

Fostering

in Scotland

Issue 27

Autumn 2009

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the fostering network
the voice of foster care



Hello and welcome

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of our quarterly *Fostering in Scotland* newsletter! This newsletter is produced thanks to funding from the Big Lottery Fund as part of the Fostering Links project and we hope that you manage to get involved with the project in some way over the next three years. Whether through meetings, events, training or this newsletter – watch out for events happening across the country!

We would also like to welcome Philip Coghill (pictured with wife Julie and Minister for Children and Young People, Adam Ingram), who was elected at this year's AGM as a Trustee to the Board of the Fostering Network. We hope to catch up with Philip in our next newsletter and also at our meetings and events.

We all hope you enjoy reading this and as always we would love to hear from you if you have anything you would like to include in our next edition.

Best wishes,



Philip with wife Julie, talking to Minister, Adam Ingram.

Dear Members,

As I write this letter autumn has certainly arrived! I attended the Fostering Network's Annual Conference in York at the beginning of October and I enjoyed the time to chat to foster carers from across the UK. The Conference launched the *Together for Change* campaign – read more about this elsewhere in the newsletter.

We were delighted to welcome Jim Bond, the Chair of the Fostering Network Board, to our Scottish Advisory Committee in August and congratulations to Philip Coghill from Edinburgh on being elected onto the Board.

We were sorry when Sue Hardman decided to leave the Advice and Information post in the North and wish her all the best for the future. Margaret Anne McLean from Glasgow Council has been on our Advisory Committee as a representative of the Association of Directors of Social Work. She will be leaving in December and I thank her for her contribution.

The Adoption and Children Act 2007 and the *Looked After Regulations* were implemented at the end of

September. Training has been taking place over the summer and the Fostering Network and BAAF are currently writing the supporting guidance which will hopefully unravel the legal jargon! As part of the new Act, Freeing Order and Parental Responsibilities Orders (PRO's) can no longer be granted. Instead local authorities can apply for a Permanence Order. One of the goals of Permanence Orders is to give children greater stability and foster carers more authority on everyday decisions.

Another exciting development is the re-shaping of our work with young people in foster care and the sons and daughters of foster carers. Keep in touch to find out what's happening.

We are always keen to hear your views and how you would wish to become involved and we hope to see you soon.

Best wishes,



Chair, Scottish Advisory Committee

Generous bequest for the Fostering Network



The Glasgow office was delighted to receive a generous donation from a member of the community. It was a real surprise to receive this cheque and will help support our work over the coming year. As a charity, being remembered in a will is a wonderful way to ensure that we can continue our work and we are grateful to the individual involved for leaving this legacy.

Birthday plans for 2010



Next year the Fostering Network in Scotland will celebrate its 25th anniversary and are planning ways to celebrate this amazing achievement! If your parents started fostering, if you started fostering, if you were in foster care, if your children were in foster care or if you were working in fostering 25 years ago we would love to share our celebrations with you. Please contact Linda Curran.

Practice development day

The Fostering Network is hosting a one-day practice development exchange on Thursday 19 November in Stirling. Participants will explore the impact of the new *Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009* and the *Adoption and Children (Scotland) 2007 Act* on everyday practice.

Open to those working in local authority family placement teams who have direct or regular contact with foster carers in their area, it is hoped that this event will promote the sharing of good practice and networking while highlighting areas which may require further training, support or investment. Places are limited and must be reserved in advance.

To book your place, please contact Sarah Crangle.

Fosterline Scotland

We are delighted to launch *Fosterline Scotland* - our new look advice and information service. Funded by the Scottish Government, *Fosterline Scotland* offers a telephone service to foster carers and fostering services throughout Scotland, providing advice and information on a range of issues and areas.

Currently, the service operates Monday to Thursday, 10am til 4pm, and we are now recruiting for another worker to allow us to offer this service across Scotland Monday to Friday. For further information about the post please contact Sara Lurie for an informal discussion.



Annual Conference 2009

26th November 2009

Apex City Quay Hotel Dundee

Supporting young people looked after at home

Who should attend?

