

The
Fostering
Network

FOSTERING IN Scotland

issue 59

The newsletter of **The Fostering Network** Scotland

Autumn 2017

In this issue:

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- **Young champions meet the commissioner**
- **Lifelong Links - developing connections for young people**
- **And more!**



Hello everyone

It's been another busy few months with a highlight being our family day out enjoying Foster Walk Glasgow 2017 in September. The event was a huge success and lots of fun (despite the rain), and we were delighted to be joined by foster families and a host of children from across Scotland as we enjoyed a wander through Rouken Glen Park (see pictures on page 7).

The Care Review is now underway with a series of stakeholder events having taken place to help inform the review. Adam and Amy represented our young champions at one of the review's 1,000 voices events and it was great to have June from the Care Review team and Alistair from the discovery group leading discussions at our recent IVP forum meeting (see pictures). We would encourage our members to sign up to the Care Review to be kept up to date with progress. Visit carereview.scot and click the link to 'Get Involved' or follow the Care Review on Twitter or Facebook.

I am pleased that the Scottish Government will shortly be commencing a review of care allowances and The Fostering

Network will represent our members on the review group which will first meet in November. We look forward to sharing more on this work as it gets underway.

We welcome the recent announcement by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon of the Government's commitment to exempt care leavers from paying council tax. Please do keep an eye out in our next newsletter, or follow me on twitter @tfn_sara, to be kept up-to-date on the implementation of this as further details are known.

We are delighted to announce the winners of our Slater's vouchers competition, on page 7. Sean and Daniel are both inspirational young men.



We are repeatedly expanding our range of popular training courses, and are pleased to be providing a new course in November on Moving into Adulthood, while also offering new in-house training on health issues which fostering services can purchase for their foster carer and social work teams.

Read more about our training on page 8, and make sure you get in touch with Joy Crawford as soon as possible if you would like to attend any of our courses to ensure you do not miss out! In addition to this training, we are also running (back by popular demand!) a workshop on Consent and Confidentiality in Glasgow on 21 February and a new workshop on Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) on 7 December. Both workshops are free for foster carer members – for more information: e.scotland@fostering.net and do keep an eye on our 'dates for your diary' on the back page!

Until next time,

Sara Lurie

Sara Lurie
Director for Scotland

Update from the Independent Care Review

Fiona Duncan, Chair of the Independent Care Review, has sent the following message to foster carers:

The Independent Care Review has made great progress since I last updated you as we have been touring Scotland meeting with children and young people in care and speaking to the people and organisations who care for, support and work with them.

I am so pleased to see we had a good representation of foster carers at our events.

The review is in its discovery stage and we are counting on you to help us answer these two key questions:

1. What would the best care system in Scotland look like for you? This will help define the vision of the review.

2. What do you think a root and branch review of the care system should include? This will define the scope of the review.

If you haven't been able to attend any of the discovery events I would really encourage you to provide your views on these two questions. As foster carers, fostering service staff and children and young people directly affected by foster care, you have the lived experience that is crucial to ensuring that this review is informed by the people who are at the heart of the care system.

This will be an ongoing conversation and we hope you will be involved throughout the two-year duration of the review. Your views are critical and central to the review as are the voices of the children and young people you look after:

Join the conversation and sign up for updates:
carereview.scot/get-involved

Walking Tall update

The Fostering Network was recently awarded funding by the Big Lottery Fund to support Walking Tall, a two-year project which aims to provide opportunities for primary school aged children in foster care and the children of foster carers that make their voices heard and enable them to reach their full potential - to help them 'walk tall'.

It's been a very busy couple of months and an exciting start to the project's development. We have been visiting various fostering families, agencies and local authorities to help spread the word about how people can get involved in the steering group and the forthcoming workshops. We have also presented the project to our team in London and to the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, Bruce Adamson. We are planning on inviting Bruce along to our future steering group meeting, as he expressed an interest in joining us.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank our steering group members who have kindly volunteered their time to ensure that the project is steered in the right direction. We had our first meeting in early August and it was both fun and informative - our youngest steering group volunteer is only six years old!

There are still a few spaces left on our steering group. If you have experience of foster care at primary school age and would like to be a part of this exciting new project then please do not hesitate to get in touch with Kirsteen Marshall, project worker: **t** 0141 204 1400 or **e** scotland@fostering.net

Finally, keep an eye out for Walking Tall updates on our website and social media. The workshop plans are coming together nicely and you do not want to miss out on the opportunity to get involved!



Walking Tall workshops - save the date!

