

# Fostering

Promoting foster  
care in Scotland

Issue 15 Autumn 2006



# in Scotland

## Extraordinary Lives report published

### The Social Work Inspection Agency

(SWIA) recently launched *Extraordinary Lives: Creating a positive future for looked after children and young people in Scotland*. The report describes the findings of SWIA's review of services for looked-after children in Scotland.

The review explored how looked-after children could be fully included in the vision for Scotland's children, that they should be safe, nurtured, healthy and active, achieving, respected and responsible and included.

The report emphasises that when supported by adults who believe in them and who have the skills to support them, looked-after children can overcome adversity and lead fulfilling and successful lives.

It concludes that the single most important thing that will improve their futures is for local authorities to focus on and improve the way in which they act as parents for the children in their care.

In addition to this, five supporting reports have been produced, exploring in more detail issues relevant for looked-after children and those who work with them. Copies may be downloaded, or for further information visit [www.swia.gov.uk](http://www.swia.gov.uk)

## National Fostering Strategy

**Peter Peacock**, Minister for Education and Young People, recently announced the plans for a National Fostering Strategy.

The issues for consideration include:

- Recruitment planning
- Placement of children
- Consideration of changes to regulations
- Fostering allowances and fees
- Kinship care
- Support for looked-after children to become successful learners

Mr Peacock said, 'We want more youngsters to have the chance to flourish in safe, secure families. Foster care makes that possible for children struggling with challenging circumstances in their lives. I am pleased that many youngsters already benefit from the support, stability and respite that foster carers so selflessly provide, but there is scope for many more to become involved in a hugely important and rewarding part of our national life.

'That is why we will soon seek more powers from Parliament to give Ministers the ability to support fostering more effectively and so that more children grow up in secure settings, and why I am adding my voice to the call for more potential foster carers to think about coming forward.

'Councils across Scotland will receive £12 million for additional support for fostering covering the period October 2005 to September 2007.

At time of going to press, details on taking the strategy forward have yet to be confirmed, although informal consultations have already begun.

We would welcome your contributions on any news, views, articles or ideas.  
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## Date for diary....reminder for focus group reps...

**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 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.

Please contact Sarah Crangle  
e sarah.crangle@fostering.net t 0141 204 1400 to confirm your attendance.

## Fostering Network training – what we offer

### Open courses – an ideal option for smaller numbers of participants

**Choosing an open course** is a cost-effective alternative for fostering services and other relevant agencies seeking training for small numbers of participants.

The training dates and venues of all courses within the Open course programme are organised by the Fostering Network, well in advance of the course dates, and are available to staff and carers from all fostering services and other relevant agencies.

Forthcoming open course dates

#### Men in Foster Care

1 - day course  
Edinburgh - Saturday 18 November 2006  
Glasgow - Saturday 3 March 2007

#### The Skills to Foster Leader's Course

3 - day course  
Glasgow - 20, 21 & 22 February 2007  
Edinburgh - 24, 25 & 26 April 2007

#### The Role of the Supervising Social Worker

2 - day course  
7 & 8 March 2007 – Glasgow

in-house courses – bringing training to YOU

We customise all our courses to ensure that they meet your specific needs. We have a comprehensive range of training courses that we can bring to your fostering service or agency, on a date of your choice, for groups of up to 24 participants.

To discuss your training needs further, contact our training team – Sue Robertson, training manager & Joy Crawford, training administrator t 0141 204 1400



## Education topic of meeting in Aberdeen

The *We Care You Learn* membership meeting recently took place in Aberdeen, once again bringing together a range of carers and practitioners, from various backgrounds and from throughout Scotland.

The day focused on education and the educational experiences of children and young people, particularly those in foster care.

Rena Philips and Eileen Bebbington from PACS (Post Adoption Central Support) gave a presentation which examined working with children and young people who experience attachment issues, and how this impacts within the classroom and school setting. The day also allowed delegates to participate in discursive workshops and examine how we can all work together to support the successful learning of children and young people.

Membership meetings continue to be held regularly throughout Scotland and explore various topics and themes. For more information contact Sarah Crangle.

