

# Fostering

*in Scotland*

Issue 38

Summer 2012

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the fostering network  
the voice of foster care



# Hello and welcome...



...to the latest edition of our quarterly *Fostering in Scotland* newsletter. As ever there's been a lot happening at the Fostering Network UK wide and across Scotland.

In addition to all the media activity during *Foster Care Fortnight* our Director, Sara Lurie, along with Anne Black, Chair of our Advisory Committee, have been active in keeping the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Government, CELCIS, ADSW and other decision makers and stakeholders informed and up to date on key issues impacting on foster care.

We have been getting out and about with a range of focus group meetings as well as our popular selection of training courses taking place throughout the country. It was great to see some of you at these sessions and we have a whole load of dates planned for future meetings including focus groups, membership meetings and media skills training. These will be taking place in the autumn/ winter

so be sure to get in touch if these are of interest to you. Look out for dates of these in this newsletter as well as keeping up to date on our website, [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net). Email updates will also be sent so if you want to be kept in touch and I don't have your contact details email me, [sarah.mcenhill@fostering.net](mailto:sarah.mcenhill@fostering.net) and request I add you to our e-list.

As always, we hope you enjoy reading this edition. There's always so much happening and it would be great to hear from you about what is happening in your area. Remember to keep in touch with your news.

Until next time,

**Sarah McEnhill**

Fostering Links project manager

## Foster Carer Finance membership meeting

**Thursday 6 September,**  
9.45am til 2pm, Glasgow

**Wednesday 3 October,**  
9.45am til 2pm, Perth

Allowances, fees, tax, national insurance and benefits are just some of the financial issues foster carers have to give consideration to. These free events for foster carer members of the Fostering Network in Scotland will help foster carers to discuss some of the complexities foster carers face in dealing with finances.

Delivered by the Fostering Links project we have two events running, one in Glasgow and another in Perth. Refreshments will be provided at both.

Places are limited and must be booked in advance. To express your interest, please contact Sarah McEnhill,  
e [sarah.mcenhill@fostering.net](mailto:sarah.mcenhill@fostering.net)  
t 0141 204 1400

## New briefing from Enquire on Extra Support at School: The Rights of Looked After Children

**The law says** that all looked-after children should have the extra support they need to get the most out of their education and achieve their full potential. Enquire, the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning, has published a new briefing paper that explains the rights of looked-after children under the Additional Support for Learning Act.

The briefing identifies different reasons why looked-after children may need extra support to get the most out of their learning, and gives examples of different ways that support can be provided. It looks at the responsibilities that education authorities have towards looked-

after children's education. This includes their legal duty to consider whether a looked-after child requires a co-ordinated support plan to ensure that agencies work together to plan what help the child needs to learn effectively. It also considers issues around school attendance and school exclusion, and the processes by which disputes about support for learning can be resolved.

The briefing will help professionals in education, social work and health in relation to GIRFEC and the role of the corporate parent, and will be useful for parents and carers in knowing how to ensure their child is getting help when they need it most.

For advice about additional support for learning, contact Enquire's helpline t 0845 123 2303 or e [info@enquire.org.uk](mailto:info@enquire.org.uk)

To download a free copy of Enquire's briefing, visit <http://enquire.org.uk/publications/briefings/looked-after-children>

## Online community connects members

**1,767 people** have joined our new online community since it launched in April. Are you one of them?

The community is the place to go to connect with everyone involved in foster care. Members can start new conversations, respond to other posts, or simply take a look around, and all within a secure environment as the community is only accessible by members of the Fostering Network. Conversations so far have ranged from going through an allegation, to the pros and cons of fostering. Support is always on hand from other community users who have experience of similar issues, whether it's tangible advice to cope with a particular situation, or some much-needed words of comfort and encouragement.

Above all, the community provides an opportunity to talk about anything and everything to do with fostering. Some interesting highlights so far include:

### What do looked-after children call their carers?

kentfostercarer said on 16 May:  
*We are long-term carers for two challenging siblings aged 10 and 12.*

*They have been in our care for 4 1/2 years now, having been in care with a variety of placements for a total of 7 years. They call us a variety of things depending upon their mood! Mum & Dad, first names or something a little more colourful.....we answer to them all!*

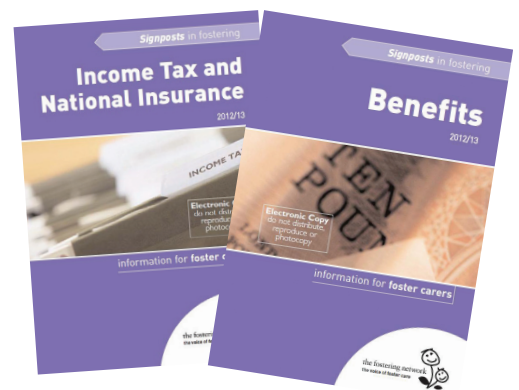
### Is it possible to be a foster carer and not drive?

