

Fostering

in Scotland

Issue 32
Winter 2010/11



the fostering network
the voice of foster care



Hello and welcome...



Hello everyone and Happy New Year!

I'm crossing my fingers that we will be enjoying some slightly warmer weather than that which we experienced in December and threw the country into chaos!

In this edition we hope to update you on what has happened over the past few months. In October we launched our fabulous book *Stella comes to stay...a story of caring and sharing*. Aimed at younger children, Stella will

help them understand and explore the issues around fostering in a relaxed and informal way.

In November we held a membership meeting in Aberdeen exploring the impact of allegations on foster carers and how best to respond if allegations take place. In the same month our focus group meeting took place in Perth. Our next meetings will take place across Scotland during March. If you are a foster carer and member of the Fostering Network check out our events page later in this edition and get in touch if any of these are of interest to you.

Our Recruitment and Retention Project came to an end in December 2010. Funded by the Scottish Government the project explored some specific areas in relation to recruitment and retention. Read on for further information on this. As a charity, the ending of this project funding highlights how reliant the

work of the Fostering Network can be on funding and donations from a range of sources. We have a number of ways you can help us to support our work so please remember to check our website for ways you can donate!

Our Learning and Development team remain busy and we have held training across the country. In addition, the Fostering Links project has also held a series of Assertiveness and Advocacy Skills training for foster carers. Further dates are diaried for these free sessions so please read on to find out more. And our Fosterline service remains busy with Katie Alibone continuing to respond to a number of various queries which our members face day to day in their fostering role.

I do hope you enjoy reading this edition and as always welcome your thoughts and contributions for future newsletters.

Best wishes,



Sarah Crangle
Fostering Links Project Worker

Dear Members,

Happy New Year everyone! It only seems like a few weeks since the last *Fostering in Scotland* newsletter but it has been another busy time for the Fostering Network.

There have been a number of membership and focus group meetings and I have enjoyed meeting some of our members from a range of agencies across Scotland. What always strikes me is the willingness of foster carers to express their views and to join in the debate where different opinions arise. The meetings were lively and Sarah Crangle deserves a mention here for her brilliant organisation and for the content of the meetings. Everyone had something to contribute!

The Fostering Network in Scotland has an Advisory Committee made up of foster carers and fostering service staff. We last met in early

November and had a full agenda. We have to face the reality of cuts in income, reductions in grants and no lessening of demand for our services. We will have to really focus on the things we do well with the support of our fundraiser Linda Ogston to fundraise hard, apply to trusts and support our work in providing more services.

At the Advisory Committee meeting, Marjorie Ruddick advised us that she would like to retire. We all owe a lot to Marjorie who has supported the Fostering Network for many years as well as delivering a lot of our training courses across Scotland. Marjorie will still be delivering many of our training courses, but we will all miss her and we hope she will be able to attend membership and focus group meetings in the future and let us have her views on the many topics we address. Katrina

Weldon also resigned from the Advisory Committee, underlining for us the competing pressures on foster carers and the problems of participating in groups relating to foster carers.

I do hope that you have had a good break and plenty of fun over the festive period. I know that for some foster carers the season will have been clouded following the deaths of young people who they had looked after. We will be thinking about you all.

With best wishes for 2011 and I look forward to seeing many of you in the New Year!



Anne Black
Chair, Scottish Advisory Committee

The Fostering Network focus on day of discussions



If you are a member of the Fostering Network and you or your local support group have issues which you would like raised at these meetings our next focus groups will take place:

- **Wednesday 2 March 2011**, Edinburgh, 10am til 2.30pm
- **Tuesday 15 March 2011**, Glasgow, 10am til 2.30pm
- **Monday 21 March 2011**, Elgin, 10am til 2.30pm

To find out more or to request a place contact Sarah Crangle.

At the recent focus group our discussions focussed on a range of topics which were suggested by some of the delegates who attended. The meeting took place in Perth Racecourse, overlooking the stunning Scone Palace grounds on 18 November. We were delighted to welcome 26 participants along representing 11 local authorities and six independent fostering providers from across Scotland.

A number of areas were discussed but high on everyone's agenda was uncertainty over the impact on fostering services of the Government's spending review. Sara Lurie commented: "The alternative to foster care is very expensive residential care.

