foster carers as regards tax.

At present taxation is determined on the basis of agreements between fostering services and their local tax office.

The Fostering Network has been pressing the Inland Revenue to adopt a more consistent scheme, that is easy to use and reflects the true costs of caring.

In the announcement the Paymaster General has proposed an Income Tax Exemption Threshold below which carers will not be liable.

For Carers above this threshold they would be able to choose between calculating their profits in the same way as self-employed persons, or treating the amount by which their gross receipts exceed the threshold as their taxable profit.

The proposed threshold will consist of two elements. Firstly, a fixed amount which for 2003/2004 will be £10,000 per year. Secondly, an additional amount per fostered child, which for 2003/2004 will be equivalent to £200 per week for a child under eleven, and £250 per week for a child aged eleven or over.

Once we have more details we will be consulting with Carers about these proposals, to ensure they are acceptable.

## Welcome

We are pleased to welcome the following into individual membership, purchased for them by their agency or local authority:

Barnardo's carers, Family Placement, Edinburgh.  
Caroline House Trust carers  
Dundee City carers  
City of Aberdeen carers  
North Ayrshire carers  
Quarriers Breakaway Project carers

We also welcome into corporate membership:

Aberlour Trust  
Care Partners, Kilmarnock

## Letter from Anne Black

### Dear Members

2003 has begun as busily as the year just passed. I hope that you are all surviving the winter and beginning to enjoy the lovely spring-like weather. I keep hoping that the heavy snowstorms from North America do not land on Scotland this year!

The Scottish Committee decided that it should produce an annual report as well as a forward plan for 2003. The issues that the committee felt were important to progress are very much the issues that we covered in the paper *Trying to meet the standards*. To achieve them will take a lot of work and I hope that you feel that they are the key issues. Let us know if you have others or feel that the ones we have gathered from meeting carers across Scotland need to be changed.

The Fostering Network has published its yearly report on the level of allowances paid by councils across the UK. This caused a lot of criticism as it could be interpreted as a 'league table' of good and not so good councils. The goal of the campaign is to convince central government that they need to fund councils adequately so that carers receive allowances that do reflect what it costs to care for a foster child. It did not show the fees and rewards that some councils pay in addition to the allowances but the Fostering Network believes we need to get the allowance level correct and not rely on other discretionary payments to help carers to meet the costs of care.

You can make your points of view on this to the people who will be seeking election to the Scottish Parliament later this year!

The delayed AGM of the Fostering Network took place in London on 26 February and there are a few changes to the Board of Trustees. Tom Judge – a Glasgow carer – has been elected to the Board, so that is good news. Mike Jarman, who was the Chair of the Board, has had to retire as his wife has had a serious accident and her recovery will be slow. We all wish Mike and his wife well.

I know that the new Board may have different ideas about some of the work priorities of the Fostering Network but the key issue needs to be to continue to help young people in foster care to thrive and to work with all the partners to achieve this.

Thank you to those carers and social workers who did send in a proxy vote, I am afraid that from the 1400 letters that we sent to let you know what was happening at the AGM only about 15 people did register a proxy vote. A disappointing result! But I know that elections and AGMs do not excite much interest!

Looking ahead, we are hoping to meet with some of the staff from Cathy Jamieson's office to continue the debate we started with Cathy about the needs of the foster care service.

We have also planned a membership meeting in Perth on 1 May to look at protecting young people, carers and councils. All the focus groups across Scotland have said that a major anxiety for carers, young people and fostering staff is dealing with allegations. I hope that you will come to take part in the discussions, share good practice and look at ways of improving practice when it falls short of good.

I look forward to meeting you during the year. Do let us have your views on topics that are in this newsletter – it belongs to everyone!

Best wishes,

Anne Black

## Foster carers as relevant persons at children's hearings

These notes have been taken from the presentation by Philip Jackson, Head of Casework, Scottish Children's Reporters Administration at Fostering Network's Membership Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2002 in Glasgow.

Since 8 February 2002 foster carers have been treated as 'relevant persons' for the purposes of the Children's Hearing system, in most circumstances.

This is as a direct result of a Court of Session appeal judgement *S vs N* issued on that day.

