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January 2022

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Happy New Year!

My name is Francine Bates, and I took over from Sara Lurie as interim director of Scotland while her replacement was recruited. I started in October last year and one of the first things I did was meet up with Sara in her last week. We had met many times online but never in person. I was so impressed by her energy and commitment to fostering and our members. I know that Sara will be greatly missed by all her friends and colleagues. We are so grateful for all she has done over the last 13 years to build the work of The Fostering Network in Scotland and push foster carers up the agenda.

Life goes on and our team in Glasgow continues to be very busy. We have started meeting face to face and coming into the office but most of us are still working from home, logging onto zoom meetings most of the time! We were delighted to welcome Laura to her role as implementation

manager for The Promise (see below, as well as our update from The Promise on page 3) and our cover photo shows some of our influential young advocates with their project worker, Amy Adair, presenting at the Continuing Care and After Care event in Glasgow. I'd also like to take the opportunity to warmly congratulate our Scottish award winners: Betty Falconer, Gordon and Rhonda Miller, Scott and Gina Murdoch, and our inspirational young winners Tilly and Penelope, Heather, Calum, John and Brittany-Denise. Thank you so much for the contribution you all make. You can read more about our Fostering Excellence Awards, which were held virtually in November, in our UK magazine.

The new permanent director for Scotland will be announced very soon, and we will include more about them in the next newsletter. Even though I



have only been in this role for a short time, I will be sad to say goodbye to everyone I have met. This is a great team to inherit, and I wish the new director the best of luck in the future.

Thank you.

Francine Bates
Interim Director of Scotland

Meet Laura – Our new implementation manager for The Promise

We are delighted to introduce you to Laura Graham who joined the team in Scotland at the beginning of October to support us to

#KeepThePromise.

'I am so excited to be here and be part of supporting The Fostering Network to keep The Promise. I have been working with children and young people with experience of care, and their families, for a number of years and I am extremely passionate about working to ensure Scotland realises its ambition of being the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up.'

Laura's work will have a focus on the language we use and what changes we need to embrace within our practice and policy to ensure we are not compounding the stigma of care. We are committed to carrying out this work in partnership with foster carers and children and young people with experience of care.

'We know language creates realities. What we say and how we say it can have a huge impact on a child or young person's experience of care and how people think about care. I am looking forward to working with foster carers and young people to co-produce training, activities and resources for The Fostering Network staff team and foster carers to explore our language and reframe the narrative around care.'

The Fostering Network is committed to **#KeepThePromise** and through our work, we will aspire to align with all that The Promise encapsulates. As well as focusing on language, as one of the five Fundamentals specified in **Plan 21-24**, we will also be looking for more ways to include children and young people in our ongoing development as an organisation. We aim to embed what we've heard from them and ensure they are at the heart of all we do.



If you would like to find out more, or you or anyone you know is interested in being a part of our ongoing work to **#KeepThePromise**, please email Laura Graham at **scotland@fostering.net**. You can also read more on their website **thepromise.scot**, and we're pleased to feature an update from The Promise on page 3.

Update from Jackie Brock, chief operations officer, The Promise Scotland

It's been another busy few months for The Promise Scotland, and for everyone involved in the work to **#KeepThePromise**. You will be keen to know what progress is being made; you understand, more than many, the real impact of the promise being kept – or not.

Since our last update, a working group has formed to redesign the Children's Hearings System. A partnership of Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS), the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), The Promise Scotland and the Scottish Government, it includes members with lived experience of the hearings system. As the independent care review concluded, there are a number of changes required if the Children's Hearing System is to **#KeepThePromise** Scotland made to its children and families. Chaired by former sheriff David Mackie, it will agree a vision and analyse practice, legislative, budgetary and structure blocks to implementing that vision. It will agree proposals for legislative change – and changes that don't require legislation will be progressed at pace. As with all the work to **#KeepThePromise**, what can change now, must change now.

In September, The Promise Scotland welcomed the Scottish Government's announcement of a Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. This is an investment

of at least £500m within the life of this parliament, and an aim of investing 5% of all community-based health and social care spending in preventative whole family support measures by 2030. The Scottish Government committed to **#KeepThePromise** and to do everything in their power to make sure that children and families get all the support they need to thrive – now and in the future. Given the devastating impact of the pandemic, this fund is a tangible demonstration of that commitment. New ways of working are required but the approach outlined in this Programme for Government of significant and sustained investment which must be delivered in a joined up, cohesive way gives hope to everyone who is working to **#KeepThePromise**.

Finally, the government's consultation on a National Care Service for Scotland closed on 2 November 2021. The Promise Scotland took a thorough and evidence-based approach when preparing its response. This included; revisiting the care review's evidence framework; re-examining cross-referencing of the Review of Adult Social Care recommendations against the independent care review conclusions; considering it in relation to the twelve composite stories developed from and with the hundreds of children and



young people the independent care review spoke to; and assessing implications on **Plan 21-24** and Change Programme ONE. The Promise Scotland did not reach a binary decision and cannot say whether the proposals, as they stand, will **#KeepThePromise** – you can read The Promise Scotland's consultation response through our website: **The Promise Scotland response to a National Care Service for Scotland consultation - The Promise**.