If their [the Scottish Government's] strategy is not to increase the numbers in residential care they need to consider very carefully the investments that need to be made in foster care."

Discussions focussed on the role of foster carers in supporting contact between children and their families

and the benefits of respite care. It was clear from evaluations of the day that contact and respite are two areas which would benefit from further discussion and we hope to re-look at these in future meetings.

Our final session enabled a number of participants to speak for one minute on a fostering issue they feel strongly about. While these included 'Continuity', 'Security', 'Short Breaks', 'Respite', 'Keeping Promises' and 'Joint working' we felt foster carer Charlie Stewart's 'Ten Commandments for Stress Reduction' were of value to all, and have shared these with you in this edition!

Overall the meeting was a really positive day, with participants being able to speak very openly and honestly about areas impacting upon them. The discussions from the day were recorded by our graphic facilitator and we look forward to sharing these with you.

Ten Commandments for Stress Reduction

As suggested by foster carer,
Charlie Stewart

1. Thou shalt not be perfect or even try to be.
2. Thou shalt not try to be all things for all people.
3. Thou shalt sometimes leave things undone.
4. Thou shalt not spread thyself too thin.
5. Thou shalt learn to say 'no'.
6. Thou shalt schedule time for thy self and for thy support network.
7. Thou shalt switch thy self off and do nothing regularly.
8. Thou shalt not even feel guilty for doing nothing or saying no.
9. Thou shalt be boring, untidy, inelegant and unattractive at times.
10. Especially, thou shall not be thine own worst enemy, but be thine own best friend

Author unknown

Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Groups 'LACSIG'

Anne Black and Sara Lurie have been involved with the range of LACSIG groups which have been working with the Scottish Government to try to improve outcomes for looked after children. There are five groups working away on topics to achieve the Government's goals.

The *Culture Change Group* is exploring a range of topics about finding solutions for looked after children so that they can experience stability and security in their placements. The group is exploring areas which include delays in adoptions, care planning and placement drift and the importance of attachments for children.

As a member of the *Workforce Hub*, the Fostering Network want to ensure that foster carers are seen as an integral member of the workforce and that their contributions and needs are given equal status to other key workers in the looked after children sector.

The *Commissioning Activity Hub* aims to actively promote and support the development of strategic commissioning, e.g. between local authorities and independent and voluntary fostering providers ('Registered Fostering Providers'). As part of this, the Fostering Network has been facilitating the development of a national contract for the commissioning of fostering services.

Other groups include *Improving health outcomes and Improving learning outcomes*. The groups are looking at good practice examples and any experiences you have, good or not so good, would be welcomed. Further information on LACSIG, including remit, membership and minutes of meetings can be found on the SIRCC website:

<http://www.sircc.org.uk/lacsig>

Learning & development

UPDATE

Susan Galloway

It has been a busy few months since I joined the Fostering Network and the time has flown by! I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting foster carers and social workers from across the country and hearing your views, experiences and many great ideas. 2011 promises to be another busy year with a number of both 'in house' and open courses already planned.

We were delighted when the Fostering Network redesigned the competency based assessment for foster carers, launching *The Skills to Foster Assessment Materials* last year, along with training to provide support in using these materials. Aimed at social workers who assess carers, this course helps participants to achieve best practice in conducting assessments using our new materials. With lots of practical exercises - including opportunities to practice using the materials on case studies - our first course in January was oversubscribed and we are looking forward to offering this course again later this year. Please watch this space or contact us for further details

From March we will run another set of some of our most asked-for open courses:

- **More than a Voice**, Wednesday 23 March, Glasgow. Providing you with the tools and ideas to effectively engage with and involve young people.
- **Managing Allegations against Foster Carers**, Tuesday 29 March, Glasgow. To increase your awareness of approaches to minimise the risk of allegations and strategies for coping if they occur.
- **The Role of the Supervising Social Worker**, Tuesday 19 & Wednesday 20 April, Glasgow. This two day course will provide an opportunity to identify ways of supporting foster carers within a supervisory relationship.
- **Men in Foster Care**, Saturday 14 May, Glasgow. Delivered by a male foster carer and designed to allow participants to speak openly and



confidentially about fostering from a male perspective.