## Survey of support to foster carers

**Feeling supported** and not feeling isolated is an important part of fostering, making sure that foster carers enjoy fostering, and ensuring that children and young people benefit from the best possible care.

During August and September, the Fostering Links project compiled and circulated a survey across Scotland to examine the variety of supports currently in place for foster carers.

This survey was distributed to focus group representatives, local authority and independent agency contacts and also to contacts of the Fostering Links project. These contacts were in turn asked to distribute this within their area.

The response to this survey has been very encouraging, and will enable the Fostering Links project to bring together the views from across the country, to identify where gaps exist and where additional supports are needed.

The findings of this survey will be published and widely available from late autumn 2006.

Returns to this were requested by 30 September, but if you, as a foster carer, are still keen to have your views included in this, please contact Sarah Crangle.

## Benefits of supportive workers

Hi there, I am a foster carer from South Queensferry. My liaison worker is a Ms Robyn Sharkey and she is about to move on to pastures new within resources in Edinburgh.

She is young and has no children so when she first entered my fostering life five years ago I was wary. Would she be all theory without the practice? It turned out she was brilliant. The crucial elements were present; she is a listener, she is consistent and she does what she says she's going to do. My looked-after children had no allocated workers for long periods of time and she stepped up to act for them. I shall miss working with her.

To whomsoever she may work with in the Edinburgh area - consider yourself blessed.

**Marina Shaw**



## Good Egg Guides launched

**In the home** and in the car are two of the most dangerous places for children but simple measures can help keep them safe.

That's the message of two campaigns launched together in Glasgow that has Scotland leading the way amongst other European countries tackling child safety issues.

The *Scottish Good Egg Guides to In-Home and In-Car Safety* aim to raise awareness of the following startling facts and provide parents and carers with the necessary information to safeguard children.

The campaign goals are to educate parents and carers about the levels of potential risk, empower them with the necessary information to make a difference and encourage them to be responsible for safeguarding their children in the home or car.

The booklet highlights the most common causes of injury to children in the home, and is presented in an easily readable and attractive way, giving advice on the simple steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of accidents in your home.

For further information visit [www.protectchild.co.uk](http://www.protectchild.co.uk)

## Scottish Throughcare AGM

The Scottish Throughcare & Aftercare Forum's Annual Conference and AGM 2006 takes place on 5th – 7th December, at Crieff Hydro Hotel, Perthshire.

The event will promote best practice for young people leaving care and there will be a range of speakers, workshops and interactive exhibitions.

The programme and booking details are available on the Forum's website [www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk](http://www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk) If you are interested in attending please contact t 0141 357 4124 e [enquiries@scottishthroughcare.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishthroughcare.org.uk)

Mr and Mrs Robinson  
 David McMillan  
 Gordon McMillan  
 Mr and Mrs Thomson  
 Alan Thomson  
 Mr and Mrs  
 Robertson  
 Jan Deans  
 Stephanie Stone  
 Jim White  
 Jim Curran  
 Bill Atkinson  
 Mr and Mrs Blair  
 Mrs M Forrester  
 J Forrester  
 G Forrester  
 D Cooper  
 E Forrester  
 B McIntyre  
 M Chavasse  
 M Barclay  
 Anne Black  
 Phil Sutton  
 Johanna McLauchlan  
 J Bryson  
 Mr and Mrs Lewis  
 Marjorie Ruddick  
 Darren McElhinney  
 Stevie Craig  
 Robert Stone  
 Tony Sullivan  
 Walter Woods  
 Colin Thomson  
 Sandra Moody  
 Terry Moody  
 Jenny Mitchell  
 Alex. Mitchell  
 Andy Smith  
 Joe Crawford  
 Mr & Mrs Crangle  
 Joe McAdam  
 Aimee Lee Agnew  
 Mark Browne  
 Michael Browne  
 Ben Wilson  
 Gary McEnhill  
 Joanne O'Donnell  
 Tim Crangle  
 Morgan Crangle  
 Robin Crangle  
 Christine Fairfull  
 Martin Ferguson



## 10K run for funds

**Staff and supporters** of the Fostering Network Scotland took to the rain drenched streets of Glasgow on Sunday 3rd September to take part in the Great Scottish 10K Run, to raise much needed funds for the charity.