The Promise Scotland will remain engaged in the national discussion and support whatever decision is made as a result of this consultation – but only on the basis that Scotland's commitment to **#KeepThePromise**, as swiftly as it can, to its children and families, is maintained and clearly articulated.



Training update – courses now online!

'A great session for me. As someone who is new to fostering, I have listened and learned.'

Foster carer, Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers

Our training programme is now running successfully online. Our upcoming Zoom courses, which all cost £102 plus VAT for members and £204 plus VAT for non-members, are:

Moving into Adulthood
Wednesday 26 January 2022

Life Work
Wednesday 16 February 2022

Moving Children On
Wednesday 16 March 2022

These and other courses are also available to be purchased by fostering services as 'in-house' training. Other courses include: Skills to Foster: Train

the Trainers, Managing Allegations Against Foster Carers, Moving Into Adulthood, and the Role of the Supervising Social Worker.

To book a place on one of our courses, or to find out more about purchasing an in-house course, please call Joy Crawford on 0141 204 1400, email scotland@fostering.net, or visit thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/events.

Creative workshops

In October, Articulate Cultural Trust created a shared space in the Pipe Factory in Glasgow for creative workshops and a gallery to share work by young people with experience of care.

We were proud to see the young advocates' pieces displayed alongside other beautiful and moving art.



Some of the young advocates with their creative work at the art gallery (hosted by Articulate Cultural Trust)

An update from the Young Advocates project

Our young advocates continue to have a positive impact with their creative work and online resource. Recently they have had their artwork featured at a gallery exhibition, spoken at live events, and have been busy delivering sessions for educators about how to raise awareness and reduce stigma for young people with experience of care.

Below are some quotes from trainee teachers which highlight the positive impact the young advocates are having:

“ The key learning for me was the reinforcement of always being trauma aware in the classroom and supporting all learners, ensuring consideration of individual circumstance.

“ The young advocates showed bravery and honesty.

“ I liked the fact that it was young people who had experienced what they were talking about rather than just adults speaking for them.

If you would like to find out more about future opportunities with The Young Advocates project, including the free online resource for educators, sessions for foster carers, or opportunities for young people aged 8-15 to have their voice heard, please get in touch with Amy Adair at scotland@fostering.net.

Augmented Reality Trees

The Young Advocates project listened to foster carers, young people with experience of care, educators, social workers and other professionals to find out their views on raising awareness and reducing stigma for young people with experience of care in education in Scotland.

These Augmented Reality trees have recordings of the quotes provided and when you pick the apples, you hear the different voices.

It works by downloading Adobe Arrow app* and then scanning the QR code with your camera and following the instructions. Explore the different trees from your own living room!

A step by step instructional video can be found at [youtu.be BFXLiVT2JR0](https://youtu.be/BFXLiVT2JR0).

**This app is compatible with Apple and some Android devices*



Glasgow's Continuing Care and After Care event



Amy and Bethany from our Young Advocates and Moving On projects.

Young advocates speaking at Glasgow's Continuing Care and After Care event.

On 29 October, the young advocates were invited to speak at Glasgow City's Continuing Care and After Care event, with around 150 people attending and celebrating the achievements made by organisations and young people over the last year. It was exciting to attend our first live event together since lockdown, and to hear from a variety of professionals including Susanne Millar, interim chief officer of the Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership, as

well as musical and drama performances from young people. There was even a surprise message from Karen Dunbar!

We enjoyed making connections with everyone there, a tasty lunch and a mass sing-a-long or 'massaoko' to finish. We were thoroughly impressed with the hard work and achievements by all who attended, especially since everything was produced during lockdown. It truly was a wonderful day, well done to all involved!

Scottish Government update: Getting it Right for Sisters and Brothers

On 26 July 2021, the Scottish Government introduced legislation (the Children (Scotland) Act 2020 and the Looked After Children (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021) which places a duty on local authorities to keep brothers and sisters together, where appropriate. The definition of 'sibling' is deliberately broad, including those with at least one parent in common but also those with an ongoing relationship with the characteristics of a relationship between siblings. This might include the relationships developed whilst experiencing care away from home. If for whatever reason it is not appropriate for sisters and brothers to remain together, local authorities should put measures in place to nurture their relationship, enabling them to stay in touch regularly, again where appropriate for all children. At the same time we published National Practice Guidance, Staying Together and Connected: Getting it Right for Sisters and Brothers, to support the implementation of the new duties.