fenland said on 11 May:  
*I have fostered for 2 years and although I drive, the kids have volunteer drivers for school and a taxi takes them to their Just Us group, only because I can't be in 2 places at the same time!*

### Funny things children say

AndyC said on 14 June:  
*'Friday Sandwiches.' Two of our boys were convinced fried egg sandwiches could only be eaten on a Friday and that's how they got their name.*

If you have an experience to share, or want to seek advice on something that's affecting you now, then log in today at [www.fostering.net/community](http://www.fostering.net/community)



## Signposts

The Fostering Network has updated two of our *Signposts in Fostering* series of guides to provide foster carers with clear and up-to-date financial information and advice.

*Income Tax and National Insurance* and *Benefits* have both been refreshed to reflect the changes announced in the Budget on 21 March 2012.

Members of the Fostering Network can download the *Income Tax and National Insurance* signpost and the *Benefits* signpost for free from our website, or you can order hard copies from our online shop, [www.fosteringresources.co.uk](http://www.fosteringresources.co.uk) or by calling 0844 335 1892

## Congratulations to Olympic torch bearers!

As Olympic fever sweeps the nation we are proud to see foster carers and children and young people who have experience of foster care among the 8,000 individuals selected to carry the Olympic torch within their local area.

Christine Claydon, foster carer from Perth & Kinross, Evelyn Capper, foster carer from Aberdeenshire and Kirsty Kane, young person from Ayrshire are just some of the inspirational people who have been recognised for the valuable contribution they make to fostering and to their local community. Christine (pictured) says: *'I ran through Milnathort on June 13th at 8am. It was one of the most exciting things I've ever done!'*



## Fosterplus autumn conference

Fosterplus are pleased to present a conference *Brain-Based Parenting*. This will be presented by Dr Dan Hughes & Dr Jon Baylin.

Based on exciting, innovative brain research Dan and Jon will provide an exploration of how the parenting brain works, and what factors can cause difficulties. Importantly they will also share ways that the caring potential can be 'awakened' or restored with sensitive, brain-based interventions.

The conference will take place in Glasgow on Monday 29 October and there is a 10 percent discount for those booking by 3 August 2012. Please contact Fosterplus to find out more: **t** 01506 443 434, **e** [lcone@fosterplus.co.uk](mailto:lcone@fosterplus.co.uk)

# Dear Members,

**I hope you are enjoying** a change of pace and scene now that we are well underway with the summer holidays after what can often be a hectic time during the last weeks of the school term.

Over these last few months the Fostering Network has been debating fostering allowances, fees, allegations and the National Contract with our partners in fostering agencies. These are all weighty topics which we cannot ignore! The never-ending quest for grants to fund the Fostering Network's services is ongoing and all our services face the possibility of closure if funding is not found.

The good practice guidance on responding to concerns raised about the safety of children placed with foster carers, *Good Practice Guidance: Responding to concerns about the welfare or safety of looked-after children in foster care or with approved kinship carers* is now with the Scottish Government and we hope this will be published and available widely soon.

As I write this I was thinking about the Big Noise Orchestra in Stirling. What an achievement for seven and eight year olds to be playing overtures and sections from some of Beethoven's greatest works along with experienced musicians. Looking at the young people who were performing they had a sense of achievement that went far beyond the music. The Big Noise movement has helped young people to get involved in something radically different from anything else in their lives

and it seems to be paying off. Of course some young people will challenge and continue to miss school and perhaps truuant but that has not deterred local managers in Stirling from investing in such a venture. I know that foster carers through their commitment and caring day in day out are helping young people to create that spark that lifts their spirits rather than dwelling on some of the hard issues they face from their early years, at school or in the community. Maybe one day we could encourage an orchestra made up of children in foster care and their foster families!

LACSIG, (Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group), continues to consider the routes to permanency for many looked-after children. All the players need to be making efforts to shift this work forward and reduce delays. We are still keen to hear from foster carers who are in the process of seeking permanence for a child they are looking after. In particular, LACSIG is giving attention to looked-after children with disabilities and how they can be placed for permanence. I would welcome any thoughts from foster carers and children about what would help young people with disabilities to feel more included and have opportunities opened to them for new experiences. Contact me at [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net) to share your experience.