- **The Skills to Foster Leaders' Course**, Tuesday 21 - Thursday 23 June, Glasgow. This three day course has been recently updated to include a wide range of facilitation tools to help trainers draw out the best from prospective foster carers.

Please check our website or contact our learning and development team for more information.

Online learning

Please also watch out for our exciting new online training courses on six essential topics:

- Safer Caring
- Health
- Education
- Attachment
- Contact
- Behaviour

The courses are highly interactive yet simply structured to allow foster carers to easily pick up from where they left their previous point of study. There is no time limit to complete the courses and a certificate of completion is sent out at the end of every course. Each of the six courses is also complemented by a book by the same title. Please visit the learning and development section of our website for more information and a useful Q&A for individuals and for organisations.

Finally, I'd like to thank all the course participants I have met so far for sharing so openly with me and with our trainers. We look forward to meeting many more of you as we deliver our training across the country in 2011.

Big Yin backs launch of Glasgow's campaign to attract more foster carers and adopters

Billy Connolly recently made an emotional and touching appeal in support of Glasgow City Council's campaign to recruit new foster carers and adoptive parents for the city.

In his first public act since receiving the Freedom of the City of Glasgow, Billy described the anguish he feels from knowing that children in modern Glasgow still suffer from the neglect of their parents. The world renowned entertainer said it was 'distressing' that there are young people in the city who feel 'unwanted and unloved' by those around them.

He added that this was also 'unnecessary when there are families prepared to give children a happy, loving home'. Over 1,000 children in Glasgow currently require to be accommodated with foster carers and that has led Billy to urge anyone considering fostering or

adoption to contact Glasgow City Council as a way to change a young life for the better.

Billy's heartfelt call for help has come as a welcome boost to the launch of Glasgow's *Be Part of Someone's Memories* campaign to recruit more foster carers and adopters. As part of the campaign, Glaswegians from all walks of life have contributed memories of their own childhood including Sir Alex Ferguson, Clare Grogan, broadcaster Kaye Adams, Peter Capaldi, Coronation Street actor Gray O'Brien, top business woman Michelle Mone, musician Ricky Ross and Glasgow's Lord Provost, Bob Winter.

Anyone wishing to find out more about the campaign can visit www.glasgow.gov.uk/memories, phone 08452 700609 or email families.children@sw.glasgow.gov.uk

Foster Care Fortnight 2011

The theme for next year's campaign has been announced. Launching on Monday 16 May 2011, **Fostering: time to care** will highlight the urgent need for more foster carers and call on everyone from political leaders to the general public to get behind fostering and support children in care.



To help our members get ready for the campaign a guide is being sent out to them in the New Year as well as being available to download from www.fostering.net/members

We are also running a workshop to support our members to prepare for *Foster Care Fortnight 2011*. *Getting Ready for Foster Care Fortnight* will take place on Thursday 17 March in Edinburgh. Please contact us for further information.

Fosterplus Conference

The Impact of Trauma and Neglect on the Developing Child

Thursday 26 May, 9.30 – 16.30
Our Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh

A child's development is profoundly influenced by experience. Experiences – good and bad – shape the organisation of the brain. The ultimate effect impacts emotional, social, cognitive and physiological functioning.

This presentation by Dr Bruce D. Perry M.D. Ph.D. will review

clinical work and current research that can help us better understand developmental trauma, neglect and the relational problems that arise from neglect and threat. An overview will be provided that suggests new directions for parenting strategies, clinical practice, program development and policy.

For further information or to book please call Joan Elliott on 01506 443434, email jelliott@fosterplus.co.uk

Kibble Education and Care Centre is proud to present:

Promoting Youth Participation

within Intensive Fostering Services

Working together to give young people a voice

Thursday March 3rd 2011, 13.30 - 16.00

St Mirren Stadium, Paisley



INTENSIVE
FOSTERING
SERVICES

For the second year running, IFS has been awarded 3 "excellent" grades by the Care Commission

This seminar will:

Benefit and increase people's knowledge of promoting participation within a range of children and young people's services, particularly in the context of intensive fostering services.

