

Fostering

in Scotland

Issue 31
Autumn 2010

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the fostering network
the voice of foster care



Hello and welcome...



Hello and welcome to the latest *Fostering in Scotland*,

Regular readers will know that this quarterly newsletter is funded by the Big Lottery Fund as part of the Fostering Links project. As the project nears the end of its first year, here at the Fostering Network office we are celebrating 25 years of working directly in Scotland. With help and a huge thanks to our volunteer Joanne, we have been putting the finishing touches to our 25th celebration event in January. If you have been involved in fostering for 25 years or more, please get in touch soon to find out more. We are also keen to hear your thoughts on how fostering has evolved over the past 25 years, so please share your reflections with us.

The Fostering Links project has been fairly busy over the past couple of months. We have held three

membership meetings in Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh during September. At the beginning of October a visit to members in Orkney allowed me to meet with foster carers and also the fostering team on the Islands; and the end of October has been busy with three assertiveness and advocacy skills for foster carers taking place in Edinburgh, Dundee and Inverness. Further dates for these sessions are planned to take place in the West in February – find out more elsewhere in this newsletter...

The Fostering Network's annual conference also took place in Belfast at the beginning of October. This provided a valuable opportunity for social work, education and foster carer professionals from throughout the UK to focus discussions, in particular, on education.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition. In our next newsletter we hope to explore the issue of 'respite' for foster carers. Please get in touch to share your news and views on this, or any other fostering issues for our next (January) edition. Until next time,

Very best wishes,

Sarah Crangle
Fostering Links project worker

Membership meetings

The **Fostering Links** project recently held membership meetings across Scotland. Attended by foster carers and supervising social workers, these meetings were very successful in raising some interesting discussions as well as providing networking opportunities.

The Glasgow and Dundee meetings explored the role men have in foster care, whether as the main carer or an important part of the fostering household. It was helpful for the female participants who attended to have the chance to think about some of the issues their male counterparts may experience,

"The whole event emphasised the uniqueness of men's role in foster caring."

While the Fostering Network currently runs a more in-depth, one-day, male-only training course for men in foster care, some female participants did suggest developing a men in foster care course that women could also take part in.

A further membership meeting was held in Edinburgh which looked at the effects of allegations and what may happen when an allegation is made. Exploring both the feelings that may be encountered and the supports available, as well as what to expect when being questioned by the police, the day was well received by those who attended:

"I have found the whole event very interesting and it has made me realise no foster carer is totally safe from allegations."

"The reality of allegations and timescales. The real possibility of how you could be treated."

We look forward to planning further membership meetings in 2011. To find out more, keep an eye on our next newsletters, or visit www.fostering.net/fostering-links.

Great Scots 2010

Congratulations to Glasgow foster carers May and Gerry Taggart who were named Great Scots 2010 at this year's prestigious awards ceremony in Glasgow. The couple have been fostering for over 30 years, during which time they have provided a safe and secure home to many children as well as adopting two children into their family.

We at the Fostering Network feel it's great that the achievement of the family has been recognised, as well as recognising the valuable contribution of foster carers across the country. Well done to all!



Dear Members,

It is hard to believe that we are already into autumn and that holidays are over for most of us. I hope that in the midst of all your caring tasks you got some time to relax.

Over the summer months the staff in Glasgow have continued to be busy and used some of the time to plan future events and work. Sara and the staff in Ingram House have been working on fostering strategies, developing resources, working with the Scottish Government, reviewing fundraising and keeping a close watch with Andrew from our London office in Blackfriars on our finances. We also undertook recruitment for our Learning and Development Manager and are delighted to welcome Susan Galloway to the team!

A number of reports for the Scottish Government were prepared including the Fosterline report which shows the volume of advice given and the range of topics that cause concern to foster carers and agencies. The follow up to the calls can be sometimes be lengthy but the satisfaction rate from callers is impressive. Fosterline is now an integral part of wider fostering services and funding for it is crucial. We will be working with members and the Government to try to ensure that the service can be maintained and the high quality advice continued.