Taking part in the day were Bryan Ritchie, Linda Curran, Deborah Cook, running with daughter Devon, Joy Crawford and Sarah Crangle. Also braving the rain on the day were Marie, foster carer who took part in the run with friends Liz, Alexandra and Natalie.

Office Manager, Linda Curran says, 'this was our first experience of the 10K so we were quite apprehensive, although looking forward to the day! Unfortunately the weather was not as we would have liked, but we thoroughly enjoyed the day, and are keen to complete next years event and recruit as many additional runners on behalf of the Fostering Network as possible.'

Bryan Ritchie, Director added, 'Every penny we have managed to raise will go directly into improving foster care and making a positive difference to more than 3,000 children and young people in and leaving foster care in Scotland.'

You can still pledge your support of the Fostering Network Scotland – contact Linda Curran e [linda.curran@fostering.net](mailto:linda.curran@fostering.net) t 0141 204 1400

On behalf of the Fostering Network, a huge thank you to all who donated to the sponsored 10k event:





## Fun run for funds

I went to the 2K fun run in Stirling, it was really fun and everyone enjoyed it. I raced with my brother Marc and we raised money for the Fostering Network.

I got a goody bag and a shiny medal. I wore my medal and my Fostering Network t-shirt all day.

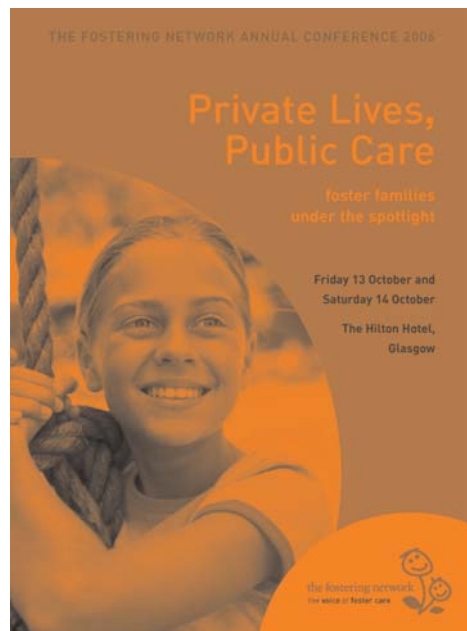
The 2K was really fun. I didn't come in first and I didn't come in last but I thought it was great!

**By Louise (aged 9)**

*A HUGE thank you to Louise and Marc for their hard work in running the 2K and for all the funds they have raised for the Fostering Network, and to Louise for telling us about the day*



Paul Brady  
 Carole Ann Alford  
 Tom Allan  
 Lynn Pincock  
 Jeanette Fairfull  
 Marjorie Ruddick  
 Caron Westmorland  
 Jean Grant –  
 Hotelink  
 Christine Alison  
 John Keane  
 Colin Crawford  
 Euan Crawford  
 Heather Crawford  
 Sheena & Frank  
 McCormick  
 Etta & Archie  
 Crawford  
 Lindsay & Ronnie  
 Monteith  
 Brigitte & Neil  
 Crawford  
 Jean Innes  
 Jimmy Whyte  
 Bob Ryan  
 Ian Foster  
 Michael Curran  
 B Cook  
 G Bowie  
 A Bowie  
 M McClay  
 M McClay  
 L McCafferty  
 E McCafferty  
 K Smith  
 N Haughian  
 A Neil  
 F Thomson  
 K Rankin  
 M Campbell Leavy  
 L Baird  
 A Learmonth  
 C Cassells  
 J Fingland  
 S Milligan  
 S Ewing  
 A Carlin  
 C Jenkins  
 L Philips  
 A McMillan  
 L Charnley  
 A McLeod



## The Fostering Network Annual conference and AGM

**Join us** on 13-14 October at the *Private Lives, Public Care* conference in Glasgow's Hilton Hotel, where we will be exploring perspectives from the public and private worlds of foster care.

