

# Fostering

*in Scotland*

Issue 33  
Spring 2011

**In this issue...**

**Celebrating 25 years of the  
Fostering Network in Scotland**

**Learning and development**

**Dates for your diary**

**And more!**



the fostering network  
the voice of foster care





# Hello and welcome...

in Scotland newsletters over the past ten years.

In this edition we have some dates of forthcoming events for your diaries – some of these are free, funded by the Big Lottery Fund. We also have some further dates for our popular open training courses, delivered by our experienced learning & development team. Make sure you get in touch if any of these are of interest to you.

Also included with this edition is our fantastic feedback report from our national focus group held last November. Among a range of issues, discussions included:

- Contact
- Short breaks
- Budget cuts
- Making connections

We hope you enjoy reading this report and hearing the issues affecting others across the country. As always we

welcome your thoughts and views, so why not get in touch and let us know your perspective.

This years *Foster Care Fortnight* launches on 16 May 2011. This UK wide fostering campaign promotes foster care and the urgent need to recruit more foster carers. In our next edition we would love to share how you have celebrated *Foster Care Fortnight*, so please send in your news and pictures.

And finally, make sure you get in touch to come along to the launch of our fantastic new DVD, *Consequences*, made by and for young people which is taking place on Sunday 5 June in Stirling.

Happy reading!

**Sarah Crangle**

Fostering Links project worker

**Welcome to the latest edition** of *Fostering in Scotland*, the quarterly newsletter from the Fostering Network for our members in Scotland.

What makes this edition even more special is that it marks ten years of the Fostering Network sharing information across Scotland through our newsletter after our first edition was circulated back in May 2001! I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Gus Campbell who has designed every one of the last 33 editions of our *Fostering*

## Dear Members,

**After a long winter** it's nice to finally see some Spring sunshine! I hope that the sun will shine more often as we head towards the summer holidays.

At the Fostering Network we have had an eventful few months and there has been a lot of excellent publicity about the amazing work that foster carers and social workers do with looked after children and how the Fostering Network can support you all.

The highlight was the 25th Anniversary celebrations in the National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh on a terrible night of wind and lashing rain. Despite that we all enjoyed the occasion and the stories from foster carers and young people about some of the changes they have seen over the 25 years were inspiring. Cheryl Legget – fast acquiring musical fame – sang a beautiful and moving

song reminding us of some of the consequences of care and the unintended ways that adults can make it more painful for the young person by lack of consistency and availability. Thanks to the generosity of Paul Fee and Gillian from Irwin Stuart Design we have a DVD of the event that we hope to show at future meetings.

Celebrating 25 years of the Fostering Network in Scotland created a lot of media interest and many of the newspapers interviewed Sara Lurie and foster carers which helped highlight the need for more foster carers across Scotland.

At the Scottish Advisory Committee we welcomed two new members, Marie Guckian from the West of Scotland and Stewart Duncan from the East. I am sure they will make a really important contribution to the committee. Mike Rosenbaum, Chair of the UK Board is to attend the next

Advisory Committee in May and I hope that we can share the ideas for change with Scottish members after we all hear more about the proposals.

Sara Lurie and I have been busy working with the Scottish Government to take forward work to improve outcomes for looked after children. This is a three year programme and I hope later newsletters can give you more detail of the work and some of the recommendations for future improvements we know are needed.

Altogether a very busy few months but then foster carers are no strangers to that!

With best wishes

**Anne Black**

Chair, Scottish Advisory Committee

# Fostering Links project update



The **Fostering Links** project has been busy over the past few months with a range of activities and events. In February we held three assertiveness and advocacy skills sessions in Edinburgh, Paisley and Stirling. Participants who attended said:

*'A good knowledge and understanding of advocacy and assertiveness and the skills to implement in my day to day experiences.'*

*'I feel more confident to speak in behalf of the child in my care.'*

*'Reinforcing confidence to speak up on how I feel and to have confidence in myself.'*

*'Both sessions were very useful and very different. Both made me think of scenarios/real life issues. The role play was fabulous!'*



Three **focus group events** across Scotland in March allowed foster carers and social workers the opportunity to meet up and discuss what they feel to be the burning issues in foster care today.

