

The
Fostering
Network

FOSTERING IN Scotland

issue 49

The newsletter of **The Fostering Network** Scotland

Spring 2015

A photograph of four young people (three girls and one boy) sitting on a dark wooden bench in a park-like setting. They are all smiling and wearing orange lanyards with medals. The background features a large, ornate stone building with many windows and a green lawn. The sky is overcast.

In this issue:

- Increase to leaving care age
- Foster Care Fortnight™
- Our Champions model
- And more!

Hello everyone



I am thrilled to begin my letter with news that will change foster care forever! From 1 April 2015 all children in foster care who were born on, or after, 1 April 1999 can remain with their foster carer, if they and their carer wish, until their 21st birthday! This new arrangement will be called 'Continuing Care'. You can read more from us, and an article from CELCIS, *Getting to grips with 'Continuing Care'* on the opposite page. A huge thank you to everyone who worked tirelessly for many years on our Don't Move Me campaign!

Foster Care Fortnight™, the UK's largest foster care awareness campaign, is taking place 1-14 June. On page 4, you can read how you and your fostering service can get involved, and you can find out about free events we have during the two week period.

Elsewhere in the newsletter, you can read reflections from our young champions; an update on Head, Heart and Hands (our programme introducing social pedagogy into foster care); details of a resource for foster carers on the Children's Hearing System; and more! On our front cover, we have a smiling photo of four students from Glasgow Caledonian University, making a documentary film about foster care.

I am pleased to inform you of the Scottish Government's commitment to support foster carers in understanding the decisions which they can legally make for the children in their care. The Scottish Government has asked Scottish Child Law

Centre to produce guidance for foster carers on the decisions which they, as carers, can make for the children placed with them. As part of the consultation with foster carers we were delighted to be invited, with carers from across Scotland, to Victoria Quay to discuss and comment on the material being produced. We believe this will be invaluable guidance, stay tuned for further updates and a launch date.

And finally, on page 9 you can meet Kevin Williams, our new chief executive, who takes up his post in June. We look forward to welcoming him and to introducing him to all our members in Scotland!

Until next time,

Sara Lurie, Director

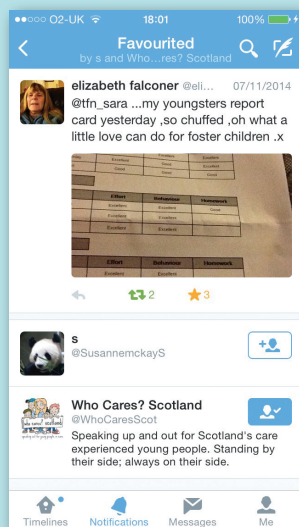
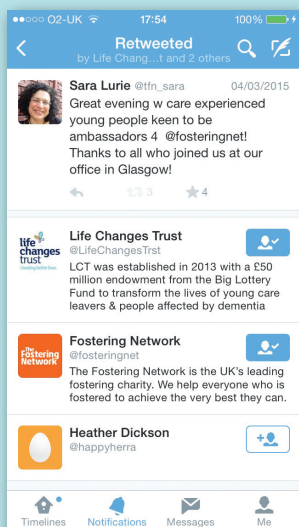


Consultation with foster carers at the Scottish Government

Are you on Twitter yet?



Sara Lurie is an active twitter user. Keep up to date with our work by following her: [@tfn_sara](https://twitter.com/tfn_sara). Here are some of our favourite tweets...



Launch of Young Scot Lawline

A free legal advice line for 11-26 year olds, available all day, every day.

Young Scot working in partnership with JC Hughes have trained lawyers available to answer a legal problem a young person may have. The service covers topics such as welfare rights, family, criminal, mental health, housing and debt.

If you know a young person who could benefit from this service then please direct them towards the freephone number:
☎ 0808 801 0801. The number is available 24 hours, seven days a week.

Continuing Care in Scotland



The Fostering Network Scotland is thrilled that from 1 April 2015, children in foster care in Scotland will have the right to remain living with their foster carers until the age of 21, as the aftercare provisions of the Children and Young People Act 2014 come into force.

This has been achieved thanks to many years of campaigning by The Fostering Network, including our award winning Don't Move Me campaign, and further campaigning by a number of key organisations, including Who Cares Scotland, Aberlour and Barnardo's Scotland.