'Relevant persons' is a legal definition in the Children Act (Scotland) 1995 and can include relatives, friends and now foster carers. (Section 93(2) 'Any person who appears to be a person who ordinarily (and other than by reason only of his employment) has charge of, or control over, the child').

The relevant person's rights and responsibilities include;

### Before the Hearing

To be notified of any business meeting, to make comments to be passed to the meeting and to be notified of the decision.

To receive formal notification of the Hearing and all the reports that panel members are given, in the same time scale.

### At the Hearing

Has the right and duty to attend each Hearing, except business meetings.

Has the right to submit a written report to the Hearing.

Has the right to accept or reject grounds of referral.

Has the right to take a representative to the Hearing (e.g. a friend, solicitor etc).

Has the right to participate in the Hearing.

Has the right to be told of the decision, the reasons and the right of appeal.

### After the Hearing

Has the right to receive in writing the supervision requirement, the reasons and be told of the right of appeal.

Has the right of appeal, which must be done within 3 weeks.

Has the right to request a review hearing 3 months after the last decision.

### At Court

Has the right to attend a proof hearing On appeal has the right to be heard by a Sheriff.

Has the right to appeal to a higher court.

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) has issued Guidance to Reporters on how the court decision should be put into day to day practice.

The Guidance says that foster carers who have a child living with them as a result of a supervision requirement should be treated as relevant persons when the situation has become 'a settled factual arrangement'. Each case will be looked at on its own circumstances.

In practice, if a child has been placed with foster carers on a supervision requirement, they will normally be treated as relevant persons at the next review hearing, unless that takes place only a few weeks later, when the arrangement could be said not yet to be a settled one.

If there is an emergency transfer Hearing the foster carer will normally be treated as a relevant person, unless the supervision requirement is very recent.

If a child is with carers on a warrant they will not normally be relevant persons.

When a supervision requirement is changed and the child no longer lives with the carers they cease to be relevant persons. However, they will have a right of appeal as relevant persons against the decision to move the child, but not to be invited to subsequent Hearings, unless they arise from the appeal against the decision or the child is returned to them.

Being a relevant person does not give parental rights and responsibilities as defined in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, Sections 1 and 2. While many

relevant persons do have rights and responsibilities these are not given just by being considered a relevant person.

### Issues for carers

Carers who are relevant persons should be treated exactly the same as all other relevant persons. However, exercising their rights may lead to difficulties with other relevant persons e.g. parents.

When carers are relevant persons they may choose to do something the authority does not agree with, such as appeal against a decision or call a review. They are entitled as relevant persons to do this but it may lead to difficult working relationships.

If foster carers wish to appeal against a Panel decision it is not clear who will fund this appeal. If the local authority are in agreement with the decision to appeal can they fund the foster carer and how does this fit in with their responsibilities to other relevant persons e.g. parents

As relevant persons carers now have a duty to attend hearings and could suffer legal penalties if they do not. However, in practice hearings would not normally be cancelled just because a relevant person does not attend, unless that person is crucial to the discussion and decision. Often only one carer can attend because of other commitments and this should not cause problems. However, carers need to be aware of the legal responsibilities being a relevant person places on them.

Foster carers will now receive additional material e.g. Safeguarders reports which should be treated with the same confidentiality as other information related to the Hearing.

If a foster carer is not recognised as a relevant person and feels they should be, they should initially discuss this with the Reporter. A business meeting or the chair of the Panel can decide that a foster carer should be recognised as a relevant person.



# Sons and daughters of foster carers

In 1993 Diana Part carried out a postal survey of foster carers' children in what was then the Tayside Region (re-published in BAAF Publications' *Shaping childcare practice in Scotland*). Her conclusions were:

**The overall impression** is that most children and young people enjoy, or at most tolerate, being part of a foster family. It can give them a greater appreciation of their own family, and an awareness of the difficulties that some of their peers have to live with. Several commented on the greater maturity they thought they had because of the experiences the family had with fostering. They can undoubtedly gain a great deal.

Fostering is not without difficulties for the birth children of the foster families, however, and they can pay a price. Some of the children had to share bedrooms and missed their privacy. Possessions were tampered with, if not broken or stolen.

The conclusion seems to be that fostering is difficult, that fostered children can be annoying and intrusive and that the nuclear family is never the same again. Despite this almost all the children of the foster carers said they enjoyed being part of a family that fostered. Their views are important and should be heeded – to help families continue through and after the difficult times.