Everyone involved in supporting young people leaving care and young people themselves

There are unique challenges in supporting this often hidden group.

- The conference will give delegates the chance to discuss and shape national developments, find out about local initiatives and hear from the young people themselves.
- 43 per cent of all looked after children are looked after at home
- Research shows those looked after at home do least well at school
- How does Corporate Parenting work when young people are looked after at home?
- 1/4 of young people eligible for aftercare already live at home with their parents, and many more young people head straight home when they leave care.



For further information please email enquiries@scottishthroughcare.org.uk or call 0141 3574124
www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk
www.debateproject.org.uk

Together for Change

Our **Together for Change** campaign was launched in October and is pushing for significant change in three crucial areas:

Status and authority – to make everyday decisions without unnecessary delays and restrictions.

Learning, development and support – being supported and having the skills and knowledge to respond to individual needs and challenges.

Pay – recognising the skills and commitment of foster carers, 52 weeks of the year and comparable to other roles in the child care workforce.

Foster carers can have a huge impact on the lives of the children in their care and need to be empowered to deliver the best possible care and enabled to focus on the job they do without worrying about lack of support or financial difficulties.

We want to encourage you, your family and friends to add your support to the campaign by signing up at www.fostering.net/together-for-change

Do you use facebook? Keep up to date with campaigns, events and much more by joining our page at www.facebook.com/thefosteringnetwork



Do you care for a young person with a family member in prison?



experience stigma, shame, anger, confusion and loss. Children of prisoners are three times more at risk of mental health problems than their peers and are more likely to go on to offend themselves. Effective contact will help children and young people cope with their loss and help reduce the risk of children offending as well as their parents re-offending.

KIDS VIP is a national charity offering practical support and training to promote better contact between children and their imprisoned relatives. This includes training on the impact on children of parental imprisonment.

For further information about the work of KIDS VIP in Scotland, please contact

Alison Boswell
Training and Development
Co-ordinator
e alison.boswell2@btinternet.com
t 07812143853

It is estimated that 16,500 children in Scotland are affected by parental imprisonment. Many of these children will be cared for by foster carers.

The impact on children is profound and children can

Weekend retreat for men in foster care

Perth and Kinross recently held a weekend retreat workshop at Kinloch Rannoch to enable Men in Foster Care to work together to improve their practice and the support they offer to the children and young people they look after.

Steve Conway, foster carer with Perth & Kinross tells us, 'We as a group used to do joint courses with other nearby local authorities but we felt we needed to progress so I took on the role of rep to the consultative group with P&K. We went away overnight with ten male carers, with five staying over. As well

as having two speakers we did our own safe caring course, a workshop on 'troublesome teenagers' and workshops with real life scenarios. We also spent time discussing our aims as a group, how often we would like to meet, etc...

'The event was a great success and a follow up day is due to be held in November and then every three months. This is a great in-house tool and the foster carers appreciate the input from the social work team. Hopefully other male groups can be set up and a meeting to liaise so that the men in fostering can air their

views together on a Scottish basis and further enhance the positive role model that men can provide to the children and young people we look after.'

The Fostering Network would be pleased to hear from any other Men in Foster care groups being set up, or up and running across the country. We also have our popular Men in Foster Care one day open course running regularly throughout the year, and is next being held in Glasgow on Saturday 27 March 2010 – contact Joy for further information.

Moving on – the impact on sons and daughters

When a child or young person moves on from a foster placement, whether returning home, on to permanence, or onto independence, everyone in the family can be affected. Ross Paget, aged 14, has been part of a fostering family for a number of years and shares his experience...

'We've fostered for 11 years now and one thing I really like is having new kids come to stay. I really like young kids as I can show them DVDs and read and play games with them. I don't like it when the kids have to leave. When they leave I feel sad and the house seems empty as it's too quiet as I am used to them running about and making noise. Mum and Dad and family and friends help me when the children have left. That's when I get lots of jobs to do, like getting my uncle's boat ready for the water – that's what I did this time as it takes my mind off the kids going away.'

'I like when Mum and Dad do fostering but think it would be good for other carers' kids to get together and talk things over and I miss the Fun Days.'