With meetings held in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Elgin a total of 36 participants took part and discussions highlighted similar themes emerging across the country. The prominent issues included the need for more foster carers, contact, finance, social worker caseloads and young people leaving care.

We hope to build on the feedback from these events and a postcard campaign is planned for May 2011 to support our members to encourage politicians to pledge their support to foster care.

We are currently planning our next groups and if you would like to be involved in the planning, please contact Sarah.

## Membership events – dates for your diary

We still have some places at our forthcoming membership workshops:

- Wednesday 18 May, Edinburgh  
*Facebook – friend or foe?*  
Social networking and keeping safe online
- Tuesday 24 May, Glasgow  
*When things go wrong – responding to allegations against foster carers*
- Thursday 9 June, Glasgow  
*Facebook – friend or foe?*  
Social networking and keeping safe online

If you are interested in finding out more about these sessions, or to request a place please contact Sarah Crangle, [e sarah.crangle@fostering.net](mailto:sarah.crangle@fostering.net) [t 0141 204 1400](tel:01412041400)



Feedback from our event in November 2010

## The cuts – how are they impacting upon you?

The **Fostering Network** want to hear from you what is happening in your area. Some of the things we are hearing about include:

- Mileage allowance cut
- Pay cut for new foster carers
- Foster carers supervising contact
- No respite provision
- No money for training courses
- Freezing allowances
- Foster carer diary no longer provided free of charge

Anything, no matter how big or small, will give us a chance to build up a picture across the UK of what is going on in fostering services as a result of cuts to local authority budgets. Share your experience

e [sarah.crangle@fostering.net](mailto:sarah.crangle@fostering.net)

## Update on 'LACSIG'

The *Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group* (LACSIG) are holding a number of regional workshops across Scotland to engage as widely as possible with those currently involved in designing and delivering children's services.

These will take place:

**Friday 27 May, Inverness**

**Thursday 16 June, Glasgow**

**Friday 17 June, Edinburgh**

**Thursday 23 June, Aberdeen**

**Thursday 30 June, Stirling**

The workshops are relevant to everyone with responsibility for delivering services for looked after children and young people. This includes key decision-makers such as elected members, senior council officers and resource managers as well as those involved in planning, commissioning and contracting personnel. They also need to hear from planning partners and key stakeholders namely, service providers, colleagues in health services, children, young people and their families and/or their representatives.

To find out more visit  
[www.sircc.org.uk/lacsig](http://www.sircc.org.uk/lacsig)

# The Scottish Child Law Centre

The **Scottish Child Law Centre** is a registered charity whose core aims include the promotion of the understanding of Scottish Child Law. They are the only Law Centre in Scotland that works exclusively for children and young people.

The Scottish Child Law Centre provide services throughout the whole of Scotland, including:

Advice Line, email and text service answers approximately 3,000 queries a year about children's rights and child law.

- *Leaflets on various topics of child law*
- *Training to individuals, groups and organisations on various aspects of Scottish Law as it affects children*
- *Parental Rights and Responsibilities*
- *The Children's Hearing System*
- *Children in Care*

- *Anti Social Behaviour Legislation*
- *Children, Sex and the Law*
- *The proposed changes to sexual offences legislation*
- *Children's Rights*
- *Children, Medical Consent and Confidentiality*
- *Child Protection*

### Forthcoming training dates:

- *Record Keeping and the Data Protection Act for Those Working with the under 16's*  
Tuesday 3 May, 1pm - 4pm
- *Basic Education Law*  
Tuesday 10 May, 1pm - 4pm
- *Advocacy and Representation Skills For Those Working With Children*  
Tuesday 17 May  
10am - 4pm



Please contact Scottish Child Law Centre [www.sclc.org.uk](http://www.sclc.org.uk)  
t 0131 667 6333, e [enquiries@sclc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sclc.org.uk)

## Listen more, assume less two – find out more about the views of young people that you work with

**East Lothian Council** have recently launched a new report, *Listen more, assume less two*. The authority and their Community Planning partners are committed to making sure that looked after children and young people and their families and carers are involved in making decisions and planning for their care, education and development. Since 2007, the authority has employed an Involvement Officer, Lisa Shine.