The Government has published a consultation on the *Children and Young People Bill*. Fostering is part of this Bill, in particular placement limits, a national



register, national minimum allowances and training and development for foster carers. We need you to support the consultation process. Find out more elsewhere in this newsletter.

To end we have two happy events for the Fostering Network staff. Our Fosterline worker Katie Alibone and her partner, Tom Munro, (pictured) were married at the end of May and Director Sara Lurie announced her engagement to Matthew Shaps at the beginning of June! We wish both couples happiness and good health.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to children whether as a foster carer or a social worker. I hope that you are having a good summer and are all looking forward to the schools resuming!

**Anne Black**  
Chair, Scottish Advisory Committee

# Open University student's success in pilot

**Well done** to all the foster carers who were part of our pilot with the Open University. We are delighted that the seven students who undertook and successfully completed the course *Understanding Children* passed! It's certainly no easy task to juggle distance learning with the daily challenges of fostering and we are so pleased for our student group to have achieved this.

*'While not all foster carers need it, the OU pilot enabled me to have 'my hand held' which was what I needed plus I felt that I have bonded with another foster carer.'*

*'A lot of the information from the course 'Understanding Children' was like having a confirmation stamp of the role you already do as a foster carer.'*

It has been great to have seen the success of the Fostering Network Scotland's pilot with the Open University. We look forward to hearing where the learning journey for these students will take them next, and perhaps some of you might join them?

## Interested in studying with the Open University?

Whatever your background or previous learning experience there are a range of course options which may be of interest to you and which could develop your skills in fostering.

Openings and Level 1 courses such as *Understanding children and young people* (Y176) are the ideal place to begin studying. They are the equivalent to the level of study during the first year at a traditional university and as well as getting you started in a subject they are designed to develop your study skills.

Other options include *Make your experience count* (U122), or for those looking to progress further *An introduction to health and social care* (K101) and *Foundations for social work practice* (KYJ113), *Understanding the autistic spectrum* (SK124) or *Social Work with children, young people and families in Scotland* (K229) might be of interest. All the Open University courses are available online, [www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk)

Even if you wished to take a different path and learn about something completely different the Open University is a good place to start. Best of all, as foster carers you will be creating a learning household, inspiring and encouraging others in your home to learn!

If you do wish to embark on further learning we would be keen to hear from you. Contact Sarah McEnhill and let us know what you decide to do!



The Open University

# New membership benefits

**Membership** of the Fostering Network is now even better for foster carers.

Our new partnership with Towergate Insurance provides competitive, comprehensive and flexible household insurance specifically developed for foster carers.

All members of the Fostering Network receive a 10 per cent discount, and key features include:

- Cover for any malicious damage or vandalism caused by a fostered child
- Cover for theft or attempted theft by any fostered child
- No need to contact Towergate each time you take in a new placement, as this won't restrict or void the cover provided
- Cover for all foster children's possessions while they are in your care.

The Fostering Network has also negotiated a discount at Merlin theme parks throughout the UK for foster carers and their families.

Go to [www.fostering.net/membership/foster-carer/new-offers-for-members](http://www.fostering.net/membership/foster-carer/new-offers-for-members) to find out more.

# Foster carers honoured in Queen's birthday honours

**Foster carers** have been recognised for their efforts to help support, encourage and develop children and young people in care throughout the UK in the Queen's birthday honours list.

Throughout the UK eight foster carers who are members of the Fostering Network were awarded MBEs in recognition of their services to children and young people. We were delighted that among them was Vanessa Orr, foster carer with Edinburgh City Council

whose nomination was supported by the families of children she has fostered in the past.

Vanessa says: *'My whole family are thrilled and proud that we have received this honour as we have all been involved in fostering over the years. We are so excited and looking forward to heading to London to receive the MBE, which is a great recognition for what foster carers do across the country.'*

Robert Tapsfield, chief executive of the Fostering Network, said, 'I would like to congratulate each one of these dedicated individuals for what they do each and every day to ensure that the children in their care have the best possible chance in the future.

*'It's great to see foster carers who work so hard to make the lives of fostered children being better recognised in this way.'*



# Foster Care Fortnight Round-up

## Foster Care Fortnight 2012

This year's *Foster Care Fortnight* (14-27 May) was our biggest and best to date, using traditional and social media, publicity and events to raise the profile of fostering and the need for more foster families across the UK.

The Fostering Network launched the *22 Minutes* campaign just ahead of the fortnight. The campaign revolved around the fact a child comes into care and needs a foster family every 22 minutes in the UK, demonstrating the scale of the challenge facing fostering services and existing foster carers.

22 films of foster carers and care leavers were available on a specially designed website, [www.22minutes.org.uk](http://www.22minutes.org.uk).