In October 2002, at the Fostering Network's membership meeting in Edinburgh, foster carers discussed the effect they felt fostering had on their children and what services should be available specifically for sons and daughters.

There has been considerable development since 1993 in including sons and daughters in the assessment process and seeing fostering as a whole family activity. However, many of the issues identified then were similar to those in the survey.

Themes identified included how to:

- prepare yourself and your children for the fostering task before you do it
- help children cope with issues, such as abuse and self-harming behaviour
- give them information about issues you would prefer them not to know about, or at an earlier age than you would have liked
- assess the impact of fostering on carers' children, bearing in mind the age of children in placement, their place in the family structure, having to share parental attention and the behaviour of foster children who may take all attention – thus making sons and daughters feel left out
- deal with mixed feelings, for instance that they should be responsible for foster children when they are also unhappy about being linked with them at school – especially when their behaviour is unacceptable

- address concerns about lack of privacy and their own possessions being damaged/ stolen/destroyed, particularly if sharing a bedroom with a foster child.

Other issues included:

- a need for recognition that foster carers' children, including adult children, will get upset when they witness violence towards their parents
- the difficulty faced in ending placements even when it is having a detrimental effect on the family – many carers feel that they have failed and their children may share this feeling
- a need to recognise that relationship/ placement endings have an effect on the children of foster carers – they are affected by separation, loss and attachment issues as much as looked after children.

Ways of tackling these issues suggested were:

- More support for the sons and daughters of foster carers – a 'buddy' system offering someone to speak to in times of crisis.

Some carers had experience of their children going to groups for sons and daughters and felt these were helpful, but it was agreed that the support provided needed to be individualised – it will be different with different children.

- More support for foster carers with difficult placements – regular respite built in to the care package was seen as necessary to avoid breakdown.
- Respite for all foster carers to allow them time as a family.
- Better recognition and sensitivity by social workers of the impact of difficult placements and placement endings on the children of foster carers.
- A recognition by the agency that foster carers' children are part of the caring partnership and need to be involved in discussions and decisions, but not asked to take responsibility for these.

On balance, foster carers felt their children had benefited from being part of the fostering experience, but that, as parents, they needed to be sensitive and aware of their own children's needs, as well as those of the foster children.

In the end foster carers would place the needs of their own children above those of the foster child, even if this might lead to placement breakdown, and they felt that the agency should recognise and accept this.

# Office administration



**Linda Curran**, Office Administrator for Scotland, has been with The Fostering Network since April 1999. She commenced employment with tFN when the premises were based at Melrose Street, Glasgow and subsequently moved to Ingram Street, Glasgow.

Linda came from a background of approximately 15 years in social work

administration, including a spell in Glasgow and latterly with North Lanarkshire Council.

Linda supervises core staff, including a clerical assistant and four project administrators for whom she shares some responsibilities with the Project Worker. The main functions of Linda's post consists of office management, finance procedures, budgetary controls, and personnel issues.

**Johanna McLauchlan**, Clerical Assistant, has been with the Fostering Network since April 1995. She previously worked for an insurance company.

Johanna assists the Office Administrator in her work, providing clerical and administrative support and dealing with publications orders. If you require any publications please contact her at the Glasgow office where she will be happy to help.

# Throughcare and aftercare

**The last year** has seen a number of important developments in terms of throughcare and aftercare services in Scotland, affecting young people aged 15 and over.

The publication of 'Still a Bairn', with research carried out by the University of York, illustrated that there is a wide variation across Scotland in the level of support received by young people leaving care. It acknowledged that many local authorities are in a process of developing their services, but it also highlighted that many young people are not receiving the full level of support that they are entitled to under the Children (Scotland) Act. A series of detailed recommendations were made.

September 2002 saw the launch of the working group report on throughcare and aftercare in Scotland. This report outlines proposals on how support services for young people leaving residential and foster care in Scotland should be developed. The working group report sets out issues to be addressed during the next 18 months. The proposed date for the implementation of all the new duties and arrangements is 1 April 2004.

A consultation period is currently ongoing in terms of the recommendations made in the report.

All of the above can be downloaded from the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum's web-site ([www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk](http://www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk)). This site also contains a discussion forum for anyone interested in the whole area of how accommodated young people are supported to make the transition into adulthood.