Her role is to set up systems, initiatives and procedures to involve children, young people and their families in how they plan and deliver integrated services in East Lothian. *Listen more, assume less two* follows on from her

first report (produced in 2010), *Listen more and assume less*.

*Listen more, assume less two* will provide you with:

- a summary of the views of looked after young people and young people at school (from Viewpoint and Lime surveys) on the things that affect them
- an update on progress made in meeting the actions listed in *Listen more and assume less*
- what needs to be done to address new issues arising from consultation and the involvement of children, young people and their families.

Available online, the report is only available to download or print off as needed. Visit: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk)



## Free books for under 5's



**Scotland's** looked after children are to receive a free book every month until their fifth birthday thanks to a new partnership with country and western superstar Dolly Parton.

The Dollywood Foundation has been working with the Scottish Government and Scottish Book Trust to bring the Imagination Library to Scotland.

Each of the country's 3,341 looked after children will receive their own personal library of up to 60 books, improving their literacy and

encouraging their parents and carers to read with them.

It's a real first for the UK that has come about because all the organisations involved are determined to make a fundamental contribution to the lives and prospects of all children in Scotland, especially those who are looked after. Literacy, reading and above all access to quality books are some of the key building blocks in the early years which help lead to fulfilling and productive lives.

## Scotland's New Centre of Excellence for looked after children

**From the 1 April** onwards, a New Centre for Excellence came into being. This New Centre will incorporate and build on the work of SIRCC (Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care) and aims to provide the best possible outcomes for children and young people who are looked after and those leaving care by supporting a range of professionals, including foster carers and parents.

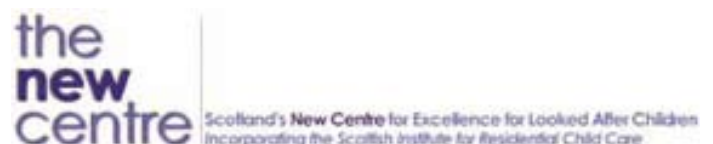
Foster carers are central to the work we'll be undertaking, and over the next few months we will be working closely with a range of new partners to develop learning opportunities for workers across a wide range of settings, for parents and carers who support children and young people throughout the care spectrum. There will be many opportunities for inter-professional training, such as the new distance learning social pedagogy. This comes from a recognition of a need to ensure that young people who are looked after are more likely to prosper if foster carers along with all the other professionals working with young people develop a shared understanding, learn from each other and plan young people's care with the needs of the young person at the centre of all activity. We hope that the New Centre will provide just that opportunity. The New Centre will be guided by the work of

the Looked After Children's Strategic Implementation Group, (LACSIG), and we are really pleased to have Sara Lurie's expert input on the Centre's Transitional Management Committee.

The new Centre for Excellence will have a brand new website in early September, which will be the home for a wide range of accessible learning resources, and where you will find our research, presentations and video clips from our conferences. You will be able to book on to courses, training and events directly through our website. You can find out about events being hosted throughout the sector (not just by the new Centre) in a collective events calendar. We will be seeking the help and feedback of a range of stakeholders on our new website so that it meets your needs and requirements.

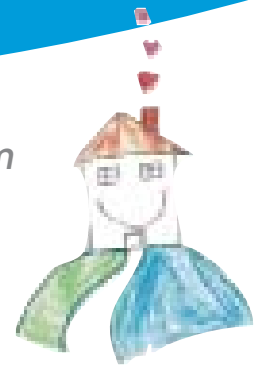
In the meantime, we are really keen to hear from foster carers about any suggestions or ideas you may have in terms of training or support you feel the New Centre could provide. Please sign up for regular updates, and contact us at: [www.thenewcentre.org.uk](http://www.thenewcentre.org.uk) or [thenewcentre@strath.ac.uk](mailto:thenewcentre@strath.ac.uk)

**Jennifer Davidson**  
Director, The New Centre of Excellence for Looked After Children



# What can a foster carer expect from SWIIS Foster Care Scotland to support their learning and development?

SWIIS Foster Care Scotland recently filmed a short promotional film for the Open University in Scotland to highlight the partnership working they have been committed to over the past two years. SWIIS' Training and Development Co-ordinator Roy Lawrence discusses some of their work...