Sara Lurie said, 'I am delighted that this new legal right has now come into force. It will help to ensure that young people in Scotland have the opportunity to enter adulthood supported by the foster families that have devoted their lives to caring for them.'

'The Fostering Network, together with its members, has campaigned tirelessly on this issue for many years. The evidence has always shown that it will make real change for young people who have previously faced the prospect of living alone too soon, and we look forward to working with fostering services and foster carers in Scotland to ensure that every young person who wants to take advantage of this new opportunity is able to do so.'

You can watch MSPs discuss why allowing young people to 'stay put' matters to them on The Fostering Network's YouTube channel. To find out more about the impact of this, keep reading! The CELCIS article below will help you to get to grips with the implications of continuing care...

Getting to grips with 'Continuing Care'



Reflections from Ben Farrugia, Head of Policy at the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS)

On 1 April 2015, Part 11 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 came into force. This means that Scottish local authorities are now subject to a new duty to provide 'Continuing Care.' But what does this actually mean for young people in foster care?

In short, between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016, a 16 year old in foster care can cease to be 'looked after' but continue to live with their foster carers. Previously, if a young person ceased to be looked after there was no guarantee that the local authority would cover the cost of them remaining with their carers. Now, if the carer is happy to continue providing the placement, and the young person wishes to remain living with them even though they've officially left care, the local authority is under a duty to maintain the placement (unless they assess that doing so would be harmful to the young person's welfare). This new kind of arrangement will be called 'Continuing Care,' and it can last up until the young person's 21st birthday.

However, nothing is as simple as it seems. Foster carers should note that:

a) While the local authority is under a duty to provide the young person with 'the same accommodation and other assistance' as they were receiving immediately before they ceased to be looked after, this does not mean that the local authority has to offer the foster carer the same financial support as they did previously. Once the young person has ceased to be looked after the local authority can legitimately request to change the terms of the arrangement. The law does not require them to change rates of allowance or fee, but they can do so if they wish.

b) Young people do not have to cease to be 'looked after' to remain with their foster carers beyond their 16th birthday. Wherever possible, young people should be encouraged to remain 'looked after' until their 18th birthday (although the law allows them to remain 'looked after' beyond that if it is in their interests to do so). Over the next 12 months, 'Continuing Care' should only be considered for those young people who strongly wish to 'cease to be looked after' (terminating the Compulsory Supervision Order or voluntary agreement). If the young person is happy to remain in foster care (and therefore in the 'looked after' system) carers and the local authority do everything they can to make this happen.

c) Over the next 12 months (April 2015 – March 2016 inclusive) only young people who turn 16 years old will be eligible for a 'Continuing Care' placement. Young people aged 17 and above will not be eligible. The reason for this is practical: the Scottish Government needed to limit the immediate impact on local authorities, so decided to introduce this new duty in a staged process. In the year 2016-17 young people who cease to be looked after aged 17 will also become eligible, and in the following year 18 year old care leavers, and so on up until the year 2020. But remember that continuing care is not the only option. A 17 year old can remain 'looked after' until their 18th birthday (and beyond). A care leaver of any age can remain in your care indefinitely under a 'Supported Carer' arrangement. Explore the options, and identify the best one for the young person.

Dear members



I am always amazed at just how much many foster carers are prepared to do to support the wider fostering agenda. Attending meetings with the Scottish Government, commenting on lengthy documents and the willingness to discuss new ideas is really valued by The Fostering Network. We cannot

do our job without the involvement of you, our members, and your contributions help to ensure that we are always aware of the realities of the foster care task and can help the Scottish Government to understand the skills and complexities of being a foster carer. Thank you all.

Becoming a member of The Fostering Network's Scottish Advisory Committee is another way of contributing to the development of foster care. The committee meets four times a year in Glasgow at lunchtime to try to fit in best with the day to day tasks for carers with the children in their care. We have carers, fostering agencies and local authorities as members and in that way mirror the kind of team we need for each looked after child. The Advisory Committee contributes to planning for The Fostering Network by looking at proposals for new developments, by commenting on fundraising and finance and also providing feedback on

the training and services we provide. We do have a number of carers on the committee but would welcome a few more!

Sara Lurie and her team value the opportunity at the committee to hear your views and help to shape future work. There are no responsibilities on the committee to manage finances or staff issues but involvement in fundraising efforts is always welcome!

If you feel you could consider becoming a member of the Advisory Committee please do contact Sara Lurie, or myself, at The Fostering Network. Both of us are happy to talk more about the committee and its work. We look forward to hearing from you!