“We are particularly interested in any changes you are seeing in planning for children now that the courts can make Permanence Orders for looked-after children.”

We have had a lot of praise about our various newsletters and the new *Kidz Biz* has been a real hit. I am delighted that the younger ‘young people’ are doing so much and creating such a good newsletter. The fun days at the Macrobert Arts Centre during the summer went well – but we were disappointed that more families did not manage to take part in these fun and free holiday activities.

Looked-after children remain high on the agenda of the Minister for Children, and the Fostering Network will be working to keep foster carers in the forefront of that agenda as they provide so much of the care for looked-after children. Many of you know that the outlook across the UK for funding of social care services is bleak with budget cuts imminent. In Scotland we do not yet know the extent of the cuts that local authorities will have to make in the coming years. Any cuts may have a direct impact on fostering allowances, membership payments and training and we will be monitoring that carefully. We will be talking to the Scottish Government and local authorities to urge them to try to preserve foster care service budgets. The message that good foster care can provide longer term savings to the costs of supporting young people is a difficult one to act on if there is just no money to cover basic services.

We want to keep a close eye on this and ensure that the voice of children and foster carers is reflected in our discussions with the Government and local authorities.

It will be good to keep an open dialogue with our members over the impact of financial restrictions in your area. Do write to or email the Fostering Network in Glasgow so that we can keep abreast of areas of support or difficulty.

We are particularly interested in any changes you are seeing in planning for children now that the courts can make Permanence Orders for looked after children. These orders can include many rights being transferred to foster carers which in turn gives the young people and the carers a much stronger feeling that they are truly a part of a family. Our information is that this is proving a very slow process but the Fostering Network is keen to hear how carers are being involved in meetings to discuss these orders for children. Sara Lurie and I are both part of the Government Group set up to look at the implementation of the *Moving Forward in Kinship and Foster Care* report and the National Residential Child Care Initiative. There is a very long agenda but the overall goal is to identify effective practice which gives children the best possible care and which addresses their emotional, health and educational needs.

From time to time the groups will have questions for different groups of people involved with the care of looked-after children. I hope that we will be able to use some of the members of the Fostering Network to give the group information about what facilitates good planning for children and what holds it back.

As you can see from my letter and from the other articles in the newsletter there is a lot going on! I hope that you will want to get involved with some of the debates. I enjoyed meeting some of you at the recent membership meetings and look forward to meeting with more of you in the future as well as hearing your views on many topics!



Anne Black
Chair, Scottish Advisory Committee

Visit to the Orkney Isles

Orcadian foster carer George Burdett took some time to meet with us. Here he shares some of his poems about fostering...

Fostering

*You may hold a life
In your hands
Never fully knowing
The hurt inside
Of how and when
And more*

*The face you see
The voice you hear
That body yet to grow
Its hurts, painful yet naturally healing
But the mind's in control
Not understanding or revealing*

*The whys and the reasons
Of life so complex
To fit in, behave
Not understanding
The world which has treated
Them so*

*How to show them
That uncertain path
We all should walk
For them to see self
Amongst our fellow
Brothers and sisters*

*To guide that life
Impossibly by the word
Or mistrust, betrayal
To touch that inside
Which must change inside
To be loved and self
Accepted*

*Give us time
And strength
And developmental
Knowledge
To lead and show
With patience and example
That life
Can be a good - life!!*

Many thanks to George for sharing his words with us.



A wonderful part of my role as Fostering Links project worker is having the opportunity to travel the length and breadth of the country to meet with members, particularly those in the more remote areas of the country. Most recently, a trip to Orkney to meet with foster carers and the fostering and adoption team was on the agenda.

With just eight fostering households located across the Islands, Orkney Isles fostering service is one of the smallest in Scotland. Our meeting with this peedie* group of foster carers demonstrated that their skills, expertise and resourceful nature were in no way small.

Our meeting followed similar discussions we have held across Scotland, ensuring that we can compare the challenges and successes in the Orkneys with those across the country. Further group discussions looked at priorities for foster carers and also the fostering and adoption team, as well as ways of developing support networks between carers.