# Focus groups

**The Focus Group** Structure continues to operate across Scotland. Its unique approach to taking forward the issues of foster care continues to attract carers, social workers and children's rights officers. We have held focus groups in Aberdeen, Perth, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The main topics emerging from all focus groups relate to the impact on placements of poor allowances, a lack of resources in terms of social workers, training and fees. However its not been all bad news, as many authorities have been able to share with others what their agency or local authority, are trying to do in the way of innovative approaches to meeting the challenges faced by the foster care service in Scotland. Both carers and social workers have been able to share in practice and information with others and this 'networking' has been felt by everyone to be extremely beneficial.

The Focus Group Structure enabled the Fostering Network to submit two reports to the Scottish Executive entitled 'Status Recognition and Reward' and 'Trying to Meet the Standards', both these reports called for urgent action in respect of supporting foster care in Scotland. Both reports can be viewed on our web-site at [www.fostercare-scotland.org.uk](http://www.fostercare-scotland.org.uk) Both reports have been debated in parliament and have helped raise the profile of the foster care service in Scotland with our politicians.

The focus groups have been supported by the Development Project in Scotland. We want your help to look at how we take forward the project over the next three years. If you are interested we are holding a conference in Perth in June of this year to gather ideas as to what are the issues we require to take forward and how we should go about this. If you are interested please contact me at the office in Glasgow.

Invitations will be going out to a number of participants of all the focus groups as well as family placement teams and children's teams across Scotland. If you don't receive an invitation, please get in touch.

We have received a number of enquiries regarding foster carer associations. If you attend or have experience of one we would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact Anne Fisher on: t 0141 204 1400.



### Monday 27 January

**Morning** Meeting at school regarding exam arrangements – invigilating in a fortnight.

**Afternoon** Family placement worker visited to discuss placements, complete paperwork and identify any training in the future. Arranged to see him at local support group meeting next month.

**Evening** Early start tomorrow so spent evening confirming transport arrangements, meals and others' responsibilities while away!

### Tuesday 28 January

**Morning** Alarm goes off at 4.30 am, very cold and frosty. Planned to get bus but luckily managed to get lift from neighbour, so enjoyed the comforts of a warm car, conversation and a direct journey to station. Good start to the day!

**Afternoon** – Attended Scottish Committee Meeting, the first of 2003. Updated about the summer school, methods of restraint and various local authority fee structures for foster carers. Discussed membership project and focus groups, making me reflect on my role when funding comes to an end this year. Have greatly enjoyed the experience of meeting the other parties involved in fostering from the various local authorities in the north of Scotland.

**Evening** Arrived home at 9.30 pm. Long day but it allowed plenty of time for reflection and relaxation!

### Wednesday 29 January

**Morning** Took bus into town for long overdue dental appointment. Needed treatment on what felt like nearly every tooth in my mouth!

**Afternoon** Spent afternoon confirming arrangements for visit next day and rescheduling for early next week, allowing me to leave for Glasgow in the morning to attend course.



**Evening** As going to be away for two nights and three days, had to plan what seemed like a military campaign!

### Thursday 30 January

**Morning** Snowing heavily. Schools closed. Buses delayed due to accidents and atrocious conditions on the roads. Eventually reached station to discover no trains going south.

**Afternoon** Finally arrived in Glasgow at 3.45 pm. Couldn't believe difference in weather. No wonder they seemed surprised when I questioned if the course was still on.'

**Evening** Training went well and looking forward to day two of the course.

### Friday 31 January

**Morning** Office very quiet as staff training day. Photocopied handouts and prepared packs for course.

**Afternoon** Went out for lunch with staff. Heard funding may be available for summer school, hope so as so many people keep asking me 'when is the next summer school?'

**Evening** Stayed for second night with colleague and her family. It was like a short holiday, pampered, relaxed and felt totally at 'home.'

### Saturday 1 February

**Morning** Arrived in plenty time for course, or so we thought! Actually two buildings with the same name and we chose the wrong one. What's the expression – 'the best laid plans of mice and men... ???'

**Afternoon** After lunch, changed rooms due to noisy distracting fan. Course went well, shared many experiences in common with other carers. Great to feel you are not alone.