With best wishes

Anne Black

Foster Care Fortnight™



Foster Care Fortnight™, the UK's largest foster care awareness campaign, is taking place 1-14 June 2015. The theme for this year's campaign is *Fostering, make a connection*. The Fostering Network Scotland is asking people to make their connection to fostering, what it means to them, their family, and their friends, and consider the role of foster carer in local communities.

Foster carers across Scotland do an amazing job 365 days a year supporting children and young people who can't live at home with their birth families. Foster care is evolving, and foster carers across Scotland are now widely seen as professionals within the team supporting children in care, children with increasingly complex needs. You see the challenges, and you see the rewards, and you're the very best advocates for fostering as a vital role in the fabric of our society. We need your voice loud

and proud during *Foster Care Fortnight™*, to raise as much awareness as possible of the work of foster carers who make the difference to children in care.

You can get involved by tweeting us with the reasons why you foster, using the hashtag #FCF2015, you can follow us on Facebook, and you can visit our website to download the 'my connection to fostering' placard: www.fostering.net/sites/www.fostering.net/files/uploads/my_connection_placard_v2.jpg

The following events will be running during *Foster Care Fortnight™*:

Tuesday 2 June 2015
Tax workshop for foster carers

Wednesday 3 June 2015
Meet the Scotland team: Open day

Tuesday 9 June 2015
Reach Out event: Fostering a disabled child.

For more information on these events, flick to the relevant pages or contact us directly:
t 0141 204 1400,
e scotland@fostering.net



Visit our offices
and learn more
about our work...

On Wednesday 3 June 2015, during the first week of *Foster Care Fortnight™*, we are opening our doors to everyone and they can drop-in to our offices in Glasgow's City Centre.

Come along and meet the team, hear about our work, chat to our Fosterline Scotland worker, see our publications, share your ideas and enjoy some nibbles!

Everyone is welcome!

Feel free to come along anytime between 11am and 2pm: drinks and snacks will be available. Please send us a quick email if you will be dropping by so we can ensure we have enough refreshments!

e scotland@fostering.net

Huge thanks to children who have sent in book reviews!



which book has been picked and we will send you a free copy to review. Follow this link to pick a book: www.pinterest.com/scopestories/books-with-disabled-characters/

Are you fostering a child with a hearing loss? If so, you will be interested to read Sarah-Jayne's review of Julia Donaldson's *Freddie and the Fairy* which comes highly recommended with four and a half stars! Sarah-Jayne explains that the fairy 'can't hear very well', demonstrating the impact of having a hearing loss.

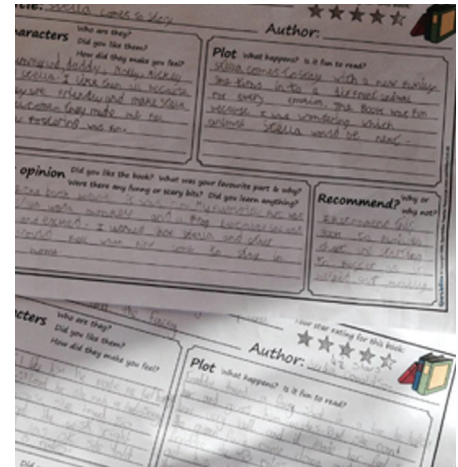
We are grateful for the many book reviews we have received and would love to receive more! If you would like to read one of the reviews we have received, or would like to review a book for us, please contact us to receive a copy of whichever book you pick: **t** 0141 204 1400, **e** scotland@fostering.net

Happy reading!

Read, write, review – and gain a book token as a reward!

Would your child like a £10 book token in exchange for his/her book review? We are looking for children to review one of Scope's recommended children's books, featuring children's characters with a disability. Simply choose a book from Scope's recommended list, let us know

Have you received your copy of Stella? John reviewed our own *Stella* book, a story describing Stella's experience of going to stay with a new family. He awarded it four and a half stars, stating: 'I recommend this book to families that are starting to foster as it helped our family.' If you are a foster carer member in Scotland and would like a free copy of *Stella*, please contact us: **e** scotland@fostering.net



Glasgow Film Festival:

Raising much needed funds for The Fostering Network Scotland!