Following on from Ross's request, his fostering service (Falkirk) have plans in place for day sessions for different age groups of children who foster to allow them to meet up, get to know each other, have some fun and offer understanding and support to each other.

Thank you to sons and daughters

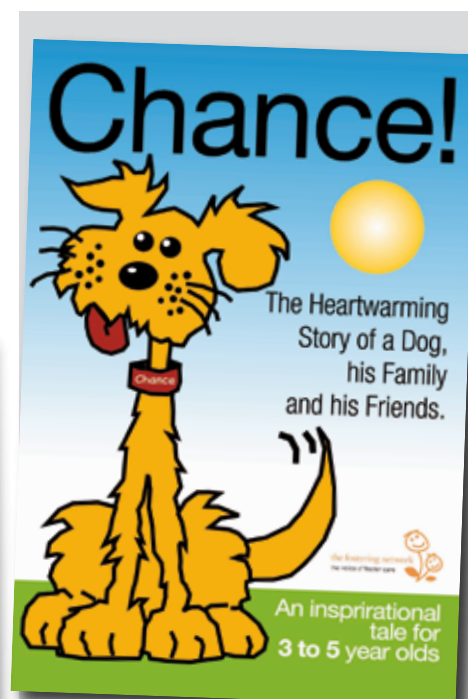
During the month of October, fostering agencies across the UK celebrated 'Sons and Daughters Week', the Fostering Network's annual campaign to recognise the vital contribution that foster carers own children make to the success of fostering.

To mark the campaign, the Fostering Network ran a photo competition to find the winning image to go on the front of thank you cards which fostering services were able to send out to sons and daughters in recognition of their role and across the UK fostering services ran a range of events and activities. The Fostering Network is also encouraging all

fostering services to establish regular groups for sons and daughters in their area.

Research shows that the relationship between a foster carer's own children and the fostered children in their home can make or break a placement. However, the views and opinions of sons and daughters often go unheard and they don't always get the support they need.

We would love to hear how you celebrated Sons and Daughters week, or how you recognise the important role Sons and Daughters have within a fostering family throughout the year!



Book project for children

Are you 8-11 years old and the son or daughter of a foster carer? If so we need your help with a fantastic new project designing a book for younger children to tell them what to expect when their mums and dads foster.

For more information about this, or to get involved, get in touch with Sara Lurie by phone or email.

Local links needed for project

We are all delighted that the Fostering Links project has now begun, thanks to funding from the Big Lottery Fund. As well as bringing you this newsletter, and a number of other areas of work, the project seeks to develop and strengthen local links between foster carers. To do this we need some 'Regional Advisers' to be the local voice in their area and linking in to our work more nationally.

If you are interested in finding out about this exciting opportunity, contact Sarah Crangle.

Open training courses – dates for your diary

The training team in Glasgow continue to offer a wide range of training courses offered to you 'in-house' (within your agency) as well as our popular 'open courses' – able to be booked by anyone.

Role of the Supervising Social Worker

27 and 28 January 2010
£180 + VAT
Glasgow

Assessing and Working with Same Sex Couples

****New Course****
17 February 2010
£110 + VAT
Glasgow

The Skills to Foster Leaders' Course

(This course will use the second edition of The Skills to Foster)

9, 10 and 11 March 2010
£270 + VAT
Glasgow

Men in Foster Care

Saturday 27 March 2010
£90 + VAT
Glasgow

To find out more or to book your place on one of these courses, contact Joy Crawford
t 0141 204 1400.