**Evening** Collected former placement for respite visit. Went out for meal together and home to routine of bath, bedtime story etc. Very reassuring and positive experience for all.

### Sunday 2 February

**Morning** Contact visit was delayed – newly taxed family car stopped, never to start again! Alternative transport provided by daughter-in-law living in next town. Road clear but could see remains of huge drifts still piled high at side of road.

**Afternoon** Daughter-in-law drove us into town to meet our elder son who had borrowed the Peugeot. After exchange of driver, quick dash round Costco which was closing in 15 minutes, managed to get some essentials.

**Evening** Just relaxed and reflected on past week. Things didn't go according to plan, but seldom do as a carer! However, difficulties with transport and subsequent cancelling and rearranging of appointments fade into insignificance when you have support from family, friends and colleagues, and the opportunity to meet others, share information and enjoy new and different experiences. It was a good week.

### PS Monday 3 February

Snowing again, roads travelled yesterday now blocked. Schools closed. Had to cancel rearranged meeting with family. So begins another week!

# Reviews

## Attachment trauma and resilience: therapeutic caring for children

Kate Cairns

Published by BAAF

**Carers in particular, but also social workers interested in family placement, should not be put off by the rather technical title of this excellent book.**

**Kate Cairns** is a social worker who bases her ideas about family placement and 'therapeutic re-parenting' on 25 years of hard-won experience as a carer who has looked after 12 children, all on a long term basis.

The book is divided into two parts. Part one describes the concepts of attachment trauma and resilience by relating them to her birth children, and the children she and her husband have fostered. In contrasting the early life experiences of their birth children with the early life experiences of their foster children, Kate Cairns vividly and painfully describes the gulf which exists between the life we would all want for our children and the lives lived by many of our accommodated children. Some of these descriptions are very hard to read but will strike chords with any carer who has lived with 'children and young people who wrestle so bravely with the giants of pain and despair.'

Part two links the theories behind attachment trauma and resilience to the daily living with hurt children by asking about each concept: 'what happens'; 'what do we observe'; 'what can we do?' Kate Cairns' wealth of knowledge and experience means that

each chapter is crammed full of ideas, links and suggestions.

In chapter six, entitled 'Attachment – formative experience' – Cairns pulls together the emerging themes and theories about attachment and explains, in a very accessible way, the latest research into neurophysiology and brain development. She states that 'children whose environment is hostile or lacking in nurture end up thinking with a very different brain.' She outlines four stages of brain development in babies and infants which have critical implications for many of our accommodated children and their carers. She highlights the effects of stress on brain development: 'stress is toxic to the brain, causing profound changes in brain structure and function in the interest of survival.' She describes some of the behavioural patterns which can develop as a result of insecure attachment and, most importantly, she devotes a large part of this chapter to discussing 'what can we do' to begin to re-parent hurt and damaged children. She says carers need 'commitment, personal support, professional supervision and a care-team around the child. Carers need to be experienced by the child as being SAFE – i.e. secure, attentive, friendly and empathic. No mean feat when we consider some of the challenges carers have to face.

Chapter seven discusses 'Trauma – transformative experience,' describing the developing brain and body response to stress and trauma and drawing on the disorder.

She describes trauma as follows: First there must be an external event in which the person is confronted with actual or realistically perceived threat to the life or personal integrity of self or others. Then there must be a response to the event which includes fear, helplessness or horror.

For most of the children in our care this must be a fairly accurate description of many of their life experiences.

This chapter then describes the most common behaviour patterns seen in children who have experienced trauma – hyperarousal (permanent red alert), numbing (cutting out all distractions), intrusion (living in the past), avoidance (how to feel safe on the Titanic) – and how to identify these behaviour patterns. And again, most importantly, the chapter ends with 'What can we do?' and sets out ways in which carers and professionals can begin to help.

Chapter eight, on resilience (affirmative experience), is an attempt to understand why and how some children appear to survive in the face of overwhelming difficulties. In discussing the development of true self-esteem Cairns says: children who have been able to develop insight and independence are in a good position to be able to develop form a coherent and balanced narrative of their lives. This will provide them with a continuous sense of self will with a sense of personal identity and with the basis for self-esteem.

Many carers and workers will know individual young people who have indeed, with years of committed care, managed to achieve a true sense of self-esteem.'