On Tuesday 31 March, a group of students from Glasgow Caledonian University hosted a student film festival with all proceeds going towards our charity! We are so grateful for their support, and are happy to share their story:

'As a group of students at Glasgow Caledonian University, one of our final year projects is to produce and edit a short film. We chose the topic of foster care. Through this project we aim to raise awareness of the importance of foster care in Glasgow, showing the benefits of the foster care system.'

'Not only do we hope to do this through our short film, but we also hosted a student film festival raising money for The Fostering Network Scotland. Money was collected through ticket sales, a raffle and donations with the aim of raising as much as possible. Through our work with The Fostering Network Scotland we are making more people aware of the importance of foster care and the great difference it makes to those involved. We hope we can do this important issue justice.'

If you would like to help raise vital funds for The Fostering Network Scotland, please get in touch with Linda Bowie: **e** scotland@fostering.net or **t** 0141 204 1400.

New resource for foster carers – Children's Hearing Systems

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administrator (SCRA) has produced a new information resource for foster carers.

The interactive e-book aims to provide foster carers with some introductory information about the Children's Hearing System.

The e-book also aims to help foster carers to better prepare the children and young people in their care for coming to their hearing. It provides information on the rights of children and young people as well as the rights of foster carers.

Malcolm Schaffer, SCRA's Head of Practice and Policy said: 'Foster carers have a critical role to play in helping prepare children and young people in their care before going to a hearing. It is important

they are aware of the child and young people's rights in a hearing, as well as their own rights.'

The e-book is available to be downloaded from SCRA's website: www.scra.gov.uk/home/information_resource_for_foster_carers.cfm

Online survey for children in foster care... a chance to win an iPad Mini!

SCRA is also calling on children and young people in foster care aged 10-17 years to complete a new national well-being survey. The survey asks children to tell us how they feel about things such as their friends, their home, and feeling included. SCRA will put everyone's answers together to see what bits of life young people are feeling happy about and what they need more support in.

SCRA hopes to present this information to organisations which support children and young people too. The survey is confidential so there will be no names included in their report. Everyone who takes part can also have a chance of winning an iPad Mini or other great prizes.

SCRA would like to ask foster carers to invite children to complete the survey and help them if needed. For further information or paper copies of the survey please contact Lucy Hanson
e lucy.hanson@scra.gsi.gov.uk or
t 0300 200 1597.

To complete the survey online please follow the well-being link on SCRA's website: www.scra.gov.uk
The deadline is **15 May 2015**.



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Facts you should know ... Being a relevant person

The implementation of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, in June 2013, brought with it changes for foster carers. The most significant of these was the change to the law relating to relevant person status. Relevant persons have particular rights and duties under the law. For example, they have a right and a duty to attend hearings, as well as having a right to receive the papers and to appeal decisions made by Children's Hearings. Relevant persons can be involved in proceedings and contribute to decisions about the child.

Here are 10 points all foster carers should know about being a relevant person in the Children's Hearings system:

1. Under the 2011 Act, foster carers are not automatically considered to be relevant persons, even if they were relevant persons under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.
2. The 2011 Act provides a route for foster carers to be deemed as relevant persons by a Pre-Hearing Panel or a Children's Hearing.
3. Foster carers can ask the Children's Reporter to arrange a Pre-Hearing Panel if they believe that they meet the significant involvement test to be deemed a relevant person.
4. The test for being deemed a relevant person is that the foster carer has, or recently has had, significant involvement in the upbringing of the child. The hearing will consider many factors including - is the foster carer fulfilling a parental role in relation to the child; is the foster carer involved in key decisions in relation to the child and also the length of time the foster carer has been involved in the child's life.
5. If the panel members think that the foster carer has, or has recently had, significant involvement in the upbringing of the child, they will make that person 'relevant.'
6. Once you have been deemed a relevant person this status will continue while you have ongoing significant involvement in the upbringing of the child.
7. As a relevant person, you can bring a representative to the hearing - this could be your supervising social worker, a lawyer, advocate or friend – and you can also send in a report to be considered by the panel members.
8. Foster carers who are not deemed to be relevant persons may still be able to attend the hearing, either as a representative of the child, or at the discretion of the panel members.
9. This change recognises that while foster carers play an important role in the lives of the children in their care, it may not be appropriate to grant relevant person status if a foster carer's involvement in the child's life is on a temporary or very short-term basis.
10. Once relevant person status has been granted, it can only be removed by a hearing if the person ceases to have significant involvement in the upbringing of the child.