Our first series of Walking Tall workshops are scheduled to take place in Glasgow on the following dates:

- Saturday 24 February 2018
- Saturday 10 March 2018
- Saturday 24 March 2018
- Saturday 7 April 2018

The block of four workshops are aimed at primary aged children who live in fostering households with our members (both children in foster care and the sons and daughters of foster carers).

Over the four days we will be using dance, drama and play as a means of exploring and developing a shared understanding of the fostering experience. Children should plan to attend all four sessions. We are also looking to hold workshops for foster carers to run alongside these sessions.

Spaces are limited and will be snapped up quickly, so for further information or to register your interest with Kirsteen Marshall, project worker, get in touch as soon as possible. We ask that children commit to attending all four workshops. **e** scotland@fostering.net

Watch this space for information on additional workshops across Scotland later next year.

Back by popular demand!

Free workshop for foster carers – Consent and Confidentiality

10.30am – 2.30pm, Wednesday 21 February 2018, Glasgow

We are delighted to be hosting our Consent and Confidentiality workshop once again, in partnership with Children's Health Scotland (formerly Action for Sick Children Scotland). It has been extremely well received in the past, and this is your opportunity to benefit if you were unable to attend previously.

The workshop will explore the medical rights of children in foster care, providing:

- An introduction to the specific issues of consent and confidentiality when accompanying a child in foster care who has healthcare needs.

- Increased understanding and knowledge of children and young people's rights when accompanying a looked after child who has healthcare needs.
- An opportunity through interactive activities (including quizzes and case studies) to apply knowledge to different situations.

- Increased confidence when you are encountering situations in which these issues apply.

Explore the health needs and rights of children and young people in foster care during our Consent and Confidentiality workshop, facilitated by Anne Wilson from Children's Health Scotland.

The workshop is free of charge for foster carer members, including lunch. To request a booking form, please contact us:

t 0141 204 1400 or
e scotland@fostering.net



Young champions visit London



In August the young champions took a working trip down south to meet our London colleagues.

Having contributed so much to the work and image of The Fostering Network here in Scotland we wanted to find out how we contributed to fostering nationally.

It was a 5am start and, after meeting in Glasgow, we flew down on an early flight. The young champions enjoyed a tour of our London office and met the staff, some of whom took time out to explain their roles within the organisation and give lots of career advice to our champions who are heading to work/university this year.

Our night in London was spent seeing the sights from up high – an exciting view from the London Eye made some of us face a few fears!

Day two saw an interesting insight into the work of the London office. It was great to feel so welcome and find out how much the work of the young champions influences our UK-wide drive to improve the lives of all children and young people in care. The young champions then gave a fantastic presentation to a packed room, filled with all the London staff, detailing the range of work they do and the importance of organisations listening and using the voices of young people. We also kept the audience happy with some delicious Scottish sweets.

The Fostering Network would like to thank all the young champions for their hard work and dedication to the service. Their continued commitment and motivation to improving the lives of children and young people is an inspiration to all of us!

If you know someone who would be interested in joining the young champions and sharing their views and experiences, then please get in touch with Sue McKellar: **t** 0141 204 1400 or **e** scotland@fostering.net



Meeting Scotland's commissioner



The young champions met with the new Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People in his office in Edinburgh. Bruce Adamson has been in post since May and shares the view of our young champions that children and young people need to be at the heart of any work that influences their lives. You can read the results of

their interview in this edition of The Fostering Network's Foster Care magazine.

The commissioner's job is to help young people understand their rights and to make sure those rights are respected. His goal is to make sure all children and young people in Scotland are as safe and happy as possible.

Bruce works towards this goal by:

- listening to children and young people
- asking people in power – like members of the Scottish Parliament – to think about how new laws might affect children and young people
- helping children and young people learn more about their rights
- speaking out if children and young people are not getting a fair deal.

You can contact the commissioner: **t** 0131 346 5350
Young people's Freephone: **t** 0800 019 1179

Fostering Community Champions



Foster carer champions

As we enter the final year of Fostering Community Champions, here's an update from project worker Sara Smith.

It is hard to believe that it is a year since I took on the role of project worker for the foster carer champions and what a busy year we have had. Our amazing group of volunteer foster carers (the foster carer champions) have given so much of their time to the project and I thank them for that. The foster carer champions are available to all foster carers and offer peer support to foster carers.

Below are just a few facts and figures:

- 40 foster carers given direct phone support with a foster carer champion.
- 172 foster carers attended our events at Our Dynamic Earth and Edinburgh Zoo.
- 13 meetings to promote the project through fostering providers and conferences.

- 133 foster carers met throughout year.
- 10 support meetings for our team of champions.

We have also worked closely with the young champions and have attended their events, providing support to these fabulous young people at every opportunity.

