

Fostering

Promoting foster
care in Scotland

Issue 14 Summer 2006

in Scotland

the fostering network
helping children to thrive



Inverclyde launch new recruitment material



At a civic reception hosted by Provost Rebecchi, Inverclyde Council launched their brand new recruitment material that has been designed by children in Inverclyde.

The Council held a poster competition in the local schools looking for a number of designs they could use that would form the backdrop to their new material.

The family placement team have come up with flyers, postcards, placemats, as well as explanatory leaflets for fostering as well as adoption. Several designs are being used, all based on posters submitted by children in Inverclyde. The winners attended the Municipal Buildings and met with the Provost and were given a guided tour of the magnificent building.

As part of their ongoing consultation process with children and young people accommodated in Inverclyde, the authority recently held a one-day conference to look at some of the emerging issues.

The conference entitled *Talkback* was attended by a large number of individuals involved in delivering services across a wide range of agencies, and included input from the young people.

We would welcome your contributions on any news, views, articles or ideas.
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Leafy suburbs foster challenge

East Renfrewshire Council recently launched its recruitment drive to get more foster carers for children and teenagers in the area. The council is challenging residents in what's known as the 'leafy suburbs' to find out if they're 'cut out to foster' and Councillor Collins challenged families and individuals to think seriously about fostering.

Residents who think they're cut out to foster can contact the Council t 0141 577 8303

e fosteringplus@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk
or they can log on to the dedicated web site
www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/fosteringplus



The Fostering Network Conference 2006

Private Lives, Public Care: foster families under the spotlight

**Friday 13 October
and Saturday 14 October**

The Hilton Hotel, Glasgow

Foster care enables children and young people to experience the benefits of a stable home and family life. But foster families live in an unusual space: a place where the private world of the family meets the public world of the care system.

Private Lives, Public Care will explore issues and perspectives from the public and private

worlds and the ways in which they meet and challenge each other.

Keynote speakers include Jane Aldgate from the Open University and June Thoburn from the University of East Anglia.

The conference will also include workshops and an interactive debate on whether foster carers should be able to smoke at home.

For further information, or to register your interest, e conference@fostering.net

Dear Members,

I hope that you have all survived what has seemed a very long winter and that you are now looking forward to summer!

There has, as usual, been a lot going on for the Fostering Network both in Scotland and across the UK. We have finished the series of focus groups and membership meetings, and are planning the rest of the year's events.

The *Steps forward* agenda has been very well received and brings together what members across Scotland see as key issues for children looked-after in foster care, for carers and for agencies. The topics are very similar to those across the UK though in some respects Scotland has lagged behind the rest of the UK. The absence of placement limits is probably the most significant difference in Scotland and we are keen to continue to press for its introduction.

The Adoption and Children (Scotland) Bill has been published and Bryan did a lot of work to try to ensure that some of the key changes needed to make foster care stronger were included. Unfortunately there is only one mention of fostering in the whole bill relating to the power for the Executive to set rates of allowances.

Bryan, Lynne Isaacs, foster carer from Angus, and I appeared to give evidence to the Education Committee as they discussed the way the Bill should be introduced. We made it very clear that foster care services across Scotland were working very hard, were delivering a high quality of care but that they were stretched to their limits. We asked them to ensure that more attention is given to fostering in the final legislation. We have sent them reports and proposals for additions and amendments so we hope some of those may be put into the new legislation. We were keen to understand why some of the firm commitments made earlier by the Executive have been lost as they would have helped to strengthen the foster care service. I do not feel that we got answers.

We have had a meeting of the Scottish Committee where we had a review of its role and structure. It has struggled a bit over the years from a lack of a clear remit. With the new structure of advisory carers in place through the focus groups it seems a good time to look at what the Committee's role should be. We will give you more details after the next Committee meeting in August. From discussions that Bryan and I have had so far the Committee needs people who will be active in promoting the work of the Fostering

Network in Scotland and who will be prepared to get involved in fundraising for the work of the Fostering Network.

The grant from the Scottish Executive does not cover more than some of the basic costs of the Director and the Administrator and all the other posts have to be funded by grants and trusts or, in the case of training, by earning the money to cover their salaries. We face a hard year in terms of finance and some hard decisions will have to be made about services unless we can find some extra money from grants and trusts.

At Board level we have been looking at the accounts for the year that is over and the budgets for the year that is ahead. We have also looked at what should be the policy and campaigning focus of the Fostering Network.

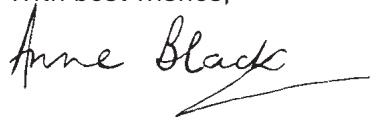
The UK Conference is being held in Glasgow this October, from Friday 13th October to Saturday 14th October at the Hilton Hotel, so I hope that some of our Scottish members will be able to come and give delegates from across the UK a Scottish welcome.