Please note the above points are not an exhaustive list. Please contact Fosterline Scotland if you have any further questions about this: t 0141 204 1400. There may also be other issues, which our Fosterline Scotland worker will be happy to discuss with you.

Fostering Community Champions

The Fostering Community Champions model, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, is well under way and we are in the final stages of recruiting and appointing our first foster carer champions. The next stage is to organise training for all those involved. Our foster carer champions will receive training and guidance to ensure they are equipped to offer peer support - being linked to new or existing foster carers who are facing difficult situations or who simply need a listening ear. We are also delighted to have a number of young people interested in our young champions work. You can read more from two of them below. Having direct experience of foster care our young champions will be given the opportunity to regularly come

together and make new connections with other young people. The project will also provide training and support to prepare them for being involved with the young champions model, allowing them to speak out about foster care and sharing their valuable first-hand experience.

Our first annual gathering will be held on Thursday 17 September and will provide an opportunity for all of our Champions to come together and share good practice from across Scotland, talking about some of the issues facing foster care and collectively identifying ways forward. It will also provide an opportunity for those closely connected with the Champions, such as supervising social workers, to find out more about the model.

More information about how to access peer support for yourself or for someone you support, as well as more information about the gathering, will be available in our next newsletter but in the meantime please visit www.fostering.net/foster-champions-need-for-scotland or contact Sarah McEnhill or Jane Wright for more information.

We will be recruiting more champions later this year so if you are interested in this role or would like to know more about the champions model then please get in touch with Jane Wright or Sarah McEnhill **t** 0141 204 1400 or **e** bethevoice@fostering.net

My parents foster... My reflections

They stood there looking at me, not taking their eyes off me at each step I took towards the car. At that moment every memory that I had made with them came flooding back. I didn't know what to think as I waved goodbye to them. I wished that we could have helped them more, made an even bigger improvement to their lives. But we couldn't. They were gone.

In March 2013 my life was turned upside down when we got our first 'placement.' It seemed great at first but then the cracks began to show. I went from being an only child engulfed in my parents' full attention to suddenly having a two and six year old sharing everything with me. Everything. The term 'terrible twos' became a reality for me: the screaming, kicking, slapping, punching and spitting became a daily occurrence in my crazy household. I had my low days where I resented having foster children in my house and only then did I realise how ridiculously selfish and jealous I had become. At times I didn't even want to speak to them, eat with them or have to share the little time I got with my parents with them. Selfish? Yes it was, these children had come from a horrendous home life in which they had been scarred-mentally and physically. The two girls came with nothing. Now, you may think that I am exaggerating when I say they came with nothing, but they did. They didn't walk in clutching a teddy bear they had had since birth, nor did they come in with a picture of their mum and dad, not even spare clothes. Nothing.



I had everything that I had ever wanted yet I thought I was the one who was having a hard time, when in reality it was the opposite. However, I could now sympathise with my friends who had siblings. It occurred to me that they were not exaggerating about how hard it was to share everything with someone. It had not hit me yet how hard it was going to be, I struggled for weeks if not months with my new environment but slowly I finally adjusted to it. It was the good days we had with the children that got me through the rough periods: the smiles that illuminated their faces when we went for a family walk on the beach could make anyone feel guilty about how jealous they had been, and the good moments definitely outnumbered the bad.

I don't think anybody could understand the intense bond you create with your foster siblings; they live in your home for months: you see them every day. I protected them as if they were my own sisters and tried to make everything enjoyable for them. I gave them both one of my childhood teddies to see if this would make them any happier at the beginning, and it did. They took the teddies to school and nursery and paraded them about the house. It is unimaginable how much of a difference one teddy bear can make to neglected children's lives.

This is an extract from an essay written by Charlotte Lochhead, young champion.



Introducing Connie, a young champion

My family live in the northwest of Scotland in the Highland region, they have been fostering children for several years and this has given me a unique insight into working with/alongside children in foster care.

I enjoy socialising with friends, sports and travelling to different countries. Growing up in a family who foster has helped me to be more balanced as a young champion for The Fostering Network. I am able to provide examples of benefits and areas for development for foster care, in particular in rural areas.