Common themes emerging included: the importance of communication and getting

feedback; having the opportunity and resources to participate in learning and development events on the mainland; and the reward in being recognised by the community in making a positive difference to a child's life. The feedback from these discussions will inform a report due to be released shortly. This report will bring together views from across Scotland.

I am also really looking forward to seeing the development of a Facebook page for foster carers in the Islands – if other areas currently have a Facebook page, I'd love to hear from you about how it is getting on.

For those foster carers unable to attend the group meeting, it was fantastic that they were able to take the time to meet with us individually, to chat about their current experiences as well as hearing about the work of the Fostering Network.

And, last but not least, we were delighted to support the Council's current recruitment campaign by being interviewed along with social worker Shona Thain on BBC Radio Orkney, to raise awareness of the need for more fostering households both in the Islands and throughout the country.

* Peedie: Orcadian for little

Men Who Care – new resource

In 2010 the University of Glamorgan's StoryWorks team and the Fostering Network ran a two-day storytelling workshop with a group of male foster carers to encourage them to share their experiences of fostering.

This project engaged male foster carers in an innovative way – facilitating them to tell the stories of their experience of foster care and to share those stories with the wider world, including other potential foster carers, social services and, specifically, staff and students on Health and Social Care courses at University of Glamorgan and elsewhere.

“The storytelling workshop helped me find a voice, to express myself and to take away a renewed desire to improve understanding of why men like us want to foster, of what a great job we do, and what help we need to be able to do this. This book will, I hope, be a step in the right direction on all three counts.” (Alan Torry, Trustee, the Fostering Network).

The Fostering Network's experience of working with male foster carers indicates that there are many men 'out there' who would value the opportunity to learn some story-telling skills and benefit from the

Men Who Care is **FREE** to download from the Fostering Network's Foster Care Resource Centre at www.fostering.net

experience of working with other male foster carers to share and craft their stories and to know that these stories could have a real-life impact – maybe changing aspects of the way some elements of Health and Social Care courses are taught.

Men Who Care contains some of their stories. The stories reflect the breadth of work that foster carers undertake and offer an insight into the world of fostering from a male foster carer's perspective. **Men Who Care** can aid discussions around being a male foster carer in support groups, training sessions or at home. There is a brief introduction to each story to set the scene and raise key issues and two or three questions at the end to prompt discussion. It is also an interesting stand-alone read for any foster carer or other social care professional.

“Foster care has traditionally been viewed as a task undertaken by women, and although times have changed, this still appears to be the public perception. But the reality is that men have much to offer as foster carers and can provide the positive role model that some of these vulnerable children have never had.” (Jim Bond, President, the Fostering Network).

Conference Roundup

This year's annual UK conference, *Enjoying, Learning and Achieving in Foster Care* took place at the beginning of October. I found it to be an incredibly interesting, engaging, informative and inspiring two days. With a focus on education, the variety of workshops and presentations from across the four nations and also the Republic of Ireland certainly provoked my thoughts and I only wished there had been more time to have the opportunity to take part in all the workshops and seminars!

The stark reminder from official statistics shows that looked-after children and young people achieve less well than their peers in terms of formal exam qualifications at school, but the conference brought together a wealth of expertise, in the form of delegates and presenters who were able to share alternative suggestions for ensuring that learning for children is more than just literacy and numeracy in the classroom setting.

Northern Ireland is already seeing improvements in GCSE results from what the DHSSPS described as a 'relatively modest' Government investment in the Fostering Network Northern Ireland's Fostering Achievement

and Study Buddies schemes. The Letterbox Club, run in association with the Book Trust/Scottish Book Trust; is another of the many innovative programmes taking place across the UK that provide opportunities for foster carers to support children and young people's learning in a fun and interactive way, using books, games and toys as well as supporting interests such as sports and leisure.

A DVD produced by young people in Northern Ireland, hearing from young people directly, and being audience to a drama presentation were the best demonstrations of the success of the good work currently taking place.