It was great to look at the various projects we have been involved in, but what I found most remarkable was the development journey set out by one of our foster carers, Carol Craig, highlighting her achievements and personal growth through learning. Carol has achieved two awards, is undertaking another at the moment and was already looking at where she would like to go next. This is alongside her comprehensive training record, using the wide range of courses offered through our own Training Calendar.

This led me to think about what any foster carer could expect to access through the SWIIS *Learning and Development* service. What opportunities exist in relation to training, qualifications, skills development and working groups?

First of all they can expect to receive a comprehensive range of training, both mandatory and optional, to meet their ongoing need to deliver a high quality service to the young people placed with us. This includes courses we have co-designed with the OU in key practice areas, available only through SWIIS. Over the last year we've been involved in a project between the OU in England & Scotland to co-design and pilot a suite of courses under the banner of *Developing Effective Practice in Health and Social Care*. In all, 21 courses over six subject areas will have been delivered by the OU across Scotland before June, including:

- Attachment & Life Story Work
- Evaluating Professional Practice and Personal Effectiveness
- Enhancing Inter-Professional and Organisational Communication

- Involving the Service User Perspective in Service Planning
- Reflective Supervision, and others.

Due to our recent approval from SQA, foster carers can apply to undertake an SVQ Level 3 or 4 award in Children & Young People through our newly established Assessment Centre. Their award will be delivered by SWIIS staff who will also access qualifications, i.e. the Assessor and Verifier awards, through the Centre. As part of our pilot intake we are also providing places for Fife Council foster carers and we are keen to further develop the range of organisations who we provide this service to.

Our carers can be [and are] part of a number of on-going learning and development projects that underpin our multi-disciplinary and participatory approach.

*'I am grateful to SWIIS for supplying the funding and support to enable me to take my first step into OU learning. I have now finished two courses – Y156 Understanding Children and the K101 Introduction to Health & Social Care – and at present I am doing the VQ in Children & Young People, attached to K101. SWIIS has given me the incentive to further my learning which will help in my work as a foster carer. I now feel that I have gained both knowledge and experience which I hope to pass on to others, whether through training or on a one-to-one basis in talking to other carers.'*  
Carol Craig, foster carer



# Learning & development update

Carers from all regions are part of our 'case study' working group to support the SSSC research on the benefits of using the 'Continuous Learning Framework' within the foster care service.

Carers are driving our development of a formal Mentoring programme, co-writing the procedural documents, designing joint training and briefing their peer group on the benefits of becoming a 'Mentor'.

Carers are a key part of the working group to design and deliver *The Skills to Foster* course within SWIIS and are supported to undertake the Fostering Network's *Training for Trainers*.

These examples provide a framework for foster carers to create an individual learning plan that supports their personal developmental growth, but also ensures that their core learning provides a solid practice base to continue to provide the high quality placements to children and young people that local authorities expect from us.

At present SWIIS are working with partners to investigate the area of Social Pedagogy, leading to a potential national fostering pilot project with the Fostering Network, SIRCC and Thomas Corum Research Unit at London University, which will provide further learning opportunities for our carers and employees.

SWIIS hope to continue to develop learning opportunities for foster carers from across Scotland and are keen to open out learning opportunities.

To find out more or to discuss further, please contact Roy Lawrence, Training & Development Co-ordinator, t 01383 842 284 or e Roy.Lawrence@swiis.com

**Our thanks to Roy for contributing this article.**

The **Fostering Network** are delighted that our training courses continue to be well attended and our recent events have also included three new open courses: *The Skills to Foster Assessment Materials*, *More than A Voice – engaging and empowering young people* and *Managing Allegations against Foster Carers*.