Main Presentation

After an opening address by Heather Gray, Chief Executive of Who Cares? Scotland, the main presentation by Billy Penders (young adult in supported care, IFS), Joe Devine (Foster Carer, IFS), Rona Woodward (Lecturer of Social Work, University of Stirling) and Kay Gibson (IFS Manager) will discuss recent research by the University of Stirling and consider practical ways to engage children and young people in shaping their own services, particularly those of Kibble's Intensive Fostering Services. There will be opportunities to meet young people and foster carers from Intensive Fostering Services, and ask questions at the end of the event.

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BOOK ONLINE:
www.kibble.org/events
Telephone: 0141 842 3332

Focus on... Respite

While it is not outlined in legislation respite is seen as an integral part of fostering.

At our recent focus group meeting it was one area on which we focussed our discussions. It was clear that throughout the country practice varied significantly across fostering services.

At the meeting it was agreed that to achieve a quality experience for each child, and for foster carers, respite should be built into each child's care plan from the early stages. For the child, effective and timely planning, taking into account the child's needs and where possible using regular respite carers will provide continuity and benefits.

For foster carers, a break provides time to recharge and refresh.

One foster carer shared: "I foster a lot of teenagers. Some of them abscond some of them drink and do drugs. I try and get a weekend off every six weeks, but that sometimes doesn't work at all. I would just love to just be able to shut my door one Friday night and say, I have got the weekend to myself, I have got the house to myself. I can meet my own family for once for lunch rather than my daughter saying, have you got space in your diary. Just things like that, I would love to have one weekend that is mine."

Here, two foster carers share their views on what respite care means for them...

Respite or Break - What's in a Name?

By David Eade

"Respite: Delay permitted in the discharge of an obligation or suffering of a penalty" (Oxford Dictionary).

My family have been providing 'Respite' for a number of years. The majority of this time has been giving breaks to children of unpaid carers, but for the last four years we have worked for Acton for Children as short break foster carers. We have found the same issues apply working with both sectors.

Over the last few years a lot of work has been done by charities and the Scottish Government on short break provision. This has centred on unpaid carers but a lot of

guidance on short break provision could be used to create a 'best practice' for short breaks for children in care. This is probably a long term project, but as a start I would suggest changing the terminology from respite, to short break. "Respite is often associated with more institutional forms of service based stays. Short break implies the prospect of positive outcomes for everyone involved and shared benefits." (*More than a Break; Shared Care Scotland, March 2010*).

I am in favour of anything that promotes a short break as a positive experience for the young person. I have lost count of the times I have heard a foster carer claim ownership of 'their respite'. It's no wonder that the young people are anxious when they are told they are 'going on respite' and it can't be easy for a young person to explain to friends what 'respite' is. A break, weekend, or holiday everyone can understand and is much more inclusive. I have never seen Thomas Cook advertise a 'respite'.

Change is difficult, especially terminology used over many years. (I still eat Marathons) Everybody in the fostering world seems to use the term 'respite' from social workers to the Fostering Network. We have managed to change



a lot of paperwork in our agency from 'respite' to short break, but it is still controlled by the Respite Co-ordinator. Old habits die hard. It wouldn't cost much to change and it will have positive benefits for the young people we look after. I nearly forgot, "Break: To interrupt, change". (Oxford Dictionary)

From full time to respite care

By Marion Crangle

As foster carers, we got our first baby 22 years ago when the youngest of our own four children was six years old. Since then we have welcomed two boys permanently into our family and they are now 17 and 21. We have cared for lots of babies and toddlers, family groups, teenagers and even a young mum and her baby. Although we started as short term carers, after we got our two permanent foster sons we went on to do a lot of emergency and respite care as well. We've now looked after 94 children.

We've experienced a lot of challenges, some heartache, frustrations but certainly a whole lot of pleasure.

This summer, with my husband now retired, we decided after a lot of soul searching that we wanted more time for ourselves to pursue our passion for sailing. We knew that we would miss our fostering role and it was suggested that perhaps we might be used as respite carers during the winter months. The local authority was happy to still have us able to foster for them and we have been very busy since we started full time as respite foster carers back in October.

I'm aware that across the country a lot of people do not feel the need to have respite, preferring to have full time care for the child. Others may feel guilty about asking for respite, but I believe respite can be very beneficial to the whole fostering family. Children of foster carers have to share their mum and dad, their home and their lives with their foster brothers and sisters and while fostering placements often work out well, foster carers have to remember that it is really therapeutic to have special time just for you and your family. In our local authority, foster carers have the opportunity to take a week's paid holiday if they wish, as long as they also have a proper holiday with their foster children at least once a year.