During the Conference the AGM takes place and the results of the elections to the Board are announced. This year there are 5 vacancies for carers on the Board so I hope that some of you will think seriously about being nominated. Being a Board member carries considerable responsibilities for the running of the work of the Fostering Network in close collaboration with the Chief Executive and the Director in Scotland and the other UK countries. It also offers an opportunity to be in on the debates about the direction of the work of the Fostering Network. If you do not feel that you could stand to become a Board member then do use your vote. It would be good to have a carer who can bring a Scottish perspective although on the Board we have to take a UK perspective as well.

Carol Feehan from Scotland retires from the Board. She has been an important part of governing the Fostering Network and my thanks to her for her time on the Board and for her links with the Scottish Committee.

I will look forward to meeting many of you at the various meetings across Scotland and also at the UK Conference.

With best wishes,



Chair, Scottish Committee, Summer 2006



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Young People's Advisory Groups

The Young People's project held advisory groups in Stirling, Edinburgh and Arbroath. These meetings are for young people with experience of foster care and provides the opportunity to discuss foster care - what is good and what needs to improve for young people who are in foster care and the sons and daughters of foster carers.

So, if you are 12 plus, have an opinion BIG or small about fostering then we would like to meet you.



These two films are written and produced by young people involved with the project and are based on their real-life experiences. Featuring actors and aimed at social workers and trainers, the films contain hard-hitting messages about the impact fostering has on the lives of young people involved in foster care, and the support they require now and in the future. One film highlights the needs and issues for young people in foster care and the other highlights the needs and issues of the sons and daughters of foster carers.

Available on video, each film costs £25 incl. p&p. For further information and to purchase the films please contact Alison Boswell, Young People's project worker
e alison.boswell@fostering.net
t 0141 204 1400



Update on Young People's project

By Dawn, daughter of foster carers

The past months have seen the Young People's project venturing to Glasgow Caledonian University and to Crieff Hydro Hotel. Both destinations were a great opportunity for us to show various people the *Forgotten Voices* films.

Firstly, Alison and I attended Crieff Hydro Hotel where the Association of Directors of Social Work Conference was being held. We were given a fringe event which slotted in bang on lunch time, unfortunately for us this meant that most people in attendance would rather have food than sit in on a fringe, but we never gave up hope, and eventually managed to show the film to nine people. Which isn't bad considering each of the nine people took back the information they had seen in the films to their agencies providing them with the information, now we have nine different agencies in Scotland with a little bit more information on the young peoples needs and issues.

We also received a great response from our postcards, which were handed out at the event, with the people who watched the films commenting on them by writing a description on the post cards, which will definitely come in handy for future reference.

We both had the opportunity to sit in on a presentation by John Humphreys, which was very interesting. The day went really well, and I hope everyone who viewed the films was inspired to kick start change in their areas.

The next destination was Glasgow Caledonian University, where we presented the films to students, lecturers, foster carers, and social workers. Alison spoke about the Fostering Network and its main purpose regarding the Young People's project and I spoke about my experience of foster care and what I felt about the films.

Alison and I then introduced the films separately and explained a little about them. After the viewing of the films we handed out postcards, everyone again took the time to write a comment about the films on them. We then had a short discussion on the films and I was quite surprised to hear that the sons and daughters film was the one most people commented on. The main reason being they hadn't really thought about the feelings of birth children, as the children in care were their main priority. People were surprised at how informative the films were and they seemed to make an impact on peoples thoughts.

I hope that we can continue to publicise our films, as they seem to be making a big impact on all those who view them, with the more publicity we receive via the films the more chance we have of actually implementing change regarding our needs and issues raised.

The Young People's project would like to thank Mr and Mrs Rowley, Bridge of Allan, the Hugh Fraser Trust and Sylvia Aitken Trust for their recent donations.

Thanks also to Janice West and Dawn for their support of the project

Social Work student gets involved with Young People's project

Maureen Gillies, Social Work Student from Glasgow Caledonian University initially became involved with the Young Person's project through partnership working between the Fostering Network and Families for Children department in Glasgow. Maureen linked in with Alison Boswell, project worker, on developing a young women's workshop to coincide with International Women's Day and recruiting young women who would like to participate in the event, and tells us about the event.

'The theme of the event was *Taking care of ourselves* and was aimed at young women aged 14+ who were in foster care. The event included the screening of the video *Forgotten Voices* after which there was a small discussion followed by taster sessions of salsa, belly dancing, street dancing, reiki and beauty therapy treatments.