Overall the conference highlighted the importance of widening opportunities for young people as well as simply making and taking time to listen.



To read more about the conference, visit www.fostering.net/blogs/fostering-network

Learning together in Scotland



Foster care practitioners from all over Scotland had the chance to come together and share learning and practice developments on 12 August this year.

The event, held in Perth, was provided by the Fostering Network's National Recruitment & Retention project, funded by the Scottish Government.

By lunchtime – 73 per cent of participants had gained new knowledge or information that they didn't have before they came

than 10 years experience in the foster care field – something which was welcomed by the 22 per cent of participants' who had less than two years experience.

The event was received well by participants and the use of electronic voting provided a few interesting snapshots of provision across Scotland.

For example, when looking at foster care recruitment activity, only 38 per cent of authorities present had a dedicated post responsible for the recruitment of foster carers, although

Encouragingly, none of the participants thought the event was a waste of time and 92 per cent would come to a future event

55 per cent thought a centralised recruitment enquiry matching service for Scotland would be a useful resource

encouragingly twice that amount had a written recruitment strategy. All the authorities carried out recruitment campaigns with nine per cent doing this monthly and 39 per cent having one per year. Unfortunately it became clear that more needs to be done on foster care recruitment, with a staggering 96 per cent of the authorities present reporting a current shortage of foster carers to meet demand.

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A full report of the event is available on request (a copy of this will be sent to all of those who participated) by contacting heather.dickson@fostering.net

86 per cent of those present thought the development of a recognised training and development quality standard for foster carers in Scotland would be a positive move

Social work staff from across 14 Scottish authority areas came together for workshops and presentations looking at integrated professional development for foster carers, evidence based assessment, and making the most of advice services.

There was also an opportunity for practitioners to learn from each other and network, and the level of experience available for sharing was extremely high, with 30 per cent of those present having more

64 per cent thought a central register of foster carers in Scotland would be a good thing



Belfast Conference Report

We got my foster brother off to school and then we went to the airport. I was worried when I saw the plane, it had propellers. Some friends from school said to me, 'if the plane has propellers and you're going over water, you better take your swimming goggles!' I didn't need them.

The hotel was lovely! When we arrived there were some people dosing on comfy chairs as their rooms weren't ready. I heard that some people started travelling at 3am! I got to sign the register myself and got my own room card. We explored then went for some lunch.

When it was time for the conference to start, there were lots and lots of people; the room seemed to fill up so fast. I was the youngest person there, but everyone was really nice to me, especially Helen, Sandra and Debbie who were at our table. The sweets on the table were not very nice; they tasted like cinnamon. Mum kept getting my half sucked sweets because I didn't know where to put them.

The conference started, I didn't understand a lot of what people were saying but I did understand that looked-after children don't always get the same chances at school as other children, and there seemed to be a lot of talking about funding and how there isn't always enough.

**By Emily Ritchie Aged 9
(10 in November)**



During coffee break there were a few displays to look at; Lorna showed me the puppets at the Fostering Achievement stall.

Some foster carers' children and fostered children talked about what things were like for them. Jamie Leigh had my Mum crying; I thought they were really brave to get up in front of all those people. I liked this part the best; fostering isn't just about sad things.

Mum and I went to the swimming pool. We talked about some of the things we heard and about the children we've

cared for. We played for a bit then got changed. We got ready for drinks before dinner: I had some shloer, and Mum had champagne. Kellie and Sarah checked that everything was ok for me; I really felt very well taken care off.

We met some really nice people at dinner like Wendy, Aileen, Karen and two other really nice ladies, I'm sorry I can't remember their names. The hotel staff looked after me very well, the hotel made my dinner a little bit different, and Mum wouldn't let me have the champagne sorbet! Freda asked us quiz questions over dinner and Mum won me a key ring. I really enjoyed the disco afterwards and danced a lot.

On Saturday I had a really big breakfast. I was still quite tired from dancing. I liked the first person to speak, Sir Robert Salisbury. Some of what he said was quite funny and I wanted to listen to him, Mum said she could have listened to him all day.