Networking with colleagues from across the UK fostering community is an essential way of keeping up to date with best practice whoever you are, so don't miss the opportunity to catch up on what everyone else is doing, update your knowledge and take part in interactive debate on key issues.

With a range of workshops on topics such as managing allegations against foster carers, children who foster, and talking to children and young people about sex and relationships.

There will also be an interactive debate on whether foster carers should be able to smoke at home, and a play relating to the topic of foster families under the spotlight, performed by Breeze Productions.

Jane Aldgate from the Open University and June Thoburn from the University of East Anglia will be delivering keynote addresses.

The conference will be held in the stunning 5 star Hilton hotel, 5 minutes from Glasgow City Centre.

Last chance to book!! Contact [conference@fostering.net](mailto:conference@fostering.net)

# This is my life

**'Natalie' is a young person** who has experience of being in foster care. Natalie is keen to share this experience with readers.

Hi, my name is Natalie McLean and I was born in Southampton in 1989. I am 17 years of age. What I am about to tell you all is the story of my childhood, hope you all like reading it, enjoy.

My mum and dad are called Susan and David; they were married but got a divorce. They had me, Steve and Lindsay together. Steve is the oldest, then Lindsay and finally me. Steve is 19 years old, Lindsay is 18 and I am 17. We all lived together down in Southampton but when my mum and dad divorced she took me, Steve and Lindsay and moved up North to a wee place called Inverness. My mum moved us when I was about three years old, what a nightmare.

When we lived in Inverness my mum met a guy called Alan, and not long after we were to call him 'Daddy'. My mum and Alan wed – that was an even bigger nightmare. Alan is from Southampton, but my dad did not know him, my mum did though. She had seen him a couple of times while out with my dad.

Anyway, moving on – we all settled in and were starting new schools. Not long after it all became a big nightmare. I was getting older and getting into trouble at school so my mum and step dad's words were 'you must be punished', so yeah, I was punished. Alright I was grounded and got all my toys taken off me, so I used to run away a lot, but that was for other reasons as well, which I will get to in a moment.

I only used to run away after school because to tell you the truth I was too scared to go home especially if my step dad was there. He used to come home and was angry all the time and one night he started hitting me and would not stop. I was so scared I didn't know what to do. The hitting never stopped, it kept on going all the time. I was so scared, that's why I used to run and never come home. It wasn't just the hitting, there was other stuff that happened, but I can't remember a lot of it.

I used to go to school and I went in a big phase that I never talked to nobody and I had a really bad temper as well. I used to take my anger out on everybody that said a word to me. I used to sit on the school roof and get into a lot of trouble.

When I used to run away the Police would take me home. I used to scream at them and say 'I can't go back' and say 'no, please don't take me home, anywhere else apart from there.' They used to say to me, 'why Natalie?' I'd just looked at them and say nothing. We got home and they both were playing the concerned parent and when the Police went away I used to get belted for being bad. I hated it.

It came to a stage when I was about 8 or something and I went into school in pain and could not sit down as I was too sore for all the bruises I was covered in, it was unbelievable. I went to my teacher and burst into tears telling her that I couldn't go home that night. She asked me why. My brother and sister saw me in the classroom and tried to get me out so I wouldn't tell. I just screamed and said 'shut up, shut up. I am telling. It isn't you it is happening to, it is me.' My teacher turned and said to me, 'please tell me, I want to help.' I told her that my step dad beat me and she phoned the Social Services and they came and took me to the doctors. I was photographed and examined and everything. It was horrible.

After that I stayed in a safe home and I could go to sleep at night and feel safe and I could go to school and home knowing I wasn't going to get smacked.

The worst bit was I had to go to Court and tell the Judge everything about what had happened to me and I was in floods of tears. It was very hard for me to say and the other bit was that my mum and step dad were in the courtroom. It was very hard for me.

After I was in they had to speak to my sister Lindsay and my brother Steve but of course they didn't understand what had happened to me and didn't understand why I was doing this to the family. They didn't speak up in the courtroom which I hated them for

because they knew what had happened, they just wanted to be loved, and I could tell you that they would not get any love from them, that's for sure.