[www.22minutes.org.uk](http://www.22minutes.org.uk), which was visited over 8,000 times. Social networking was central to the campaign's success. The Fostering Network sent out messages on Twitter every 22 minutes for three weeks straight, as well as posting on Facebook. The campaign attracted lots of celebrity and high profile support on social networks. There were also over 50 blogs published by those involved in foster care throughout the UK on the website, which have been visited more than 9,000 times to date.

The campaign was popular with fostering services, many of which adapted the central message to suit local circumstances across the Scotland and the rest of UK.

## Hitting the headlines

This year's *Foster Care Fortnight* attracted a record 1,400 pieces of media coverage throughout the UK, focusing on *22 Minutes*, the shortage of foster carers for teenagers and sibling groups and the stories of foster carers and care leavers up and down the country. Highlights included Gareth Gates appearing on BBC Breakfast, as well as pieces on Daybreak, the Today programme, Woman's Hour, articles in the Herald, the Scotsman, the Times and many more.

A huge thank you to all the amazing foster carer and care leavers who took part in media work for us, to raise awareness of the great impact fostering can have on young lives.

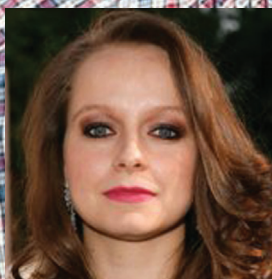
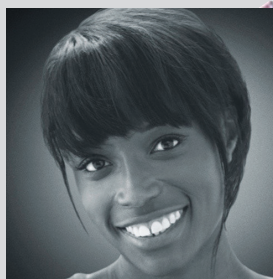
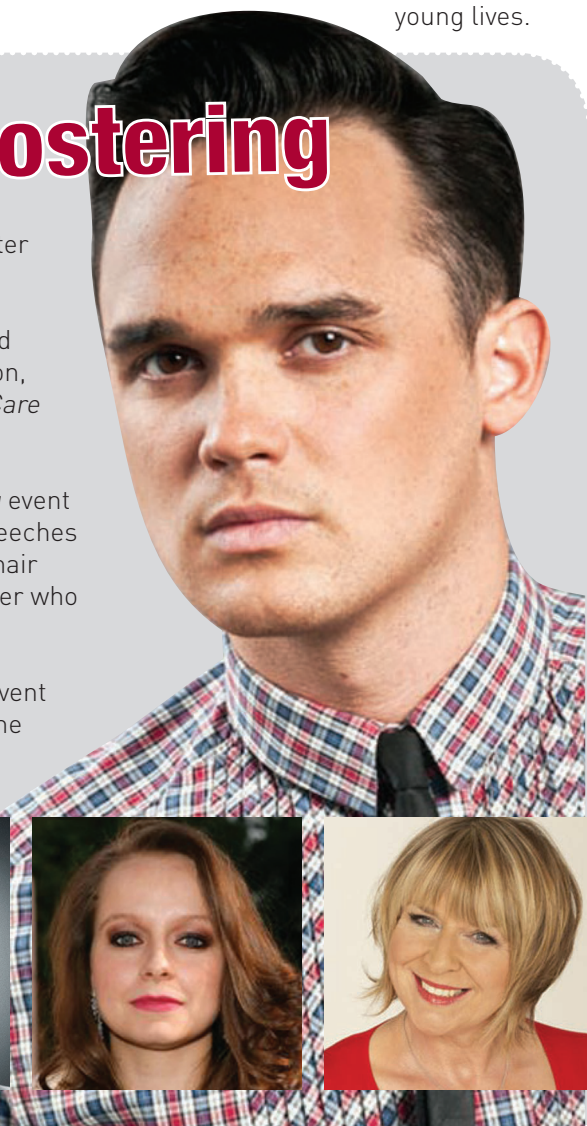
## Stars come out for fostering

Seven of Britain's top stars added their voices to the call for more foster carers, during the UK's biggest foster carer recruitment campaign.

Lorraine Pascale and Samantha Morton, who both grew up in care, and Gareth Gates, the son of foster carers, were joined by Jacqueline Wilson, Gabby Logan, Fern Britton and Tim Rhys-Evans in supporting *Foster Care Fortnight* 2012.

We were delighted that Lorraine attended our *Celebration of Fostering* event on 22 May. The event, at the Royal Festival Hall in London, featured speeches from children's minister Tim Loughton MP, the Fostering Network's chair Philip Coghill and president Jim Bond, and Clare Marshall, a care leaver who travelled down especially from Newcastle for the event.