The *More than a Voice* training day allowed participants with a range of experience to think creatively about how to engage more effectively with the children and young people they work with,

*'The training has inspired me in many ways; I have just designed a 'celebration' board to highlight foster kids and children who foster achievements. I have also designed a 'wishing tree' board again for carers and young people to put forward what they would like from our service.'*  
**Jill Watson, Sycamore Families**

If you missed these sessions don't worry as we hope to run these courses again soon – please get in touch to find out more.

## Few remaining places on our open courses...

We still have a few places remaining on our popular *Men in Foster Care* course and *The Skills to Foster Leaders'* Course.

### **Men in Foster Care**

Saturday 14 May  
Ramada Jarvis, Glasgow  
Members price: £90+VAT, includes lunch. (Non members: £180+VAT).

*'I will recommend that all males in our agency do this course as mandatory! The Fostering Network's best course yet!!'*

*'All of the course was five star!'*

*'Being made aware of the full extent of your role as a male foster carer. Also to have a good lecturer.'*

*'Meeting other male carers and being able to speak openly.'*



### **The Skills to Foster Leaders' Course**

(This course will use the second edition of *The Skills to Foster*)  
Tuesday 21, Wednesday 22 & Thursday 23 June  
Premier Inn, Glasgow  
\*\*Please note the change of venue (was previously Edinburgh)\*\*  
Members price: £270+VAT, includes lunch. (Non members: £540+VAT).

*'I truly enjoyed all aspects of the two day course! In particular, I enjoyed group discussion, sharing experiences, learning new aspects of my role as a supervising social worker.'*

*'Very well delivered. I enjoyed the two day course and the opportunity to hear people's own experiences including from the trainers – thank you. It was all useful.'*

*'Excellent presentation of resources and assessment tools.'*

### **In-house courses**

And remember, we still have a wide range of 'in-house' courses which can be tailored to your needs and delivered within your fostering service.

If you are interested in finding out more about any of our learning and development opportunities, please contact Joy Crawford, Learning and Development Co-ordinator, t 0141 204 1400 or e Joy.Crawford@fostering.net



## Foster Care Fortnight

**Foster Care Fortnight**, the Fostering Network's annual high-profile campaign to raise awareness of fostering, runs from Monday 16 to Sunday 29 May.

With an ongoing shortage of 10,000 foster carers, more and more children needing foster care and the threat of government cuts we need people to get behind fostering more than ever before and support children in care.

The theme for this year's campaign will be **fostering: time to care**. We will be reaching out to everyone from MPs and elected councillors to the media and the general public to encourage them to get involved.

We want as many people as possible with the right skills and qualities to consider a career in fostering. For those not ready to foster we will be offering other ways to show they care – visit [www.fostering.net/timetocare](http://www.fostering.net/timetocare) to find out how.

To make *Foster Care Fortnight* a success we need lots of foster carers to get involved by spreading the word about the need for more foster carers and sharing their experiences of fostering with the media.

If you think you could support the campaign please contact the Fostering Network media team at [media@fostering.net](mailto:media@fostering.net) or call 020 7620 6425.

## New Benefits Signpost produced

**Working out** which benefits foster carers can claim can be complicated. This booklet provides clear and succinct information on benefits, allowances and tax credits for everyone involved in fostering.

### Benefits (2011)

A5 24 Pages: £2 members/£4 non-members

Download: £1 members/£2 non-members

Published April 2011

This *Signpost in Fostering* booklet provides an overview of the benefits and tax credit system and looks at how foster carers and looked after children and young people can access them. It is important to be aware of the special rules that apply to fostering payments and how this affects individual foster carers. The booklet also provides information about specialist advice services and sources of further information.

This *Signpost* has been updated to reflect the changes announced in the Budget on 23 March 2011.

To download or order, contact:

P&P Ltd

7 Bradfield Road

Wellingborough

Northamptonshire

NN8 4HB

t 0844 335 1892

e [orders@fosteringresources.co.uk](mailto:orders@fosteringresources.co.uk)

[www.fosteringresources.co.uk](http://www.fosteringresources.co.uk)



## Going green in Scotland

The **Spring** edition of *Foster Care* magazine is carrying a special feature on the joys and benefits of gardening for all the family. For readers in Scotland we have collated some local contacts and resources to get a project going...