Anyway after the Court I was away from harm and I moved to Fife to a children's home. It was quite good there and I made new friends and had started school, it was going really well. I haven't got much to tell about my life in Fife apart from meeting my two foster parents there and I now live with them and they are the bomb! I love them to pieces and wee Callum – he's the wee cutie, and Bella – she's a good wee lassie. I am so happy to be living with them. My life has had a big turn around and I am so happy. Kate's daughter Sarah lives with her dad in Liverpool, so I see her when she comes to visit, and Mike's daughter Eilidh lives with her mum in Dundee, so I see her when she comes to visit. It's a great family and the other thing as well is it's a safe, happy family. This is everybody in my life I love and care for:

Katie – foster mum  
Mike – foster dad  
Callum – foster brother  
Bella – foster sister  
David – real dad  
Liz & Tom – grandparents  
Ann – foster auntie  
Gary – foster cousin  
Kyle – foster cousin  
Lee – foster cousin  
Evan – foster cousin  
Darren – foster uncle  
Tim – foster granddad  
Sally – foster gran  
George – foster uncle  
Papa – foster Papa  
Nan – foster Nan

Well, that 'My Life' and I hope you enjoyed reading about me, and one last thing – I am a 'happy wee lassie' and feel dead safe where I am.

Yours thankfully,

**Natalie**

*Many thanks to Natalie for taking the time to share her story with us*

*\*Names and places have been changed to ensure confidentiality*

## Summer storytelling in Moray

**Children in Moray** got together over the summer to take part in story workshops, with the help of CHILDREN 1st, Moray Council Fostering and Adoption team and the Arts Development team. The group included children aged 6-11 who are all fostered within Moray area.

Beth Fraser, Children and Young People's Rights Worker with CHILDREN 1st organised the event and tells us, 'The purpose of this was to allow them to get to know one another as fostering can be an isolating experience, and to engage them in my newsletter for children and young people who are accommodated by getting them to write and illustrate stories, and to provide them with an creative and educational experience.

'I engaged the services of a storyteller and an artist and the children met up five mornings in one week. During the week we listened to stories, drew images from them and then worked together to create group stories where one person begins the story and the next one continues and so on to its conclusion. We then all drew the images to go along with this. The children also wrote and illustrated their own stories. It was a really lovely week - the children had lots of fun and I got some great stories for my *Rights Now Right On* newsletter which will make it more relevant to a younger age group.

'The stories are being made into a booklet for the children to keep.

'The next step would be to do the same thing but to guide their stories a little to look at how it feels to be fostered and answer some questions in them such as - will I be able to phone my Mum, will I get pocket money, can I help myself to the Cornflakes? In so doing you could create age related information booklets for children who are fostered.'

Thanks to Beth for sharing this information with us

## home smart campaign supports young people into independence

**Young people** who leave home at an early age are often at risk of housing crisis or homelessness. The transition for those leaving care is particularly hard, not least because, more often than not, there is an artificial timetable imposed on the process of moving on. To coincide with the media attention on homelessness around the 40th anniversary of the broadcast of the TV play *Cathy Come Home*, the Scottish Council for Single Homeless has created its *home smart campaign*.

Schools are being encouraged to engage in leaving home and housing education work to help young people in S4 and the adults who support them – whether teachers, workers, parents or carers – gain a realistic understanding of what is involved in moving on and living independently. Knowing what help is out there and a bit about housing options plus being up on practical skills, such as cooking, cleaning and budgeting, can make a big difference. Hearing about others' experiences of leaving home can also help young people to make better decisions about when and how to make the move.

You can find out more about the home smart campaign and other leaving home and housing education materials – including a guide for foster carers and residential workers looking after those preparing for independence – at [www.scsh.org.uk](http://www.scsh.org.uk). Contact Matt Elton, Head of Youth Unit, Scottish Council for Single Homeless **e** [matt@scsh.org.uk](mailto:matt@scsh.org.uk) **t** 0131 226 4382

## Throughcare best practice publication launched

The Scottish Throughcare & Aftercare Forum recently launched their new best practice publication *How Good is Your Throughcare & Aftercare Service?* on Friday 6th October in Edinburgh. Copies of the new publication are available from the Forum and on the Forum's website [www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk](http://www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk) please contact **t** 0141 357 4124 **e** [enquiries@scottishthroughcare.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishthroughcare.org.uk)

## Parliament presentation

Falkirk foster carer and focus group representative, Robert Monteith continues to welcome support from foster carers wishing to join him in attending Scottish Parliament on October 26 from 12.30 til 2.30pm. (Please note this date has changed from that previously advised).