We welcomed people involved in fostering from around the UK to the event that also featured live music from care leaver Kay-Jay Simmons and the Fostering Network fundraiser and Nepal trekker Laura Hocking.





## Foster carers meet in Edinburgh

To celebrate **Foster Care Fortnight** in Scotland Sara Lurie and Sarah McEnhill met with foster carers, local authority staff and representation from the Scottish government in Edinburgh on 15 May.

The group had accumulated over 200 years of fostering experience between them and provided care to over 400 of Scotland's children and young people. Among the many topics debated were a national register for foster carers, a foster care charter for Scotland and foster carer recruitment.

The event was one of many focus group events held by the Fostering Network, building on our discussions with foster carers and supervising social workers throughout the country. The good practice and knowledge shared and gained is central to our work and we look forward to the next 'round' of events.

- **Monday 10 September**, Foster Carer Focus Group, Orkney
- **Tuesday 25 September**, Foster Carer Focus Group, Glasgow
- **Thursday 27 September**, Foster Carer Focus Group, Edinburgh
- **Friday 5 October**, Foster Carer Focus Group, Aviemore

Contact Sarah McEnhill to find out more.

## Would you like to speak out for foster care?

### Developing media champions

20 September, Edinburgh,  
10am til 3pm

We are running a free training event for foster carer members of the Fostering Network. Taking place in Edinburgh on Thursday 20 September from 10am til 3pm, this one day event will discuss

why we need foster carers to support our media work and harness your experience of fostering. The session will explore the different types of media we work with and help promote your skills as media champions for foster care.

For further information contact Sarah McEnhill.

### *Date for your diary*

Foster Care Fortnight 2013 will take place from Monday 13 to Sunday 26 May. Planning is already underway – fostering services watch this space for more information.

## Foster panel membership

Do you have experience of foster care?

Could you be a fostering panel member?

The **Fostering Network** are regularly approached by a number of fostering services looking for people with foster care experience and interested in joining their fostering panels.

Fostering panels should be made up of a diverse range of individuals with varied backgrounds and experience and are crucial to the approval and review process for foster carers. Fostering panels carry out roles such as looking at applications from people hoping to become foster carers, making recommendations about their approval, including terms, recommending whether someone should remain as a foster carer, and carrying out a foster carer's first review.

If you are aged over 18 and are:

- care experienced,
- a foster carer,
- the son or daughter of a foster carer,
- the parent of a looked after child,
- or have relevant experience in education, health or law

then you may have the experience and skills needed to sit on a fostering panel.

If this is something you would be interested in finding more about, or sharing your details why not get in touch? Call 0141 204 1400, [e scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net)

# Foster carers meet with children's minister



**A small group** of foster carers from across Scotland met with the children's minister for Scotland, Aileen Campbell MSP at the Scottish Parliament on 13 June to discuss a range of issues affecting foster care in Scotland. Sara Lurie, director of the Fostering Network Scotland and Sarah McEnhill, Fostering Links project manager accompanied the foster carers to the Scottish Parliament.

The discussion brought to the attention of the minister issues including

the standardisation of foster care allowances, as Scotland is the only country in the UK without a minimum allowance, the professionalisation of foster care, the need for a national register and the long term funding of the much needed services offered by the Fostering Network.

Sara Lurie said of the meeting, *'I am delighted that foster carers have been invited to personally speak to the minister about the issues that foster carers face every*

*day. It is vital that this happens and that they can convey the message that the support systems put in place by the Fostering Network are working.'*

In addition to the meeting, Sara Lurie has met with the Education and Culture committee of the Scottish Parliament on a number of occasions to provide oral evidence exploring the educational outcomes for looked-after children and separately, what level of children's services voluntary organisations provide on behalf of local authorities and public bodies.

The Fostering Network will also be feeding into the Committee's inquiry currently exploring the decision-making processes involved in determining whether a child should be removed from the family home and taken into care and whether these decision-making processes are delivering the best outcomes for children and their families.

The deadline for submissions to the Committee's inquiry is 28 August 2012.

## Learning and Development

**Due to popular** demand our learning and development team are planning to run further sessions of the following highly regarded training courses from the Fostering Network:

- *The Skills to Foster Leaders Course*
- *Men in Foster Care*
- *The Skills to Foster Assessment Materials*
- *The Role of the Supervising Social Worker*

These training courses are also available to purchase as in house training courses, delivered locally within your fostering service.

The courses will be running in Autumn/ Winter, 2012-2013.

To find out more or to be kept informed, check out our website, [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net) or contact Joy Crawford, t 0141 204 1400 e [joy.crawford@fostering.net](mailto:joy.crawford@fostering.net)

## UPDATE

### New trainers join the team

The Fostering Network are delighted to welcome two new associate trainers, Jim McNally and Justine Young, to the learning & development team.