The Scottish Government has a *Grow Your Own* working group which is intended to ensure that allotments and 'grow your own' projects are supported, and to produce practical advice that will appeal to public bodies, communities and individuals to help them develop local 'grow your own' initiatives.

You can download the working group's first report at [www.farmgarden.org.uk/scotland](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/scotland) or contact the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens at [scotland@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:scotland@farmgarden.org.uk) tel 0131 623 7058 for more information, news and events.

Community Food and Health (Scotland) [www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk](http://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk) has a directory of projects including some which place growing food high on the list of ways to achieve a healthier lifestyle. It offers grants of up to £4,000 to groups working to improve access to a healthy diet under its Small Grant Scheme. One in five applications is successful.





# Learning opportunities for foster carers with the Open University

You may already be aware of The Open University's partnership with the Fostering Network to promote learning opportunities for foster carers.

As a development of this partnership, The Open University in Scotland is working with the Fostering Network in Scotland to devise a learning pathway of existing OU modules which may be of particular interest to people working as foster carers.

The proposed learning pathway allows you to gain credit for your prior learning, including that from the workshops offered by the Fostering Network, through the module *Making your experience count* and the introductory module *Understanding Children*. Other more in-depth courses such as *An introduction to health and social care* are also available.

As part of this initiative we are looking to recruit up to 20 foster carers who would be interested in following this study pathway. As an enhancement to the standard OU offer, the Fostering Network in Scotland will also be funding

some additional face-to-face sessions to provide additional advice and support to students.

## Are you a foster carer and interested in finding out more?

We are also holding two free information sessions for our members on 25 May in Glasgow and 26 May in Edinburgh. Both sessions will run from 10.30am til 12.30pm. To find out more or to book your place please contact Sarah.Crangle, e sarah.crangle@fostering.net or call 0141 204 1400.

## Would love to study but are worried about the cost?

If you earn under £22,000 and/or are in receipt of certain benefits you may be entitled to a whole or partial fee grant.

To find out more please visit: [www.open.ac.uk/financialsupport](http://www.open.ac.uk/financialsupport) or call The Open University in Scotland on 0131 226 3851, email scotland@open.ac.uk. If you don't have a computer you may also be eligible to join a 'PC Scheme'.

## Young People's project DVD launching in June

Many children and young people have helped to put their thoughts and ideas into the DVD the Fostering Network's Young People's project are making called *Consequences*.

The animated DVD is almost ready to be launched and we would love for you to come along and see it at the Macrobert Arts Centre in Stirling on Sunday 5 June between 11am and 1pm.

The event is aimed at people of all ages. To book your FREE place, contact the team at the Fostering Network:

email: [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net)  
tel: 0141 204 1400  
text: 07590928476

## On Our Own Two Feet – savings for young people welcomed

The Fostering Network has welcomed the Government's decision to provide savings accounts for children in care. The move came after a campaign by Action for Children and Barnardos, supported by the Fostering Network and other child care charities.

The Government will spend £5 million a year on the savings fund. It has been suggested that children in care will receive an initial payment of £250, and then £100 a year thereafter.

Raina Sheridan, deputy chief executive of the Fostering Network, said: 'Most children in care don't have anyone saving money for them so this is an important move. It will give them a pot of money when they leave care to help them make

a smooth transition to adulthood and pay for the things they need to set up on their own, like household goods, driving lessons or possibly a deposit for a rented flat. These are things that young people living with their own families often take for granted, so this takes care leavers a step closer to having the same opportunities as their peers.'

Action for Children's Chief Executive Dame Clare Tickell said: 'Action for Children congratulates the government for taking the opportunity to provide savings accounts for children in the care system.

'Leaving care can be a frightening and isolating time and, in the absence of support from their families, this financial support will



make all the difference to care leavers, helping them to stand on their own two feet as independent adults. We look forward to working with the government to make it happen.'

For further information visit: [www.actionforchildren.org.uk/owntwofeet](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/owntwofeet)

# Celebration of 25 years in Scotland

Foster carers involved in fostering over the past 25 years celebrated the Fostering Network Scotland's 25th anniversary at an event in Edinburgh in February.