'The evening was a great opportunity for me to gain a wealth of knowledge from the young women on their experiences of foster care, placement moves and how this has impacted upon their lives. This was extremely inspiring and enabled me to appreciate more comprehensively the positives and negatives of foster care and the overall stigma and disadvantage attached to children and young people accommodated by local authorities. A significant learning point for me was acknowledging the value of themed workshops to deliver important messages and information while creating a welcoming and fun environment to facilitate this.

'Overall I feel partnership working with Alison Boswell and meeting the young women has afforded me the opportunity to lay solid foundations for expanding my value base, knowledge on foster care and surrounding issues all of which I hope will support me move forward in my future practice.

'I would like to take this opportunity to thank the young women for sharing their experiences, similarly Alison Boswell for providing the opportunity to link with herself and develop the workshop as the experience gained was invaluable.'

Maureen has now qualified as a social worker from Glasgow Caledonian University and we wish her success in her social work career.

The Young People's project would like to thank Maureen for her contribution, Development and Regeneration Services at Glasgow City Council for their grant and the YMCA (City-Centre) for the use of premises as without this support we would not have been able to hold this event.

Children learn about fostering

Children in Primary 3/4 at Knightswood Primary School in Glasgow held an art exhibition as part of their enterprise project on the topic of Families.

As part of the project the children learned about the diversity of families and this included families who foster.

The art exhibition raised 65 pounds and the children donated this to the Young People's project.

A big thank-you to Anne Laughlin, class teacher, and all the children of Primary 3/4.



screened at Glasgow Caledonian University

By Janice West, Senior Lecturer, Social Work Division, Glasgow Caledonian University

On Wednesday 17 May, the Social Work Division of Glasgow Caledonian University hosted a screening of the *Forgotten Voices* videos as part of *foster care fortnight*. The screening was attended by an invited audience of academic staff, students and practice teachers from across the West of Scotland. The reasons for the University's involvement were twofold. Firstly, Alison Boswell, the project worker of the Young People's Project at the Fostering Network Scotland, is a GCU social work graduate. Also, through the technical support available at the University, it has been possible to make the videos available to view from the Fostering Network website although they are actually held on one of the streaming servers at Spoken Word Services.

Dr. Tim Kelly, Head of Division of Social Work, introduced the event and Alison Boswell and Dawn Meechan, a young person from the project, explained the history and development of the video material. During the discussion following the viewing, participants spoke of the powerful message being delivered by these young people and discussed ways of attempting to ensure that it remains high on the political agenda.

It was particularly interesting to hear the views expressed by current social work students, many of whom were hearing the message of the videos for the first time. This highlighted the need for greater involvement of service user groups in the design and delivery of social work education and it is hoped that this event will be the first of many fruitful collaborations between the Fostering Network Scotland and Glasgow Caledonian University.

Training updates for Scotland

A few places are still available for the following popular courses:

The Skills to Foster Leaders course

Three-day course
29, 30 & 31 August 2006
Glasgow

Men in Foster Care

One-day course
30 September 2006
Glasgow

The Role of the Supervising Social Worker

Two-day course
6 & 7 September 2006

Competency Based Assessment of Foster Carers

One-day course
17 October 2006
Glasgow

Hurry to book while places still available! Our training team can also deliver tailor made courses to suit your requirements, and look forward to discussing your training needs with you. For further information on any training issues contact Joy Crawford **t** 0141 204 1400 **e** joy.crawford@fostering.net
More open courses coming soon...

Preventing and Managing Challenging Behaviour

The Skills to Foster Leaders Course
Role of the Supervising Social Worker
Men in Foster Care

Fostering Network Scotland membership meeting

Our next membership meeting will be held in Aberdeen on Saturday 30 September 2006. The day will examine the issues facing looked-after young people in education, and the role foster carers, teachers and professionals can play in ensuring that children and young people attain their best educationally.

The day will be of interest to foster carers, social workers, family placement workers, teachers and others wishing to expand and develop their knowledge in this area.

Booking is essential as places are limited. To book a place, or for further information, please contact Sarah **t** 0141 204 1400 **e** sarah.crangle@fostering.net

Membership meetings are free, and of interest to anyone with an involvement in fostering. A buffet lunch will be provided. Please advise at time of booking of any dietary or other requirements. There will be a crèche, however places for this are limited – please speak with Sarah about this at time of booking.

Perth carer receives SVQ award

Perth and Kinross Council foster carer Maxine Scott has successfully completed her SVQ level 3 *Caring for children and young people*. Maxine (with husband Andrew) has been a foster carer for 6 years. Maxine achieved her SVQ while caring for looked-after young people with complex needs as well as her own family.

Attention focus group representatives... advance notice... next focus group meeting

The next focus group meeting will take place on Thursday 9 November in Dewars Centre, Perth from 10am til 3pm.