**Jim says:** *'I have been fostering with my wife since 2006. My background is in operations and people management. Latterly, I worked in the public sector, and developed a love for helping volunteers and charities achieve their own goals. I now do consultancy work, and am doing a second degree with the OU on their Childhood and Youth Studies BA (Hons).'*

**Justine tells us:** *'I'm strongly committed to the work of the Fostering Network and over the years have enjoyed attending a number of their*



*membership and training events. I come from a strong background in family placement and have gained a wealth of experience from my time working in social service teams in England and Scotland. My husband and I became respite foster carers in 2010 and we are linked to two young people. I love this role and really look forward to them coming to stay. I'm looking forward to bringing all these skills together in my role as an associate trainer while continuing with the Fostering & Adoption team at North Ayrshire.'*

We look forward to working with them.



# Nepal triumph



**A huge thank you** to the 21 trekkers who made it to Nepal in May and raised over £70,000 for the Fostering Network. After scaling the giddy heights of Tara Tops - including one tough day

where they braved heatstroke and leeches to climb the equivalent of Ben Nevis through tropical forest – they spent two days renovating a home for abandoned children.

For the full story and project photos, visit the blog:  
[www.giddyheights.wordpress.com](http://www.giddyheights.wordpress.com)

## Trek to the top of the world

### Mount Kilimanjaro

19-29 September 2013

At 5,896m, Mount Kilimanjaro is the highest freestanding mountain in the world. Your challenge? To make it to Uhuru peak and back in seven days.

Our trek takes the Machame route, allowing gradual acclimatisation to the altitude and an excellent chance of reaching the summit. We pass through thick forest, moorland and scree en route to the summit.

On the last night before summit climb we rise at midnight, scaling the moonscape of the upper slopes to watch the sunrise over

Stella point, then onwards to Uhuru Peak, the highest peak of the volcano.

This is a challenging trek at altitude, climbing one of the most impressive and well-known mountains in the world.

Registration costs £599, and then you'll need to raise £3,950 to complete the challenge.

Spaces are strictly limited. Register at [www.fostering.net/climb](http://www.fostering.net/climb) or contact Laura Hocking on [laura.hocking@fostering.net](mailto:laura.hocking@fostering.net) or 020 7620 8403

## At a glance...

### forthcoming events coming up in 2012

**Are you** a foster carer member of the Fostering Network? Why not come along to the following events being delivered through the Big Lottery funded Fostering Links project. They are a great opportunity to share experience, meet other foster carers and gain some new ideas!

### August

**Thursday 30**, Consultation on Children and Young People Bill, Fife, 10am til 1.30pm

### September

**Thursday 6**, Foster carer finance membership meeting, Glasgow, 10am til 2pm

**Thursday 6**, Consultation on Children and Young People Bill, Glasgow, 1pm til 4pm

**Monday 10**, Foster carer focus group, Orkney

**Thursday 20**, Developing media champions, Edinburgh, 10am til 3pm

**Tuesday 25**, Foster carer focus group, Glasgow, 10am til 2pm

**Thursday 27**, Foster carer focus group, Edinburgh, 10am til 2pm

### October

**Wednesday 3**, Foster carer finance membership meeting, Perth, 10am til 2pm

**Friday 5**, Foster carer focus group, Aviemore, 10am til 2pm

**Tuesday 30**, Storytelling & attachment membership meeting, Glasgow, 10am til 2pm

**Tuesday 30**, Storytelling & attachment membership meeting, Edinburgh, 6.15pm til 9.00pm

As well as being a great way to keep up to date with current practice and developments, both within the Fostering Network as well as on national issues, these events provide a valuable opportunity to meet with foster carers from other fostering services in Scotland and hear what they are up to!

These meetings are aimed at foster carer members of the Fostering Network in Scotland. Places are free but must be booked in advance.

Places are limited.

Please contact Sarah McEnhill, [e sarah.mcenhill@fostering.net](mailto:sarah.mcenhill@fostering.net) or [t 0141 204 1400](tel:01412041400) to find out more.



# Fosterline UPDATE

## How and what to record?

- Keep records up to date with the date entered by each entry.
- Use simple language and keep information factual as opposed to judgmental.
- If you do record personal opinion make it clear that this is opinion not fact.
- Try to record where all household members are, dates when fostered children are away on outings with school etc, behaviour and triggers, positive improvements, details of specific incidents or changes to circumstances, details of any accidents, however slight.
- When detailing incidents describe what, when, where and how it occurred and name any witnesses and action taken. Record the time, date and name of the social worker to whom the incident was reported.
- Also record all dates for reviews and meetings, social work visits, all medical appointments as well as any medicine given.
- You should record details of times when alternative caregivers e.g. babysitters are caring for the fostered children, any involvement with the police and dates and details of any theft or wilful damage.
- Lastly you should document any event or circumstance which has, or could have, an effect on the wellbeing or safety of any member of your household.