At coffee break, I was asked by David, Kay Jackson's husband if I wanted to go into Belfast, so I did. Mum took a couple of notes for me after making a wee joke about me skiving, (I went on an open top bus and had a McDonald's; I really enjoyed it).

Mum listened about the Letterbox scheme and was surprised it wasn't happening more in Scotland. I'm going to give the info to our director and see what he thinks.

Mum went to Kay's workshop; she said it was good to keep reminding ourselves what could be 'going on' for children and young people. I think I would have enjoyed the storytelling it sounded like fun.

Mum waited for me so she could hear about my trip on the open top bus. We had a bit of a panic because our taxi didn't show up; Kay and David dropped us at the airport, and we managed to get our flight home.

It was a busy couple of days, but I really enjoyed it and I would do it again. Thank you very much to Foster Plus (Scotland) for sending us!

Recommended minimum fostering allowances

The Fostering Network has announced its minimum recommended allowances for foster carers for 2011-12.

The allowances are designed to cover a foster carer's spending on looking after an individual fostered child. They are updated annually on the basis of inflation, and are widely recognised as the benchmark for

For further information, visit www.fostering.net/news/2010/minimum-allowances-announced-2011

the costs of looking after fostered children.

Minimum weekly allowances for fostered children, from April 2011 (2010 rates in brackets):

Age 0-4:	£131.47 (£125.09)
Age 5-10:	£149.76 (£142.49)
Age 11-15:	£186.43 (£177.38)
Age 16+:	£226.74 (£215.74)



Ros Craig,



**Young people's project worker,
updates us on her work...**

Hi everyone! I thought I would give you an update on how I have been getting on since starting with the Fostering Network in February this year.

The young people's project receives funding from a number of different charitable trusts to undertake many different pieces of work. As it stands, I work Tuesday to Friday from 10am til 4pm and I am based mainly in the Glasgow office unless I have meetings around Scotland to attend.

Over the last seven months, I have met with a number of young people's groups across Scotland and got to chat with some vibrant, enthusiastic young people. I am always looking for invites to your young people's groups to see how you are getting on, consult with young people and not forgetting – join in on the fun! Please get in touch if you'd like to invite me to any groups you run or attend.

At the moment we are planning to make a DVD for and by 8 to 11-year olds with foster care experience. This will be an animation informed by the thoughts, views and voices of those children. The theme of the DVD is 'consequences' and we would like to speak with any children who think they have something to add to the DVD. Over the next month I will be visiting fostering households to chat with children aged 8 to 11 with fostering experience. Please get in touch if you'd be happy for me to come to your home to share your views, show you our DVD plans and let you make/design story changes.

The other ongoing work that I have been undertaking is, as always, to

make our *Kidz Biz* newsletter as interesting, fun and informative as possible! The only way I can do this is if young people get in touch with me, so if you'd like to get involved or you know someone who could get involved then please email, phone or write to us.

With the help of 13 fantastic foster experienced children aged 8 to 11 we transformed the idea of a storybook for 3 to 5-year-olds into a reality through the creation of *Stella comes to stay...a story of sharing and caring*. This began with a drama workshop during spring break where the children acted out some issues relating to foster care and agreed on a storyline and character for the book. The children involved were then consulted on changes they would like and had the opportunity to attend a group meeting at the artist's office to make visual changes to the book using the latest design technology.

The *Stella* book is now complete with additional parent cards to guide foster carers when facing issues with their own sons and daughters. You can claim your free copy by completing the form on page 10 of this newsletter and posting in to us.

So, until next time – don't hesitate to get in touch!

Ros

Teddy bears' picnic

If you went down to Saughton Park Rose gardens this summer, you were sure of a big surprise! Wednesday 4 August was the day the teddy bears had their picnic!

Fosterplus Edinburgh usually holds monthly carer support groups, but seeing as the children and teddies were free during the summer holidays they were invited too!

I interviewed a teddy who said: 'We had some tasty snacks for our picnic and we all sat together on a blanket and had a tea party too! The children enjoyed drinking from the tea set cups and eating from the saucers and made sure us teddies were well fed!'