This meeting will bring together all of the focus group representatives from throughout Scotland. The day will examine the issues raised

by the focus group structure to date, taking stock of what has happened, and what's next for fostering in Scotland.

With speakers and presentations, the day is sure to again generate some informative and lively

discussions. Buffet lunch and refreshments will be provided.

For further information and for focus group reps to confirm their availability on that date, contact Sarah Crangle **e** sarah.crangle@fostering.net **t** 0141 204 1400

Marathon man raises funds

Heroic runner, Richard Ginn, ran an incredible three marathons in support of the Fostering Network this year. His marathons took him to Paris, London and Edinburgh where he not only managed to



get round but also achieved great finish times.

Enduring the sweltering summer temperatures on June 11th, Richard completed the Edinburgh run in 3h11m 59s, and achieved an amazing 161st position of the 4200 runners taking part.

The race started in Princes Street, and took in many of the wonderful landmarks of the city including the Royal Yacht Britannia and Edinburgh Castle.

Richard is still collecting sponsorship from colleagues and well wishers in support of the Fostering Network and its work to improve the lives of children and young people throughout the UK who, for whatever reason, cannot live with their own families.

Run for the Fostering Network

Staff are limbering up to raise funds for the Fostering Network in Scotland, and are looking for more runners to join their team taking part in the 10k run.

The Great Scottish Run is being held in Glasgow on Sunday 3rd September, with a 10k race and a half marathon, both starting at George Square, running through the city and finishing in Glasgow Green.

To join the team, pledge your support, or for more information, contact Sarah Crangle **t** 0141 204 1400
e sarah.crangle@fostering.net

Aberdeenshire reception for foster carers

In May, Aberdeenshire Council hosted two civic receptions to present long service awards to foster carers.

Around 150 children and young people are looked-after by just over 100 foster carers, offering both short and long-term placements.

Across Aberdeenshire, over 30 families have been fostering for more than 10 years, and 10 families have more than 20 years experience.

Provost Raymond Bisset and Councillor Anne Robertson presented certificates of recognition, bouquets of flowers and bottles of champagne, thanking the carers for their commitment. Carers greatly appreciated the opportunity for a get-together, to enjoy a buffet supper, to chat, to reflect the changes that have occurred in fostering over the years and to celebrate with Aberdeenshire Council.

Training opportunities for young people

Training for trainers

for young people aged 16+
7, 8 & 9 August 2006
Stirling

Advocacy skills training for young people

for young people aged 12+
14 & 15 August
Stirling

The training has been designed for young people and is open to young people in foster care and the sons and daughters of foster carers. The training is free and reasonable transport costs will be met. For further information please contact Alison Boswell

Lottery funding for Fife Foster Care Association

Fife Foster Carers Association

received funding in the last round of Developing Communities grants. With an award of £55,946 the organisation will establish a central office base from which it will provide information, guidance, advocacy, support groups and training for foster carers in Fife.



Placement right through to the Head of Social Work and regularly attending meetings to discuss Carers' issues and find solutions to working practices. The association has representatives on the Fife fostering and adoption panel, East Fife children's forum, the corporate

Run by a committee of foster carers from the Fife area, an office has recently been secured with the funding from the Big Lottery Fund after the group had outgrown their dining room space due to the growing numbers of carers approaching the group for advice and support.

The group began by holding informal coffee mornings and speaking to foster carers in the Fife area. Taking advice from Glasgow Foster Carers Association and with help from CVS Fife and VONEF, after a slow start of trying to convince carers that they could have a say in plans and decisions the Social Work Services in Fife were making, the group pushed ahead.

The group's status has grown considerably in the last year. Building a very good relationship with Fife Council Social Work Service from Family

parenting group and Fife's allegations procedures committee. One of the most important things for the association is that foster carers in Fife don't feel isolated throughout the allegations process.

The group's activities continue, having run buses to Blair Drummond Safari Park two years running and at Christmas hosted a party for over 300 carers, their own children and the children and young people in foster care. It was a tremendous success and Fife social work department helped with the costs.

The members of the committee are currently busy getting the office ready for business, cleaning the premises and buying the equipment that will enable them to establish a reliable support service to foster carers in Fife.

Thanks to Julie Derosa, secretary Fife FCA

Falkirk carer speaking to Parliament

Focus representative from Falkirk and foster carer, Robert Monteith is looking for foster carers to join him in presenting to MSP's at Scottish Parliament on 14 September.

Robert is keen to bring together the main issues facing the foster care service in Scotland from discussions with other foster

carers, and invite MSP's along on September 14 to hear these issues, and have their awareness raised.

To get involved, or for more information contact Robert **t** 01324 712863
e dad_monty@blueyonder.co.uk