## Written or electronic notes?

This is up to you as a foster carer but if you keep personal information stored on your computers you must make sure that you comply with the *Data Protection Act 1998* and be registered with the data protection register.

The *Data Protection Act 1998* also states that any individual has the right to request to see any data that is held about them. This means that in the future a fostered child may request to see the records you kept and so always record bearing this in mind.

Records are confidential and must be kept in a safe place. A lockable cabinet is a good idea. Separate records should be kept for individual children.

## Who owns the records?

It is important to distinguish between your own personal records, which you retain after the child has left your home, and those that you are recording on behalf of the responsible authority.

Information kept by foster carers at the request of the authority forms part of its record-keeping system and is therefore 'owned' by the authority. When a child moves on from your care it is likely that you will return the notes. For foster carers who do not keep their own record, this could leave them in a vulnerable position as access to these notes at a later date might be difficult. The Fostering Network recommends that foster carers keep their own log which is their property and our legal advisors in Scotland suggest that a written diary (which may be used in a court case) is considered stronger evidence for legal purposes than electronic notes.

Furthermore personal diaries are not governed by data protection however confidentiality should still be adhered to i.e. using initials to refer to certain children etc.

My last point to make is that foster carers can keep notes using a tape recorder and arrange for someone to transcribe them if they have literacy difficulties.

If anyone requires any further information or clarity please do not hesitate to get in touch to discuss.

Hoping you're all enjoying a happy and healthy summer!

*Katie*

**Katie Alibone**  
Fosterline Scotland worker



Hello all! I hope this finds you well. I thought it would be helpful to do a piece on the issue of record keeping as I have had various calls on the subject over the last few months which have highlighted some confusion. I will cover what I consider the necessities here but for a more comprehensive account I refer people to our *Record Keeping* sign post booklet. This would have been included in your welcome pack and members can also download it from our website.

## Record keeping

Like any job fostering involves paper work. As frustrating as it may be after a long day, it is crucial to keep records regarding the children and young people that you care for.

## So why record?

Records will help to:

- Accurately recall behaviour or incidents (including dates) - both positive and negative - and provide a balanced picture of particular events.
- Assist in looking at the progress of a placement as well as patterns of behaviour.
- Inform decision-making at reviews, placement agreement meetings and case conferences.
- Help to review your own practice.
- Provide the information needed for giving evidence in court.
- Support an application for additional help.
- Reduce the risk to you and your family of allegations and complaints.

# Danish exchange



The Fostering Network are delighted to be embarking on a pilot across the UK that explores social pedagogy in foster care. More information on the pilot will be in the next newsletter. The social pedagogical approach is widely used in Denmark. Kieran Guckian, son of former foster carers and volunteer in the Glasgow office, chatted with Sara Lurie to find out more...

...Recently our director for Scotland, Sara Lurie went to Denmark on a visit to see how their practices compare to ours in the UK and specifically Scotland. Seemingly there are some big differences between the two countries in attitudes and practices regarding not just care but also the way children are viewed in society as well. When Sara returned I asked her about some of these differences and how the Danish way compares to ours.

Sara started off by explaining how their attitudes towards parents of children in care or supported children are different. It seems in Denmark there is little to no blame culture. For the most part the focus is on helping everyone in the case get back on their feet. This means more practical and long term support for parents than we provide in the UK. Sara backed up this point by telling me a story of a parent who's son was in a residential home which she visited in Denmark. The mum repeatedly turned up unexpectedly and under the influence of alcohol for contact with her child. Instead of the children's home turning her away, ending contact or

even telling off the parent, residential workers would offer her a meal and coffee, and allow her time to freshen up so contact could be a more positive experience. Unlike here in Scotland where a parent could expect to be sent home if they turned up anything but sober to a meeting or contact. Another aspect of care Sara explained was that foster care seems to be much more of a last resort and there is a focus on solving the family's problems and helping parents and families get back on their feet to be able to look after their children.

Another big difference Sara pointed out were the attitudes of adults towards children and of children towards adults. From what Sara said it looks like children are much more trusted by adults e.g. children's play areas have more areas for children to hide away or places where they aren't constantly under adult supervision. Children's right to privacy is much more

respected there than here. Another difference Sara pointed out was that in school and in care there is much more emphasis on children's play, much more than there is in the UK. Very different to the work, work, work attitude in schools here.