Children need respite for short periods of time for many reasons. One of the regular fostering placements we have enables a

mum and her youngest son to travel to Robin House Children's Hospice on the banks of Loch Lomond. There she has the opportunity to get support and some time for herself while her youngest son receives care and play. I look after his brother who also benefits from his own short break with us.

Placement breakdowns unfortunately do happen and if they do the young person has to be moved, sometimes with very little notice. My husband and I are able to give the young people a short term home and security. Even if the placement has not yet reached breakdown, social work may ask us to accommodate a child for a short period to allow their foster carers a breathing space.

At present we have a three year old 'live wire'. His foster carers are very committed to him but he doesn't sleep for more than a couple of hours at a time and is constantly on the go. His foster carers are exhausted and are benefiting from a week to recharge their batteries.

Children may require overnight care if the foster family have a special event and no-one in their family is available or has been Disclosure checked by the social work department as their respite carers. As happens in many places, our local authority encourages new and existing carers to identify a friend or family member and the relevant checks are then carried out. This means they can have a babysitter if they need one who is known to the child and who the department are happy for the foster carers to use. Sometimes however this is not a possibility and then we may be asked to help.

Respite is hard work. You have the children for only short periods so you don't get to know them as well as you would like to. You rely on the verbal and written records that come with the child for any information about them. A change in an environment can be difficult for the children. They may fret for their own parents or foster carers but I'm always amazed at the resilience of children and if properly prepared they can really benefit from their break. We have never been busier and while keeping track of children's clothing and toys that have to be re-packed and returned can be difficult, along with continually changing beds, our decision to 'retire' was definitely the right one for us!

Our thanks to both David and Marion for sharing their views.

New PVG scheme launches

In February 2011 the Scottish Government will introduce a new membership scheme to replace and improve upon the current disclosure arrangements for people who work with vulnerable groups.

The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme will deliver upon the provisions outlined in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) (Scotland) Act 2007. Being phased in over a four year period, the scheme will see all those who regularly work or volunteer with vulnerable groups, including children in foster care, becoming members.

In the first year the scheme will involve, for example, all those new to regulated work, or changing posts becoming members. Retrospective checking will then be carried out during years two to four. The scheme replaces the current disclosure checks, and will reduce the need to complete a detailed application form every time a check is required.

The scheme aims to reduce the need to complete a detailed application form every time a disclosure check is required, striking a balance between proportionate protection and robust regulation.

Further training, guidance and information on the scheme is available on the web: www.infoscotland.com/pvgscheme

Ros Craig,

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

Well folks, it's been a quick year with lots going on at the Young People's project since I started last February! So what have I been doing? Well the post kicked off with getting to know the organisation which included an induction in our London office where I got to know lots of the staff and understand their roles. I then attended some innovative training in York for young people to sit on fostering panels. It was soon time for the first issue of our children's newsletter and through contacting many of you I was able to gain some really great material from many young people. The children then entered a competition to name the newsletter and Nathan from

Edinburgh won with *Kidz Biz*. We all think the name really suits the newsletter now and we have more and more input from young people, which always helps us to produce a high quality newsletter for and by young people.

I've been lucky enough to meet children and young people with fostering experience from areas across Scotland: Edinburgh, Stirlingshire, Glasgow, Dundee and the Highlands. I visited a few established young people's groups who were kind enough to let me see what they get up to and how they organise their groups. Many of you have even had me at your homes for some DVD consultation work that I was undertaking, so a huge 'thank you' to everyone who has welcomed me into their home or their young people's group.