Another teddy said he saw children collecting petals to make perfume, while other children played ball games.

Caroline Watt, who helped to organise the day, said: 'It was such a nice day that some of the children, carers and teddies didn't get home until much later in the day as they enjoyed playing in the nearby play park'.

Have you been involved in any events for children and young people? Send in your pictures, stories or ideas for events!! What did you do to celebrate Sons and Daughters Week? Let us know! email ros.craig@fostering.net or t 0141 204 1400



An interview with Stella

Who helped you settle into your new foster home?

My foster carers and their two children. Mickey is their son, he is five years old and Molly is their daughter, she is three. Molly always wears red ribbons in her hair.

How did Mickey and Molly react when you arrived in their home?

When I went into the house they both smiled at me. That made me feel really good. They kept looking at me though, I didn't like that.

How did the family make you feel welcome when you arrived?

The first thing we did was to have breakfast together. Mickey and Molly asked for toast with chocolate spread. I don't like chocolate spread, I only like strawberry jam. Mickey said strawberry jam was his favourite too and gave me some from the fridge to put on my toast. It tasted fantastic! After breakfast we went outside to play. Molly didn't want to play with me at first but then Mickey asked me to play on the climbing frame and we all played together. It was great!

You turn into a lot of animals in the story, which was your favourite?

I liked it when I turned into a frog. I

jumped up and down because I was sooooo excited and happy!

What would you like your new foster family to know about you?

I would like them to know about my favourite things. The things I like to eat, like strawberry jam, and what I like to do.

What do you like best about your new room?

It's my favourite colour – pink! I also really like the little butterflies on the wall, they are really pretty.

How did you feel on your first night in your new bed?

I felt very alone and frightened because everything was very strange. I really liked my new foster family and my pink bedroom but I was still a little scared. I held my teddy Fluffy really tightly, he's a rabbit. That made me feel a little better.

What has been your favourite moment in your new foster home?

The best bit was when Mickey and Molly made me a name plate for my bedroom door. It was a star and it had my name on it. Mickey even drew a pink heart next to my name. It was lovely. They're really nice.

Forthcoming learning and development opportunities

We still have a few places on our popular *The Skills to Foster* courses:

The Skills to Foster Leader's Course

(This course will use the second edition of *The Skills to Foster*)
9, 10 and 11 November 2010
Premier Travel Inn, Glasgow
£270.00 +VAT (includes lunch)

The Skills to Foster: assessment materials

(Formerly – *Competency Based Assessment of Foster Carers*)
19 and 20 January 2011
Premier Travel Inn, Glasgow
£180.00 +VAT (includes lunch)

****Change of date – Please note *The Skills to Foster: assessment materials* due to be held on 19 and 20 October 2010 in Glasgow will now take place 19 and 20 January 2011.**

To find out more about any of our popular courses, please get in touch with our Learning & Development Team, Susan Galloway or Joy Crawford, on 0141 204 1400.



Stella comes to stay

... a story of sharing and caring.

We are giving away free copies of our first ever storybook, *Stella comes to stay... a story of sharing and caring*.

To claim your free copy you can either complete the form on page 10 and post it to us, or email ros.craig@fostering.net



EACH Child and Young Person's Health Matters: Who looks after those in care when they are ill?



Action for Sick Children (Scotland) promotes and campaigns for the highest possible standards of healthcare for all children and young people in our healthcare system which includes raising awareness of the health needs and rights of children and young people in and leaving care.

Would you like to gain a deeper understanding of the health needs and rights of the children and young people (CYP) in your care in order to better support them at times of illness and enable them to access most appropriate healthcare services?

Action for Sick Children Scotland (ASCS) is offering a **toolkit** and **training** on this topic.