It seems like we might have some big lessons to learn.

Following this a group of 12 social workers and foster carers came to visit the office in Glasgow to hear how we support foster carers and workers and to contribute to discussion and debate surrounding care in the UK and Scotland. They were treated to a presentation from Sarah McEnhill on our organisation and our work. We learned that in Denmark there is no equivalent to the Fostering Network and so there is no unified voice for foster carers. They were very impressed by the work we do and we seemed to make a good impression on them.

by Keiran Guckian,  
volunteer



## Storytelling and attachment

30 October 2012

9.45am til 2pm, Glasgow

6.15pm til 9pm, Edinburgh

It might seem that storytelling is just an activity for very young children, something that they do before they learn to read for themselves. However it can be one of the most powerful tools you can imagine. It can be used with children (and adults!) of any age to help develop their cognitive skills for learning about the world and for also learning about dealing with feelings and relationships. It can be particularly useful for foster children and can help strengthen their relationship with you. Above all, storytelling is fun.

This free event for foster carer members of the Fostering Network in Scotland will explore the benefits that storytelling can bring, for the young people you foster and for you as foster carers.

Delivered by the Fostering Links project we have two events running, one in Glasgow during the day and another in Edinburgh in the evening of Tuesday 30 October. Refreshments will be provided at both.

Places are limited and must be booked in advance. To express your interest, please contact Sarah McEnhill, [e.sarah.mcenhill@fostering.net](mailto:e.sarah.mcenhill@fostering.net) **t** 0141 204 1400

## Read our blogs

The Fostering Network has launched a series of blogs to share the experiences of foster carers, care leavers and staff of the Fostering Network.

You can read about the experiences of foster carers and care leavers at [www.22minutesblogs.wordpress.com](http://www.22minutesblogs.wordpress.com)

You can find out more about Laurence Pollock, editor of *Foster Care* magazine, and read an exclusive series of blogs by author and foster carer Cathy Glass at [www.fostering.net/blogs](http://www.fostering.net/blogs). Glass has sold over 1,000,000 books based on her experiences as a foster carer.

The Fostering Network fundraising team also have their own blog telling of their fundraising adventures at [www.giddyheights.wordpress.com](http://www.giddyheights.wordpress.com)

# Help shape fostering in Scotland



The **Fostering Network** has welcomed the inclusion of key fostering issues in the Scottish Government's new consultation on the *Children and Young People Bill*.

The consultation, published on 4 July 2012 by the Scottish Government, contains a range of questions on all aspects of the bill. These include questions on foster care, specifically a number of areas that the Fostering Network has been campaigning on, including placement limits, a national register, training qualifications for foster carers and a statutory minimum allowance.

The Fostering Network will be responding to the consultation, which is open until 25 September 2012, and is seeking the views of our members in Scotland. We need your support to ensure that as many members of the Fostering Network as possible, both foster carers and fostering services, respond to this consultation and feed in their experience, particularly in the areas relating to foster care. In addition to responding directly, we would also hope to encourage members to respond within their local areas at local support and consultative groups.

We have three focus groups planned, specifically to discuss the proposals:

**Thursday 30 August, Fife**

**Thursday 6 September, Glasgow**

**Monday 10 September, Orkney**

Visit our website, [www.fostering.net/scotland/children-young-people-bill-consultation](http://www.fostering.net/scotland/children-young-people-bill-consultation) or contact sarah.mcenhill@fostering.net to find out more or to sign up for the focus groups.



## The Fostering Network Scotland...



Sara Lurie,  
**Director**

sara.lurie@fostering.net



@tfn\_sara



Joy Crawford,  
**Learning & Development Co-ordinator**

joy.crawford@fostering.net



Linda Curran,  
**Office Manager**

linda.curran@fostering.net



Deborah Cook,  
**Administrator**

deborah.cook@fostering.net



Sarah McEnhill,  
**Fostering Links project manager**

sarah.mcenhill@fostering.net



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](mailto:katie.alibone@fostering.net) or **e** [fosterlinescotland@fostering.net](mailto: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.

The Fostering Network Scotland  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Ingram House  
227 Ingram Street  
Glasgow  
G1 1DA  
**t** 0141 204 1400  
**f** 0141 204 6588  
**e** [scotland@fostering.net](mailto:scotland@fostering.net)  
**www.fostering.net**



**/thefosteringnetwork**

### Other useful numbers:

#### The Fostering Network - Head 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](mailto:orders@fosteringresources.co.uk)

Registered Office:

87 Blackfriars Road London SE1 8HA

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