The foster carers joined staff from the Fostering Network, other child care professionals and young people with experience of care. The evening was a great success with participants sharing their stories about how fostering has changed over the past 25 years, celebrating the key role that the Fostering Network has played in the progress achieved.

Presentations by foster carers May Dunsmore and Stuart Duncan, son of foster carers Nathan Duncan and representatives from the Fostering Network:

Anne Black, Sara Lurie and Robert



Tapsfield, all shared their experiences of fostering. A very moving reminder of the impact fostering may have on children and young people came through the medium of song and was performed by Cheryl Legget.

Cheryl had written her song *Consequences* for the event.

Sara Lurie, director of the Fostering Network Scotland, said: 'It's fantastic how much foster care has moved on in the last 25 years and we are very proud of the role the Fostering Network has played at the heart of this progress. Foster carers are now considered child care experts and are starting to get the respect and recognition they deserve



for taking on this skilled, challenging but rewarding role.

'However, we urgently need more foster carers for vulnerable children in Scotland and would encourage anyone with the right skills and qualities to consider a career in fostering.

'Moreover, we will be continuing to highlight the need for the Scottish Government to ensure that their foster carers and fostered children receive the same treatment as those elsewhere in the UK, by introducing a limit of three unrelated children per household.'

The Fostering Network are collating the memories of foster carers from over the years. There's still time to send in your memories – contact Sarah Crangle for further information.



*'When I began fostering I remember feeling bewildered and wondering if I would make any mistakes. Wondering what the kids would be like. My hopes for the future are that things will continue to improve for children, that their voices will continue to be heard and action taken to help any problems etc...'*

*'Fostering is hard work, but we wouldn't change any of the past thirty years. What a dull life we would have had!'*

*'My hopes for the future are that there will always be suitable families available to care for all children who need looking after, and they will all be given the help they require from the agencies involved.'*

*'In comparison to many years ago I feel my views and opinions are taken into account. I can share with agencies and that can help with assessments and decisions about children's future, particularly in relation to child protection issues. Over all there is a big difference in fostering now.'*

*'My hopes for the future are that more people will consider fostering, will open their homes and hearts to*

*needy children as it can make such a difference to their lives and give them a chance in life.'*

*'When we began fostering I remember being paid £32 per week, per child with no fee. Our first placement we are sure was a test to see if we were up to the job. She arrived as a whirlwind, destroyed our home, turned our lives upside down and left us exhausted. After 25 years I guess we passed.'*

*'I remember having a very challenging young lad placed with us on respite, very difficult with his carers, violent and swearing. My daughter who is younger than him wobbled on a piece of play equipment, he was over to her first, and took her hand and reassured her while she jumped down. (They are worth seeing passed the labels).'*

*'My hopes for the future are that all children and young people will receive the best possible standard of care from carers and professionals. That age will not determine the level of funds or investment. That good quality, well matched, well trained foster carers are available to meet the needs of each individual child and young person.'*

## The Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum

**The Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum (STAF)** have been working with a group of care leavers aged between 15 and 21 to hold an event with councillors, heads of service and other decision makers at Stirling Council at the end of April.

The aim of the project is to open channels of communication and create an ongoing dialogue between young people and policy makers in designing the best possible Throughcare and Aftercare services.

According to Amy Copsey from the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum: 'This is a great example of a council beginning to take seriously the views of young care leavers and, as should always be the case, putting great weight on their experience and expertise.'

'It is also an opportunity to celebrate the talents of this group of young people who are confidently developing an event, which highlights some complex issues, with flair, confidence and great insight.'

For more information contact John Mathews, Communications Manger, (STAF), t 07949 351 745



# The Fostering Network Scotland...

## meet the team



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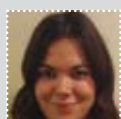
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**Katie Alibone** is our **Fosterline Scotland Worker** and can be contacted on 0141 204 1400. You can also email Katie e katie.alibone@fostering.net or e fosterlinescotland@fostering.net. Katie usually works Tuesday to Friday from 10am til 4pm and 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.



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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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