One major piece of work that we completed this year was to produce a storybook resource for 3 -5 year old sons and daughters of foster carers: *Stella comes to stay - a story of caring and sharing*. This involved a group of 8 - 11 year olds attending a drama/storyline workshop, taking the story home to comment on and meeting back at the studio to make changes to the story and illustrations. We read over the story many times to make certain it was the best it could be and then it could finally go to print. One last piece of work I had to do was to write and design the parent cards to guide the adults through the important issues in the book. To celebrate and launch the story we were very lucky to have a very special guest to read *Stella*, Kevin from the Singing Kettle! We had a great turn-out on Halloween at the Macrobert arts centre in Stirling with over sixty foster carers, social workers, children and young people joining us to hear the story being read by Kevin. We also had complimentary free copies of *Stella* for all who attended, Halloween goody bags, Professional photographs with Kevin and *Stella* cardboard cut-out, art/craft activities for the children and apple dooking! It was a great success and I would like to thank all the children who helped write the story and all who joined us to launch it.

Stella is available to purchase and we also have some copies of *Stella comes to stay - a story of caring and sharing* available free of charge to foster carers in Scotland. Contact me to find out more.



After three issues of *Kidz Biz* and one more to go, we're always looking for new voices. There are many, many children and young people who receive the newsletter into their households and I would urge them to get in touch with their ideas, writing, drawings, comments or photos.

You might be aware that we have funding to produce a DVD for and by 8-11 year old children in foster care. I have met with lots of children through home visits, workshops and meetings to gain their thoughts, ideas and feelings about foster care. We are now at the design stage and the DVD producer is currently putting together all of the character suggestions

into the story that has been produced. We will soon have script together and will also be sending out an e-survey for you to complete with any 8-11 year old children in foster care in your household. Please look out for this in your email inbox, and if you can help us to gain their ideas I will be very grateful! If you are not already on my mailing list then please drop me an email on ros.craig@fostering.net

All that is left for me to say is that I hope you had a lovely holiday period, and all the best for 2011. May you all be merry and wise!

Ros



PS: Here is a photo of me and my new puppy Baxter – you can read all about him in your copy of *Kidz Biz*! Read on to find out what some of the young people have been up to in Moray's children who foster group...

Activity day in Moray



Ten of our foster carer's sons and daughters aged between six and fifteen headed off in the minibus to Buckie High School where a fun packed day of team and parachute games were enjoyed in the morning, followed by activities in the gym hall including badminton, table tennis, basket ball, hula hoops and table games in the afternoon.

As part of the day before lunch we played the stepping game when we shared information about our interests and experience of foster care. After lunch we used interviews and fact file exercises to get to know each other further including views on being involved in fostering.

The day worked really well with much chatting, giggling and new friendships forming. We were delighted how the young people supported each other. We ended with a treat at a local tea shop where lovely cakes were eaten with much enthusiasm. With half an hour to spare we invaded the Fochabers play park arriving back in Elgin with happy but some very tired young people... and support workers!



Congratulations



Congratulations to our team of intrepid trekkers who took on the China Challenge, trekking the Great Wall of China in October. Through their fundraising the group have so far managed to raise over £97,000! Well done to all! To find out more, why not check

out the Fostering Network's blog: www.fostering.net/blogs/fostering-network

If this tempts you to take part in a future challenge on behalf of the Fostering Network, Spring 2012 will see a team heading off for Nepal – to find out more please get in touch!

Recruitment and Retention project

We were delighted to have Heather Dickson as part of our team at the Fostering Network. She joined us last January on a one year contract to do specific work on the recruitment and retention of foster carers. In addition to running very successful best practice exchange workshops, issuing an e-zine and promoting the panel members database, Heather led the Fostering Network's work on developing Best Practice Guidance for Purchasers and Providers when commissioning foster care placements and facilitated a shared service pilot, involving four local authorities in coming together for a shared recruitment campaign which 'kicked off' at the start of

Foster Care Fortnight last May. The Best Practice Guidance and a review of the shared service pilot can both be viewed on our web-site. The Scottish Government funding which allowed for this successful project has now ended and we wish Heather the very best for her future.

The Fostering Network is now focusing on this year's *Foster Care Fortnight* and members can now download a guide to support you in your preparations. Additionally, we are delighted to offer a workshop: **Getting Ready for Foster Care Fortnight** on 17 March 2011 to assist your planning for this year's campaign.