LOTTERY FUNDED

Fosterline Scotland update



Hi Everyone! Fosterline Scotland has received a number of queries from foster carers about a wide range of issues. Recently, there have been more queries from carers phoning for advice about their foster care reviews. Foster carers may be phoning for advice about what their agency is recommending. The recommendation may be a change of approval or deregistration, which the carer may or may not agree with. The carer may want to discuss the circumstances, which has led to the agency recommendation and how they can prepare for their review. In preparing for their review, it is important for foster carers to be aware of the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009 and also the National Care Standards for Foster Care and Family Placement Services.

The main provisions for reviews are contained in Regulation 25 of the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009. Regulation 25 states that reviews must be held within 12 months of the day the decision to approve the foster

carer was made, within three years of the previous review and also where the agency consider that a review of the foster carer's approval is necessary or appropriate to safeguard the welfare of any child who has been placed with that carer.

The requirement of these reviews is to refer the case to the fostering panel for a recommendation in considering whether the foster carer continues to be a suitable person with whom to place a child or children. In making its recommendation, the panel may vary the terms of the approval; terminate the approval; or confirm the decision to approve a person as a foster carer. When the agency decision-maker (ADM) receives a recommendation from the fostering panel they must make a decision within 14 days from the date the recommendation was made. The ADM must notify the foster carer in writing of the decision made within seven days of making that decision.

Regulation 26 of the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009, states that the foster carer may request a review of a decision not to approve them as a foster carer; to terminate their approval or to vary the terms of their approval within 28 days of the date of notification of the decision. Where the agency receives a request for a review of the decision, they must refer the case to a differently constituted fostering panel for a recommendation (please look at Regulation 26 for more info about this).

In the National Care Standards for Foster Care and Family Placement Services (Standards 1 – 13) reviews are covered under Standard 11, and the fostering panel under Standard 12. Under reviews, important points to mention are that you

can be confident the review report includes recommendations about your continued approval and that you are given a copy of this report before the review is held. Under the fostering panel, you know that there is a clear difference between the panel's responsibility to recommend and the agency's responsibility to decide. You can be confident that the fostering panel will have all the relevant information it needs to make its decisions or recommendations. You are also given information about the appeals procedure and how, and in what circumstances, you may access this.

All fostering agencies must comply with the national care standards. They have been developed to make sure that the services that they provide are of high quality. The standards are based on a set of principles. The principles are dignity, privacy, choice, safety, realising potential and equality and diversity. They reflect the strong agreement that your experience of services is very important and should be positive, and that you have rights.

Remember, Fosterline Scotland is here to assist with this query and many other types of queries! As Fosterline Scotland worker, I am contactable Monday to Friday, 10am until 4pm. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if with me, Mirren Taylor, if you have a query you would like help with.



Scottish Government update

Following the Scottish Government's Foster Care Review, the Scottish Government has established a Foster Care Review Implementation Reference Group to oversee progress and to advise on taking forward work on each of the recommendations. They also set up short life working groups to look at: Placement Descriptors, Alternatives to a Database and a Learning & Development Framework for foster carers.

The Fostering Network has been represented on all of these groups. To read the latest updates from the Scottish Government, please follow this link: www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/protecting/lac/foster-care-review

We welcome your thoughts and comments. Please email our Director, Sara Lurie and she will happily forward them to the Scottish Government: e.scotland@fostering.net

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR AREA

The Cool Carers Kids Club



The Cool Carers Kids Club was set up around seven years ago and is open to school children in the West Lothian Council area. The group is facilitated by the Family Placement Team and its purpose is to provide support for foster carers' children, recognising the impact fostering has on their lives. The club meets monthly on a Friday and undertakes various activities with the children, celebrating their role within their fostering family, providing support with any issues that arise from fostering and having fun!

The children have worked hard to produce this article for our newsletter telling you about their club, and we are so pleased to be able to share it with you now:

'We come to the Cool Carers Kids Club once a month on a Friday. Here we discuss if we have any worries or thoughts. This is a fun club. We play a variety of games. Some people learn games at school and share them with the club. We go on summer trips

like the Five Sisters Zoo, bowling and painting pottery. We also keep active by climbing a hill. When we climbed the hill (as part of The Fostering Network's Let's Go! project) we placed a flag as our picture shows, had a picnic and completed our Fostering Network booklets.

'We get free, tasty snacks that are healthy too such as grapes, bananas, melon, mango and pineapple. We also get a treat like hot chocolate, skooshy cream, marshmallows and cookies.

'We talk about different things like respect at home and rules in our home and in the club.

We ask each other about changes in our homes now that we foster.