Robert is busily bringing together the main issues affecting fostering across Scotland as a whole, and would appreciate hearing from carers throughout the country as well as extending an invitation to join him in Edinburgh in October.

With your support, Robert will deliver a presentation to MSP's, raising their awareness of the foster carer service. Robert has also arranged for those attending to have a tour of Holyrood following the presentation.

Robert is also hopeful that foster carers will inform their local MSP's of this event, and invite them along to the presentation – model letters are available from Sarah Crangle.

To find out more, get more involved, or to join Robert on October 26, contact Robert directly **t** 01324 712 863 **e** [dad\\_monty@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:dad_monty@blueyonder.co.uk)

## Young People's Advisory Groups

The **Young People's Project** is unique as it brings together both young people in foster care and the sons and daughters of foster carers through its advisory group network across Scotland.

The next advisory group meetings will be held in Edinburgh and Arbroath in October.

These meetings are for young people with experience of foster care and the sons and daughters of foster carers. It provides the opportunity to discuss what is good and what needs to change for all young people involved in foster care.

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

## Advocacy Skills Training for Young People

- What are they?
- Who can be an advocate?
- What skills are needed to be an advocate?

All this and more was discussed and explained at the advocacy skills training days for young people, which took place in August. The Young People's project delivered the training for young people aged 11 years and up, in Arbroath and Stirling.

Here are some of the Young People's comments about the training!

**'It was good and I learned something new. At first I thought that some activities were a waste of time but then they made me think without even noticing so I thought they were useful in the end'** (K, aged 15)

**'I learned about what advocacy means and different types of advocacy'** (H, aged 16)

**'What advocacy is about'** (J, aged 14)

**'Everyone who took part in the workshop, it is fair to say, took something away from it, whether it be a pad full of notes or a brain full of ideas or even just a tummy full of the delicious lunch we were served. It was a great day and one meeting I'm glad I attended'** (M, aged 14)

In total twenty-one young people from Angus, Clackmannanshire, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Fife, North Lanarkshire and Stirling participated in this training.

The Project and the young people would like to thank the Agnes H Hunter Trust for enabling the project to deliver the advocacy skills training.

## Training opportunities for Young People

In August, the Fostering Network's Young People's project and training section delivered a *Training for Trainers* course for young people who have experience of foster care. Young people from Angus, Borders, Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and North Lanarkshire participated in this training, which took place at the University of Stirling.

Some of the young people's comments about the course were as follows

**'How to put together a presentation to a small group competently'**

(J, aged 16)

**'I would like to do this again'**

(D, aged 15)

**'Lots of things, how the son's and daughters feel about fostering'**

(C, aged 18)

**'Today I learned that not everyone gets treated equally'** (H, aged 16)

However it was not all work. Activities were planned including golf and a visit to the Macrobert Arts Centre to see 'Rize' a film about young people's experience of life in Los Angeles.

All workshops and training courses delivered by the Young People's project are open to young people in foster care, as well as the sons and daughters of foster carers.

The Young People's project works from the perspective that young people who experience foster care are the experts of that experience.

The aim of this course is to enable young people themselves to tell you all about their experience, and the issues that impact on their lives as a result of being affected by fostering. They do this in an interesting and thought provoking way.

For further information about the Young People's project, or if you feel your organisation would benefit from hearing about foster care from a young person/adult experience, please contact

**Alison Boswell**

Young People's project worker

t 0141 204 1400

e [alison.boswell@fostering.net](mailto:alison.boswell@fostering.net)

*The Project and the young people would like to thank Lloyds TSB Foundation for enabling the project to deliver this training course.*