Dates for your diary

As a member of the Fostering Network you may be interested in some of our forthcoming events:

Assertiveness and Advocacy Skills*

Friday 4 February,
Edinburgh,
10am til 4pm

Assertiveness and Advocacy Skills*

Saturday 5 February,
Paisley,
10am til 4pm

Assertiveness and Advocacy Skills*

Sunday 6 February,
Stirling, 10am til 4pm

Working and Learning Together (free 'focus group' event)

Wednesday 2 March,
Edinburgh,
10am til 2.30pm

Working and Learning Together (free 'focus group' event)

Tuesday 15 March,
Glasgow,
10am til 2.30pm

Getting Ready for Foster Care Fortnight (training workshop)

Thursday 17 March,
Edinburgh

More than a Voice (training course)

Wednesday 23 March,
Glasgow

Working and Learning Together (free 'focus group' event)

Monday 21 March,
Elgin, 10am til 2.30pm

Managing Allegations against Foster Carers (training course)

Tuesday 29 March,
Glasgow

The Role of the Supervising Social Worker (three-day course)

Tuesday 19 & Wednesday
20 April,
Glasgow

Introduction to the media*

Thursday 28 April,
Glasgow,
10am til 4pm

Men in Foster Care (training course)

Saturday 14 May,
Glasgow

Friends with Facebook – keeping safe online*

Wednesday 18 May,
Edinburgh,
10.30am til 1pm

When Things Go Wrong: Responding to Allegations against Foster Carers*

Tuesday 24 May,
Glasgow,
10.30am til 1pm

Friends with Facebook – keeping safe online*

Thursday 9 June,
Glasgow
10.30am til 1pm

The Skills to Foster Leaders' Course (three-day course)

Tuesday 21 – Thursday 23
June, Glasgow

*These events are free and aimed at foster carer members of the Fostering Network

Remember, as a member of the Fostering Network in addition to our wide range of benefits, you will get a discount on all our training courses.

For further information please get in touch,
t 0141 204 1400 e scotland@fostering.net



Fosterline

UPDATE

Hello and a happy new year to you all. I hope you all enjoyed the festive season and weren't too disrupted by the snowy weather. Fosterline Scotland has been going from strength to strength over the last year so it is disappointing to announce that the Scottish Government's funding came to an end on the 31 December 2010. Fosterline Scotland is able to offer the same level of service until the end of March and we are currently seeking continuation funding and considering how we can deliver the service after this date. We welcome any suggestions which may help with this situation. Over the winter period some of the key areas which Fosterline Scotland has received calls on include:

- Allegations
- Leaving Care/After Care
- Disruption of placements
- Finances
- Legislation
- Respite

Allegations continue to cause a huge amount of stress to foster carers and their families although it does appear that in many areas investigations are being completed in a relatively quick timescale which we hope is due to agencies following the Scottish Government's *Best*

Practice Guidance on Responding to Allegations Against Foster Carers. Further feedback also suggests that many agencies are providing good support to their carers during an investigation which we only hope will continue. We remind agencies of the importance of keeping their foster carers as informed as possible on the processes and stages of an allegation investigation. Additionally, as mentioned in the

Fosterline Scotland is able to offer the same level of service until the end of March and we are currently seeking continuation funding and considering how we can deliver the service after this date.

summer newsletter regarding changes to our judicial system, a case was heard at the Supreme Court in October regarding being held and interviewed by the police for up to six hours without the right to access a solicitor. The case being heard was claiming that this was a breach of an individual's human rights. The case has been upheld and now in Scots law suspects have the right to a solicitor. For foster carers who may find themselves being interviewed by the police regarding an allegation you now have the right to access a solicitor from the outset. Please phone the

members legal helpline to initiate the process.

Fosterline Scotland has received a high volume of calls on the issue of respite/holiday entitlement so I thought it might be of benefit to clarify the legislative position. Unfortunately there is nothing in the fostering standards or regulations which prescribe holiday entitlement for foster carers. Holiday entitlement varies from agency to agency and is often met with a variety of views and opinion. As an organisation the Fostering Network feel that it is imperative that foster carers are

offered holidays to support their demanding role and that whilst in the main they are organised and planned for, we acknowledge that sometimes provision needs to be flexible to respond to individual need and difficulties. Respite can be crucial in supporting the continuation of placements and therefore find it disappointing to hear feedback where foster carers

have to 'fight' for a break. We hope you find our article on the issue interesting and welcome any further comments.

I look forward to receiving your calls.

Katie



The Fostering Network Scotland...

meet the team



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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

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