'We write jokes and poems for our foster carer newsletter. We enter Fostering Network competitions. We get certificates and do party games to say well done for being in a fostering family.'

By the kids from West Lothian Council's Cool Carers Kids Club!

We would welcome hearing from other fostering services about the activities and support offered to foster carers' own children and children in foster care!
e scotland@fostering.net

Children in Fife are making a noise!

2B Heard is a group which supports care experienced children and young people in Fife. As well as developing ideas around 'what care should look like' meeting with the corporate parent board and speaking at Fife Council meetings, they have visited the Scottish Parliament, been fruit picking, and visited the Edinburgh fringe.

If you would like more information about the group or would like to come along please contact e 2bheard@fife.gov.uk and Kerri will be in touch.

Fostering in Scotland

Free tax workshop for foster carers during Foster Care Fortnight™

**Tuesday 2 June 2015
in Edinburgh
Time: 9.45am – 2.30pm
(including lunch)**

Are you a foster carer member of The Fostering Network?

Would you like a reminder of how to make sure your tax (in relation to fostering) is up to date?

Would you like to find out more about other matters in foster care finance – fostering payments, national insurance, pensions & benefits, savings & pocket money, insurances & member benefits?

If yes then why not come along to our free workshop in Edinburgh in June.

To find out more or to request a booking form, please contact Mirren Taylor;
e scotland@fostering.net t 0141 204 1400



Our new UK CEO

We are pleased to announce that Kevin Williams will be taking up the role of chief executive of The Fostering Network in early summer 2015.

Kevin joins the charity having previously worked as chief executive of TACT, the UK's largest charitable fostering and adoption provider, for over a decade, and more recently of disability charity DGSM yourChoice.

Kevin will be based in our London office, but looks forward to meeting our members in Scotland. He says of his appointment: 'I am delighted to be taking on the leadership of The Fostering Network at what is a crucial time for foster care and fostering services.'

Feedback from our projects, training & events

Have you been to any of our events? Here is some of the feedback we have received from those who have been involved in our projects, attended focus groups, workshops or training. We look forward to seeing you at future events!

Our free focus groups allow foster carer members to share challenges as well as increase learning and awareness on a range of topics. Here is some of their feedback:

'Excellent, informative, upbeat day.'

'As usual, a great day run by The Fostering Network.'

'I now feel confident about completing my tax return!'

'A thought-provoking and interesting discussion. Glad there are so many like-minded foster carers who are true advocates for the children they look after and love.'



Our *Let's Go!* project inspired children to engage in sporting activities. Here is some feedback from families who took part:

'This has been a fantastic project, our children loved taking part.'

'One very very happy young person this morning... well done The Fostering Network, he is wearing his medal to school!'

Young people share their enthusiasm about becoming a young champion:

'can't wait to get started and help others.'

'very inspiring, I would like to be involved.'

Our *The Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers* course continues to receive fantastic reviews:

'As a supervising social worker I appreciate having foster carers involved in leading the groups, which was far more powerful than the theory alone. I have lots of ideas for how to make this an effective learning opportunity for prospective carers as a result of the course.'

'Just a quick note to thank you for the course. The trainers were excellent, very, very informative. It has definitely given me the confidence to carry on and try to help my agency to develop and engage more with foster carers.' (Foster carer).

'Best training I have attended in a long time.'
(Supervising Social Worker).



Keep an eye on our Dates for the diary article each newsletter on the back page to find out our forthcoming events!

Update from Learning and Development

Joy and our team of associate trainers have been busy delivering training courses across the country. The year has been busy with many of our popular courses being delivered to fostering services throughout Scotland.

Please note the following open courses taking place, with more dates to follow:

Men Who Foster*

Saturday 22 August 2015
Glasgow

Price: members £98.00 plus VAT/
non-member £196.00 plus VAT
(includes lunch)

*Please note: this course is for men only.

The Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers

Open Course
New Third Edition
Tuesday 25, Wednesday 26 and
Thursday 27 August 2015
Glasgow

Price: members £299.00 plus VAT/
non-member £598.00 plus VAT
(includes lunch)

The Role of the Supervising Social Worker

Tuesday 27 and Wednesday
28 October 2015
Glasgow

Price: members £210.00 + VAT
Non-members £420.00 + VAT
(includes lunch)

These courses continue to be oversubscribed so sign up early to secure your place, or have it provided in-house for your fostering service!