As a result of funding from the Scottish Government for a project to look at healthcare issues for CYP in care at times of illness, ASCS has produced resources to help carers and professionals provide for the healthcare needs of children and young people in care. You can look at the toolkit on our website at www.ascscotland.org.uk and going to <http://www.ascscotland.org.uk/default.asp?page=85>

Toolkit contents:

- A4 poster** signposting carers and healthcare professionals to the ASC(S) website which contains information which is relevant for all carers and staff looking after children and young people in care
- Postcard** linked to the poster including specific information about resources available on the ASC(S) website
- Young People in Hospital** – guide for young people to help them prepare for hospital. Contains many other useful resources, also available as an audio version on the website
- Young People's EACH Charter** – 24-page mini-booklet containing the 10 EACH charter points, includes the YP's own interpretation
- The GP Service for Children and Young People** – a guide for carers to help them better understand and access the GP Service when caring for a child
- What to expect when a child goes to hospital** – guide for carers
- A series of podcasts** with a range of healthcare professionals who have involvement with the healthcare of LAAC to raise awareness of their different roles

Training

ASCS has developed a series of workshops using the toolkit and some of our other resources to help foster carers and others learn about the healthcare rights, needs and issues relating to the child in their care. Sample topics include:

- Children and young people's healthcare rights, Living with a long term condition e.g. asthma or diabetes,
- The GP Service, Young People in Hospital, Dental Treatment, Consent and Confidentiality

Please contact us for copies of the toolkit and to discuss your training/workshop needs.

Anne Wilson
Project Officer
Action for Sick Children (Scotland)
22 Laurie Street
Edinburgh EH6 7AB
Tel: 0131 553 6553
Email: a.wilson@ascscotland.org.uk



Action for Sick Children (Scotland) is a Scottish Charity No. SC006016 and a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland Company No. 100114, Registered Office is 22 Laurie Street, Edinburgh EH6 7AB

Dates for your diary

National Fostering Discussion Forum ('focus group meeting')
Thursday 18 November 2010
Perth, 10am til 3pm

This meeting aims to bring together foster carers and supervising social workers representing every fostering service in Scotland. It will provide the opportunity to share experience and practice nationally, feed-in views from a local level and feedback from a national perspective.

Assertive and Advocating – foster carers speaking out
Friday 4 February 2011,
Ayr, 10am til 4pm

Saturday 5 February 2011,
Glasgow, 10am til 4pm

Sunday 6 February 2011,
Stirling, 10am til 4pm

These free one-day sessions, run by the Fostering Links project, aim to offer a fun, interactive, supportive and safe opportunity for foster carer participants to explore issues in relation to getting their point across assertively and advocating on behalf of others.

For further information on any of these events, please get in touch with Sarah Crangle.

Stella comes to stay ... a story of sharing and caring

We are giving away copies of our first ever storybook.

To claim your free copy just fill out your details below and return to us:

Your name:

Your role (e.g. foster carer):

Your address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Please return to:

Ros Craig, Young People's project worker, The Fostering Network
Ingram House, 2nd floor,
227 Ingram Street, GLASGOW G1 1DA

Names of young people in your house aged 3-5*

*By providing names of young people in your home we can address the book to them when we post copies.



Fosterline UPDATE

What membership of the Fostering Network means

We get lots of questions about what membership of the Fostering Network entitles you to. We hope that the following information will reduce any confusion!

- Comprehensive legal protection insurance, including legal representation
- Access to 24/7 helplines - legal advice, including financial matters, medical advice and stress counselling helplines
- Subscription to our quarterly *Foster Care* magazine, *Fostering in Scotland* and *Kidz Biz* newsletters
- Information line and Foster Care Resource Centre – a wealth of information and resources available in our library as well as online.
- Online members area – containing much more than our main site, including free information sheets, research and reports.
- Six free *signpost* booklets
- Members prices on events, training and publications
- Member discounts including:
 - Special offers with Bollington Care specialist home insurance for foster carers, including a £10 M&S voucher
 - 10 per cent discount on Timpsons key cutting service
 - 15 per cent discount on the Jargon board game – a fun way to help young people understand fostering
 - 20 per cent discount at Early Learning Centre
- Membership events, support with foster carer recruitment, campaigns... AND MORE!