Debate project *Life after Care* Conference 2009

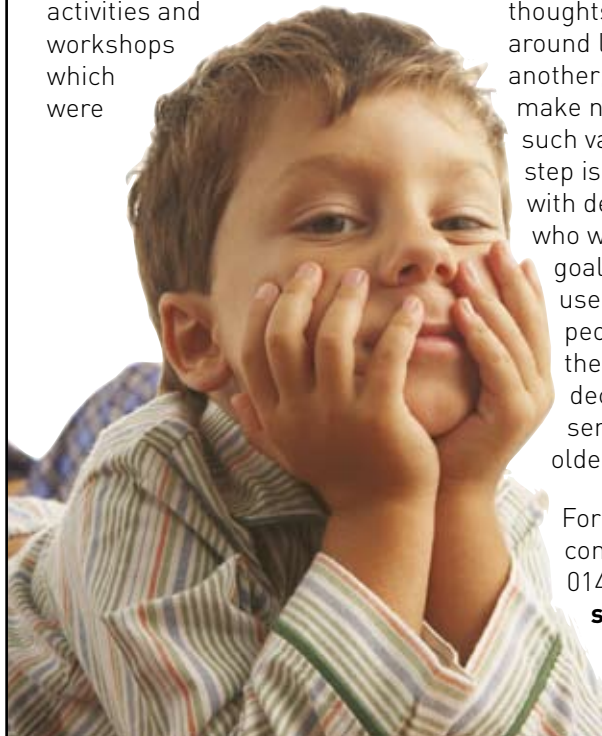
The Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum would like to say a big thank you to everyone who attended their Young People's Conference at the end of September. All the young people in the Debate Project and Voice of Reason worked hard to make the day a success and young people and workers came from all over Scotland to take part in the event.

Amy Copsey, Debate project worker says, 'We had a great day, full of activities and workshops which were

designed and delivered by care leavers. Issues covered included what young people need most when they leave care, how young people feel about being able to go back to and stay in touch with the places and people they lived whilst in care, how young people manage their financial responsibilities when they leave care and what young people feel about mentoring support.

'The conference gave care leavers the opportunity to share their thoughts, opinions and experiences around leaving care with one another, meet new people and make new friends. Having gathered such valuable information our next step is to share this information with decision makers and those who work with care leavers. The goal of the Debate Project is to use the expert voices of young people to continue to keep them at the centre of making decisions which improve the services provided for young and older care leavers in Scotland.'

For more information please contact the Debate Project on 0141 357 4124 email amy@scottishthroughcare.org.uk or visit www.debateproject.org.uk



Panel members database

A reminder that on the Fostering Network's website we have a database of members from a range of backgrounds – foster carers, teachers, social workers, care experienced young people – who have noted their interest in being fostering panel members. Fostering panels are always in need of a mix of people and to add your name to the database, sign in to the members area and visit www.fostering.net/members/panels

New permanence order

The Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009 and the *Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007* are now in place, having come into effect on 28 September 2009. The Fostering Network is busily working with BAAF to write the guidance to support these regulations. We have already received a number of calls to the Glasgow office relating to the impact of these regulations on foster carers and workers and we want to hear your thoughts on how these will affect you or those you care for – do you have a child or young person who is now on a Permanence Order?

Email, phone or write and share your experience and practice.

One change within the legislation is the repeal of the barrier to same sex couples fostering in Scotland. To support fostering services in recruiting, assessing and supporting same sex couples as foster carers, the Fostering Network is running Assessing and Working with Same Sex Couples – a one day course facilitated by Helen Cosis Brown, a Principal Lecturer in Middlesex University.

For further information or to book a place, contact Joy Crawford.

Do you know if you are a member of the Fostering Network?



If you are receiving this newsletter then it is likely that you are a member of the Fostering Network, but you should take a few minutes to check that you and your family are covered by membership. Not only does your membership give you access to our 'members only' area of the website, a wealth of resources and information, a medical and stress counselling helpline but membership also gives foster carers legal protection insurance.

'After my family had allegations against us the Fostering Network were great. We only had a couple of calls between us but you will never know how much

you actually helped me and my family. I don't know what I would have done without you all at the end of a phone – you were a life line!'

Understanding insurance is important for most people. It is vital if you are a foster carer to know exactly what your insurance cover provides, what your legal responsibilities are, and what cover is provided by your fostering service.

As a member of the Fostering Network you have access to a 24 hour legal advice helpline where you can speak to a lawyer on any personal, legal or tax matter. It can cost as much as £150

an hour to seek private legal advice so this can really save you money as well as providing vital independent support. In addition the Fostering Network provides members with legal protection insurance so that in the unfortunate event of an allegation you and your family will have access to legal representation from experienced solicitors.