To book a place, or find out more about any of our training courses, get in touch with Joy Crawford:
t 0141 204 1400

e scotland@fostering.net or visit:
www.fostering.net

Showcasing impact – social pedagogy practice exchange day

On 24 March 2015, The Fostering Network Scotland hosted a Head, Heart, Hands (HHH) practice exchange day in Edinburgh. The day was attended by foster carers, social pedagogues, researchers, social workers and other professionals and proved an enlightening event which clearly demonstrated the impact the programme is making to children and foster carers.

As you may know, Head, Heart, Hands is The Fostering Network's innovative programme exploring the impact that social pedagogy can make to foster carers and the lives of the children they foster. As we enter the final year of the programme, we are excited to see emerging evidence of social pedagogy improving stability, enhancing the quality of care and improving the outcomes for children and young people in foster care. This was highlighted throughout the day by moving presentations from foster carers as well as impact reporting from our evaluators, Loughborough University, and Edinburgh Council.

Evidence suggests that when planned transitions or emergency moves are needed, the skills and ethos promoted through social pedagogy can contribute greatly to reducing stress and trauma during these difficult times. Excellent foster care is dependent on excellent relationships and we have seen a wealth of evidence that social pedagogy is building and strengthening relationships between children, foster carers and social workers. The focus on relationships is not new, but the emphasis on the 'human' and relationship aspect of foster care that social pedagogy brings and shared focus on this by

Introducing social pedagogy into foster care

everyone around the child, is making a positive difference to foster placements.

We are seeing a marked difference in the confidence of foster carers, particularly in making decisions that they consider are in the best interest of the child. As a result, they are better able to advocate for the children and young people they are looking after. One foster carer summed up the benefits of social pedagogy during the day: 'We can live our lives without fear and make judgement calls.' Encouragingly, there is evidence of wider systemic changes within the HHH programme, including changes to the way in which annual reviews are conducted, managing allegations, and a new approach to recruiting, assessing and training foster carers.

To find out more about Head, Heart, Hands please do get in touch: contact Sara Lurie, Director for Scotland
t 0141 204 1400 e scotland@fostering.net. You can also follow our activities on Twitter #HeadHeartHands.

From a social worker

'I thought it was a lovely story that one of my carers, Sandra, shared with me a short while ago. Sandra said the young person in placement, David, drew her a card that said he was like Pikachu and she was like his trainer, Ash. Sandra thought this was odd at first and asked David about it. He explained that Ash took care of Pikachu and taught him how to be the best he could be and that was what she was doing for him.'

Save the date! Reach Out event: Fostering a disabled child

Tuesday, 9 June 2015, Perth
Free event for foster carer members

As part of *Foster Care Fortnight™*, we will be hosting our final Reach Out event and all foster carer members are welcome to come along. There is no charge for this event which will include lunch. This event will allow foster carers to explore fostering a disabled child. We look forward to welcoming as many of our members as possible, to share their challenges and successes and learn from one another. If you are new to fostering, or are considering fostering a disabled child, please join us and learn from others.

We will be taking into account the issues raised during our three Reach Out focus groups which were held last year in Aberdeen, Glasgow and the Scottish Borders, and hope participants from these will attend. We are also pleased to be featuring a session run by Action for Sick Children Scotland as part of the event.

The event will run from 10am until approximately 3pm on Tuesday 9 June in Perth. To secure your place, please contact: Linda Bowie, **e** scotland@fostering.net, **t** 0141 204 1400.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Dates for your diary ...

**Monday 1 to Sunday
14 June 2015** (Page 4)
Foster Care Fortnight™

Tuesday 2 June 2015
(Page 9)
Tax workshop for foster carers

Wednesday 3 June 2015
(Page 4)
Meet the Scotland team!

Tuesday 9 June 2015
(Page 12)
Reach Out event: Fostering a
disabled child

Saturday 22 August 2015
(Page 11)
Men Who Foster

**Tuesday 25, Wednesday
26 and Thursday
27 August 2015**
(Page 11)

The Skills to Foster:
Train the Trainers open course

**Thursday 17 September
2015** (Page 7)
First annual Champions gathering

**Tuesday 27 and
Wednesday 28
October 2015**
(Page 11)
The Role of the Supervising
Social Worker

If you are interested in attending any of these events
t 0141 204 1400 or **e** scotland@fostering.net

The Fostering Network Scotland...



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