Feedback from foster carers has emphasised just how much peer support can help; a listening ear can make all the difference.

“If it hadn't been for talking with a champion I would have given up fostering.”

“After talking I actually slept for the first time in a long time.”

Where next?

We will continue to offer support by linking with Fosterline Scotland to give a listening ear to foster carers needing to speak to one of their peers. We will carry on meeting with foster carer support and development groups to ensure we continue to promote the project and give opportunities for all carers to use peer support.

We will be visiting foster carer groups further afield, with visits planned to Orkney, Shetland and Lewis. If you are from these areas we look forward to seeing you in the near future.

By matching carers we are able to offer support from foster carers who may have had similar experiences and have a good understanding of the issues foster carers may face. If you feel you would like to access this service please do not hesitate to get in touch, **t** 0141 204 1400 or **e** scotland@fostering.net

Fosterline update

Hello everyone, we recently received some questions about insurances and it got us thinking about the various insurance cover foster carers require, including home, car, public liability and legal protection. Home and car insurance can include accidental or malicious damage to property, belongings, vehicles or people and theft.

Some main points to remember:

- Always inform your insurers that you are fostering or proposing to foster and keep them informed at the outset of the likely maximum number of children to be fostered at any one time, and explain that their ages vary up to 18 years. If there is a change to your household, you must tell them immediately. For further information on home insurance please visit thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/home-insurance
- Make sure you have legal protection insurance, in the event of an allegation being made against you. All foster carer members are automatically covered by our legal protection scheme. If you're a foster carer member, you can download our Legal Protection Insurance Guide. We also have a retired carer membership category to ensure this legal protection continues once foster carers cease to foster.
- There are specialist providers of home insurance for foster carers, including our partner Towergate Insurance (who offer a 10 per cent discount to members of The Fostering Network). Key features you should look for include cover for any malicious damage or vandalism caused by a foster child.



Remember, **Fosterline Scotland** is here to assist with any query relating to fostering. The service is open from Monday to Friday, 10am until 4pm. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you have a query you would like help with.

You can order our signpost booklet 'Insurance: Information for foster carers' from our website: fosteringresources.co.uk

Thanks, Mirren & Julie

Lifelong Links - creating lasting relationships for children in care

The City of Edinburgh Council has been searching for extended family and friend connections for children in the care system since October 2015. Here they explain why they are now working in partnership with Family Rights Group to develop a UK model that creates a positive lifelong support network for children in the care system, their wider family network and network of friends.

Why is it needed?

The Care Inquiry (2013) conducted by eight voluntary organisations, including The Fostering Network, found that the greatest failing of the care system is that too often it breaks, rather than builds, relationships for children. It found that 'relationships are the golden thread' that contribute to positive outcomes for looked after children. (The Fostering Network recognises the importance of children and young people maintaining contact with their former foster carers through our Keep Connected campaign.)

The aim of this new project therefore is to link children with responsible people from their wider family and friend networks and enable these children to have meaningful and supportive relationships. This is with the aim of supporting their care placements and to help them negotiate and



navigate through their adult lives. These people can be family, identified from doing family tree research at Register House (pictured above), or people that were important in their past such as friends, neighbours, previous foster carers, residential workers, guidance teachers or others.

By linking children with responsible people, they can gain a befriender, a mentor or strong role model, practical or financial support and emotional wellbeing. Or they may simply send birthday cards or presents to children who otherwise may only receive these things from people within their professional network. Added to this the children gain a much greater sense of belonging and, in many cases so far, begin to build a much clearer, more coherent picture of their identity.

Ongoing research is showing that in many cases there are significant numbers of extended family members (frequently 20 plus) who social workers and other professionals involved in children's lives know nothing about, but when approached are willing and able to offer a connection and commitment to a child.

The Lifelong Links project is using techniques, Register House (Scotland only), online searches, case file searches and mobility mapping exercises with young people to gather initial information about who is and could be a child's connectedness to their past and their future. The team bring those that want to be involved in a child or young person's life together in a family group meeting to plan how this can be best achieved. This service is part of the family group decision making service.

We are excited about this development and happy to talk further with fostering services who may be interested in supporting young people in their care. The key staff involved are Stuart Graham, Gillian Christian and Anne Begbie from The City of Edinburgh Council. For more information on this, please contact: **e** familygroupdecisionmaking@edinburgh.gov.uk

FASD (Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder)

Learn more about FASD (Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) and join our free workshop for foster carer members

10.30am – 1.30pm
Thursday 7 December 2017
Glasgow

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a range of characteristics displayed by children who have been exposed to alcohol in-utero. Children may display a range of physical, cognitive, social or emotional disabilities which last a lifetime. FASD has been recognised as a growing concern and it is estimated that it may affect between two to five per cent of births locally, with

the rate being much higher among looked after children. Caring for children with FASD is challenging but awareness, education, early intervention and support will encourage the child's early learning, self-esteem and readiness for life-long learning.