Following negotiations with our insurers the Fostering Network is delighted to be able to expand cover to those foster carers and former foster carers who continue to look after a young person to the age of 21. We are calling this new arrangement 'Staying Put Providers'. Please check the legal insurance guide for terms and conditions which is available to download at www.fostering.net/members

Are you thinking about retiring?

Remember that sadly allegations can arise even after you have retired from fostering so the Fostering Network also has a retired carers membership, available at a reduced rate, which you can take out to continue to provide this valuable cover for you and your family.

If you are unsure if you are a member, give our membership team a call on 020 7620 6400 and they will be happy to help you out.

New look *All About Fostering* launched

The Fostering Network has published an all new *All About Fostering* publication. In a colourful magazine style format, it is informative, engaging and essential reading for anyone considering a career in fostering.

All About Fostering contains essential information about what fostering involves alongside real-life stories and quotes from foster carers, young

people and birth families. It is a bright and vibrant addition to any information pack for potential foster carers.

Available with a choice of four covers and from just 75p per copy, see www.fosteringresources.co.uk or call 0844 335 1892 for more details.



Contact us at:

The Fostering Network Scotland
2nd floor, Ingram House
227 Ingram Street
Glasgow
G1 1DA

t 0141 204 1400

f 0141 204 6588

e scotland@fostering.net
www.fostering.net

Sara Lurie, Director
sara.lurie@fostering.net

Linda Curran, Office Manager
linda.curran@fostering.net

Deborah Cook, Administrator
deborah.cook@fostering.net

**Sue Robertson,
Training & Development
Manager**
sue.robertson@fostering.net

**Joy Crawford,
Learning & Development
Co-ordinator**
joy.crawford@fostering.net

Sarah Crangle, Project worker
sarah.crangle@fostering.net

**Sandra Moody
Fosterline Scotland**
sandra.moody@fostering.net
t 0141 204 1400

Infoline -
For everyday fostering enquiries
t 020 7261 1884

Legal, medical & stress helpline

24 hours, 365 days a year
t 0844 581 0404

Registered Office:
87 Blackfriars Road London SE1 8HA
Registered Charity No: 280852

Registered in Scotland SC039338



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News roundup...

The summer saw Clackmannanshire Council thanking their foster carers for their contribution to fostering over the years with presentations being given to those with many years service as well as to a number of foster carers who were retiring and also to foster carers who have recently completed their training portfolios.

SWISS foster carers Bob Parish & Alex Aitken organised a Go-karting day for looked after children, children who foster, and the big kids - the foster carers. With the kids all trying to beat their carers, a few good drivers and a few bad drivers on the track, a good day was had by all and it's hoped more events will follow.

We look forward to hearing your news - email us at scotland@fostering.net and share your stories.



Staff of Carolina House Trust faced up to the challenge of bringing together foster carers, their own and fostered young people and other young people from residential units. The team set up a Fun Day and as well as face painting and a fancy dress competition they looked at the proposed lay out of the young person's page on the Trust's

new website before an enjoyable afternoon at the Dundee Megabowl.

The recruitment team in Edinburgh City Council went to this year's Mela festival to increase awareness of fostering and to recruit Black and Minority Ethnic carers. Children come from a range of ethnic, religious, cultural and language backgrounds but there are not enough foster carers to match their needs.

Social Worker, Liz Pitcairn explains, 'I was out in India earlier in the year and visited a number of orphanages. Talking to the carers there about fostering and adoption it struck me that few understood the concept of fostering. Because the family unit is often large and very close, people care for their own relatives. So we need to work hard on overcoming any misconceptions on fostering and its different forms.'



Carolina House Trust's Fun Day

Vacancies at the Fostering Network

We are currently recruiting to fill the following staff vacancies:

- Fosterline Scotland worker
- Young People's project worker
- Recruitment & Retention project worker

Three exciting employment opportunities have arisen in the Fostering Network and successful applicants will play an active part in delivering our work across Scotland.

To find out more or to apply, visit our website www.fostering.net or contact Sara Lurie for an informal discussion. Closing date for applications for all posts is 17 November 2009.