Membership of the Fostering Network provides a fantastic opportunity to be part of our campaigns and have your say, working together as the voice of foster care.

Legal insurance and legal helplines...

... the legal protection insurance is specifically to cover any legal costs relating to an allegation, such as legal representation. Remember, you must contact the legal helpline as soon as the need for legal representation arises to ensure confirmation of cover. Separate to this, our legal, stress and medical helplines can provide advice on other topics like health matters or selling your house.

Fostering services can access the legal advice line, medical advice and stress counselling service but the legal expenses insurance is available to foster carers only. The legal advice line will not offer advice to organisations on a legal matter concerning foster care if they are offering advice to a foster carer involved in the same case.

Thinking of retiring from fostering?

At recent meetings we have been recommending that foster carers who are thinking of retiring, who have retired from their role or who have been de-registered ensure they keep up their membership with the Fostering Network. We have a 'retired carers' category of membership that provides legal protection insurance cover in case an allegation is made against you retrospectively. Unfortunately allegations can be made many years after a fostering placement has ended and if membership has ceased then foster carers will not have their legal fees paid should the case go to court. Available at a reduced rate, this category provides legal protection insurance although you will no longer receive the other membership benefits.

If you would like to discuss any of the above issues or require any further information please do not hesitate to get in touch. I look forward to receiving your calls.

Katie



Hello all. I have been in this role now for six months (how time flies!) and I have really welcomed the opportunity to meet with so many foster carers and social workers at the various training and membership events I have attended over the last few months. It has been a pleasure talking to so many of you about your role as foster carers, the positives and the success stories, not to mention the many challenges that some of you face.

Permanence Orders

Fosterline has seen an increase in the number of calls this year which I hope indicates how valued the service is. For those of you that are not aware, Permanence Orders came into force last year and have replaced Parental Responsibilities Orders (PROs) for those children who were on a PRO before the legislation changed, their status now becomes a 'deemed' Permanence Order. We have received a number of queries relating to Permanence Orders with many foster carers concerned that care plans for permanence are not being implemented. We are also aware of the number of young children who have been with foster carers for a number of years and are being moved to other placements. Please let us know what your experiences have been on this issue.

Kinship Care

We have received a number of calls from kinship carers and want to remind agencies and kinship carers that Citizens Advice Scotland provide a dedicated specialist advice line for kinship carers that can give up to date information on legal and financial issues. The number for the Kinship Care Advice Line is 0844 576 2955.

The Fostering Network Scotland...

meet the team



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Deborah Cook,
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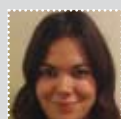
Joy Crawford,
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Heather Dickson,
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Ros Craig,
Young People's Project Worker
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Katie Alibone is our **Fosterline Scotland Worker** and can be contacted on 0141 204 1400. You can also email Katie email katie.alibone@fostering.net or email fosterlinescotland@fostering.net. Katie usually works Tuesday to Friday from 10am til 4pm and is happy to answer a range of queries from members. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with Katie if you have a fostering related question.



We're delighted to welcome **Susan Galloway**, as our new **Learning & Development Manager**. Susan took up post with us in September and has been busy coming up to speed with all our training courses as well as going along to our training sessions. We look forward to Susan introducing herself in the next edition of *Fostering in Scotland* and Susan is keen to meet with many of our members. Susan works 10am til 4pm Monday to Wednesday and 9am til 4pm on Thursdays. To get in touch with Susan, call 0141 204 1400 or email susan.galloway@fostering.net

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e scotland@fostering.net
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Other useful numbers:

The Fostering Network - London office

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

Infoline - For everyday fostering enquiries
t 020 7261 1884

Legal, medical & stress helpline

24 hours, 365 days a year
Your first point of call if an allegation arises. Queries are answered by fully qualified and registered lawyers and nurses with years of experience helping our members. Foster carers are free to discuss any subject, not just issues relating to foster care.
t 0844 581 0404

Publications & Resources

t 0844 335 1892
e orders@fosteringresources.co.uk

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