The session will provide an awareness and understanding of the impact of drinking alcohol during pregnancy, characteristics of FASD and provide information on the assessment and diagnostic process along with some practical tips and guidance to help support our foster carer members.

To find out more or to request a place **t** 0141 204 1400 or **e** scotland@fostering.net

Glasgow training suite available for hire

Our training suite is proving extremely popular with local organisations – it holds up to 20 people and is situated in a prized location in the centre of Glasgow. If you are looking for a central venue in Glasgow for a meeting or event, do get in touch! Our rates are very competitive.

For more information, please contact Linda Curran: **t** 0141 204 1400 or **e** scotland@fostering.net

Foster Walk Glasgow proves a success again!

We moved to beautiful Rouken Glen Park in the south side of Glasgow for our 2017 Foster Walk on Sunday 10 September. We were joined by foster families from across Scotland who came together to raise money to help us continue our work transforming fostered children's lives.

As you will see from the photographs (huge thanks to Amy Davidson, one of our young champions, for being our official photographer), we braved the rain showers to enjoy the park, the pond and the woodland walk. After successfully completing the walk, everyone enjoyed a picnic lunch (indoors!), before taking part in some fun activities led by park ranger Katy.

We would like to extend our thanks to all the families who took part, as well as the volunteers who helped out on the day and all those who raised money for us to continue our important work supporting foster families across Scotland. Roll on Foster Walk 2018!



Young people share their stories – competition winners announced!



We are delighted to announce the joint winners of our Slaters competition – Sean and Daniel. Both will be awarded £200 worth of vouchers.

Sean is the fifteen-year-old son of foster carers and says: 'I have gained skills through fostering, experiences and memories that I can use through my life and keep forever. Being part of a fostering family can be difficult at times, for example settling the babies or children when they arrive and everything is strange to them, and also when they leave our home, as we miss them. However, I believe that the fun times, and the memories make up for this and more.'

Daniel, (pictured), nominated by his tutor who is also a foster carer, is care experienced and as he embarks on his final year at

university studying BSc (Hons) Podiatry says: 'As this is my last year of study I shall be attending many formal events, networking events, and job interviews so whatever I buy would be a massive help to assist me in the future. Thank you very much for considering me as it's a massive honour.'

Congratulations to you both, and a huge thank you to Slaters for their generosity in donating the vouchers.

Look out for more competitions and opportunities in future editions of our newsletter.

“ Thank you very much for considering me as it's a massive honour. ”

Available training courses – filling up fast!

We are delighted by the number of fostering services who have requested our trainers deliver a range of courses to their foster carers and social workers.

As well as offering courses in-house, we are continuing to deliver our open courses. Upcoming open courses, all being held at the training suite in our Glasgow office, with lunch included, are:

Moving into Adulthood

Wednesday 8 November 2017
Price: members £110 plus VAT
non-members £220 plus VAT

Men Who Foster (for male foster carers)

Wednesday 24 January 2018
Price: members £110 plus VAT
non-members £220 plus VAT

The Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers

Tuesday 20, Wednesday 21 and
Thursday 22 March 2018
Price: members £310 plus VAT
non-members £620 plus VAT

To express an interest in any of our training please get in touch, details below.

Our courses book up fast, so to secure your place on one of the above open courses, or to enquire about running one of our courses in-house, please contact Joy Crawford:

t 0141 204 1400
e scotland@fostering.net
thefosteringnetwork.org.uk

Dates for your diary ...

Wednesday 8 November 2017

Moving into Adulthood
Glasgow (page 8)

Thursday 7 December 2017

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum
Disorder (FASD)
Glasgow (page 6)

Wednesday 24 January 2018

Men Who Foster
(for male foster carers)
Glasgow (page 8)

Wednesday 21 February 2018

Consent and Confidentiality
Glasgow (page 3)

Saturday 24 February

Saturday 10 March

Saturday 24 March

Saturday 7 April 2018

Walking Tall workshops
for children
Glasgow (page 3)

Save the date

Tuesday 13 March 2018

The Fostering Network
member's Roadshow
Edinburgh (for further details see
our website and look out for our
next newsletter)

Tuesday 20 – Thursday 22 March 2018

The Skills to Foster: Train
the Trainers
Glasgow (page 8)



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

The Fostering Network Scotland...



With thanks to the funders who supported this edition.

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