For many hundreds of carers and workers who are struggling with the enormity of the task ahead of them in their care of hurt and angry children, this book offers a great deal that is helpful. Kate Cairns manages to combine an authoritative summary of the theories of attachment trauma and resilience with a real understanding of the impact of living with children and young people 'who wrestle so bravely with the giants of pain and despair.'

## Equality in diversity playback

**A new training resource** for Social Services and Health Care staff has recently been published by an organisation called Playback. This organisation has already produced a video resource pack for teachers to use in classrooms to help young people to be aware of diversity and inclusion. The pack recently published has at its core a video made with young people from Playback, all of whom have physical disabilities. In it they talk

about their hopes, their dreams and how they want to be just the same as other young people.

A series of training sessions are included in the pack and several of these are particularly geared to the needs of foster carers. The pack is flexible and can be used for single discussion sessions or for a series of training events over a period of time. The video script is transcribed in the pack and many of the quotes are ideal

starters for discussion sessions.

There are some very honest opinions expressed about the health and social work services by the young people and their parents. They also say what they would ideally like from professionals.

More information can be obtained from Playback, 489 Lanark Road, Edinburgh, EH14 5DQ

e: [lizhawksford@playback.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:lizhawksford@playback.fsbusiness.co.uk)  
Web: [www.playbacktrust.org](http://www.playbacktrust.org)



## Empowering children and young people

One young person's experience of attending her review :

*I opened my mouth, I spoke  
Everyone stopped and stared  
'Hold On, Hold On!'  
was the chairperson's greeting,  
'I presume Adults are running this meeting.  
You're just a child, we know what's best  
I am sure we'll come to some agreement.'  
I felt like screaming, but what could be done?  
After all this system can't be beaten.  
I wasn't there, just an illusion.  
Talking to the walls, still nobody noticed.  
Before I knew it, my life had been planned  
What's the point of me in this meeting?  
I began to rebel, I wanted to be heard  
But to them I was a problem,  
a reject example of a human being.  
I wanted someone to come through the door  
with listening ears.  
Someone who understood my fears.  
The things that should have been said  
by this reject human being,  
are really quite full of meaning.*

### Chrissie Elms-Bennett

Reprinted from *Empowering Children & Young People*, published by Save the Children

## Protecting children, carers and agencies

**Complaints and allegations** are now a fact of life for foster carers. With the placement of children with increasingly complex needs and challenging behaviour, and the requirement for contact with parents, it is likely that most foster carers will have a complaint made against them during their fostering career and a smaller number will have an allegation of abuse.

How complaints and allegations are dealt with is a subject which touches on a number of crucial areas in child care, e.g. child protection, fairness to foster carers, retention of foster carers and placement stability for children.

The Fostering Network has pioneered the concept of 'Safer Caring', enabling foster carers and their agency to work together to develop an awareness of the issues and possible strategies to safeguard all those in the foster home -- the foster carers, their own children and the child or young person who is fostered.

The Fostering Network's membership meeting on 1 May at Dewars Rinks in Perth (entitled 'Protecting children, carers and agencies') will develop these issues and also look at how agencies can develop policies that are sensitive to the needs of foster carers as well as protecting the rights of children. This is particularly relevant since the Scottish Executive have recently published a review of child protection services.

**The Fostering Network's** training section plan to undertake the following open courses in the period between now and June:

- *Managing conflict* - Monday 12 May 2003 - Edinburgh
- *Safer caring* - Wednesday 4 June 2003 - Glasgow

The selection of open courses to date have been very successful, especially the new ones - Communicating with children through play and Managing conflict. Due to this success it is hoped to undertake similar open training courses in the autumn.

## Next edition

Caring for children with special needs/disabilities

Listening to Young People: Foster Care The Way Forward.  
Report on the Young People's Project conference held on 11 April 2003.

## ADVANCE NOTICE

The Fostering Network Scottish Membership Meeting

**DATE:** Thursday 1 May 2003

**VENUE:** Dewars Rinks, Glover Street, Perth, PH2 0TH

**TIME:** 10.00 am - 3.00 pm

(A buffet lunch will be provided)

**TOPIC:** Protecting Children, Carers & Agencies

**The meeting will feature a variety of presentations and workshops**