In September, the guidance was updated to include Part 3, which focuses on amendments to the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009, removing a barrier for children living together in foster care, where this meets their needs and is the right thing for them. What is best for each child is the primary consideration, and is itself dependent on whether the foster care family has the capacity to meet all of the children's needs without becoming over-burdened. Where more than three unrelated children are placed together in foster care on a short term or emergency basis, the amendments enable a greater degree of flexibility to enable them to continue living together.

The legislation and guidance is a milestone in the Scottish Government's commitment to Keep The Promise and has been developed in consultation with children, young people and families with care experience. Saffron Rohan, one of the consultants who worked on the guidance, said: 'It was fantastic to input

into this guidance, supporting its development with our thoughts and experience. It is my hope that this guidance will give practitioners the knowledge and direction to ensure children's rights are continuously upheld and these crucial and meaningful relationships are supported to flourish.'

The guidance was developed with key stakeholders, including the Adoption and Fostering Alliance and The Fostering Network in Scotland, and it is designed to support creative practice and collaboration to overcome challenges. The Scottish Government will be continuing to support implementation in the coming months and has formed a National Implementation Group to support this work, including these key stakeholders. We are also putting in place resources to help implement the legislation, with £500,000 made available through the Promise Partnership from the Scottish Government, STV Children's Appeal and Cattanach Trust. It will support collaborative approaches that help maintain safe, loving relationships.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Fosterline Scotland update



Hello everyone, Happy New Year to you all! When this reaches you, we will be fast approaching the online tax return deadline, which is 31 January (for the last tax year 6 April 2020 – 5 April 2021).

All foster carers are treated as self-employed by HMRC. If you are an approved foster carer then you must be registered with HMRC as self-employed – even if you have no profit or tax to pay. The 2020-2021 tax year ended 5 April 2021. The deadline for online tax returns is midnight 31 January 2022.

To register you can phone the HMRC helpline on **0300 200 3310** or register online at gov.uk/register-for-self-assessment/self-employed. The quickest and easiest way is to register online. Once registered, a record will be set up for you and you will be given a Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR). HMRC will also send you an activation code (by post) so you can start to use the online service.

There's a specific tax scheme for foster carers called **Qualifying Care Relief (QCR)**. Foster carers can use qualifying care relief instead of the profit and loss method. This saves a lot of time, it's easy to use and the records you need to keep are simple. QCR is a two-part calculation which works out your tax threshold (also known as 'qualifying amount').

You will have to calculate your qualifying amount as follows (these steps are from our Income Tax and National Insurance booklet):

Step one – Qualifying Care Relief and the two-part calculation

Part 1: A fixed amount of £10,000 per household per tax year – this is for a whole tax year or applied pro-rata if a carer was approved part way through the tax year

and

Part 2: An additional amount per child per week* – £200 a week for every child aged under 11 years and £250 per week for every child aged 11 and over.

Add together the £10,000 fixed amount (or pro-rata amount) plus the relevant amount per week for each child in placement.

* Note that a tax week runs from Monday to Sunday. If a child arrives on a Thursday and leaves on the following Tuesday, that counts as two 'weeks'.

Step two – total fostering payments

Work out your total payments from your fostering service for the tax year (6 April to 5 April). This is everything paid to you by your fostering service including fostering allowances, fee/reward/skill payments, retainer payments, holiday or birthday allowances, start-up costs, mileage and any other expenses. Your fostering service should give you a statement after 5 April showing your total payments for the year.

Step three – Working out if you have any taxable profit

Now work out if you have any profit by comparing your tax threshold (step one) with your total payments from your fostering service provider (step two). If your total fostering payments are below your tax threshold, you do not have any taxable profit from your fostering.

If your fostering payments are above your tax threshold you have a taxable profit from fostering. However, if you have no other income apart from fostering you will have access to your personal tax allowance. The personal tax allowance for tax year 2020-2021 is £12,500 (and 2021-2022, £12,570). Other income from pensions, employment, property and taxable benefits also has to be declared on the tax return. If you work part-time or full-time your personal tax allowance may get used up by your wages.

Useful advice and information to help:

- Order our updated signpost, Income Tax and National Insurance, 2021/22 (this can be ordered through our website - £3 for members).
- Read more info on our website. Visit thefosteringnetwork.org.uk and search for Income Tax and National Insurance.
- Read more info on HMRC website. Visit gov.uk/support-for-foster-parents/tax-arrangements.
- Phone Mirren or Julie at Fosterline Scotland.

We are here to support you so please give us a call anytime for advice and support. If our operating hours of Monday to Friday, 10am – 4pm, are not suitable we can arrange to call you outwith these hours. Please also consider our stress support helpline on **01384 889 549**, 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Thanks, Mirren and Julie



#Trysomethingnew with ILF Scotland



The transition from childhood to adulthood can be difficult for young people who are care experienced. For young people who have a disability or impairment, this can be even more daunting.

The Independent Living Fund (ILF) Scotland Transition Fund was created to help young people with a disability or impairment to take their first steps into the adult world. Its overarching purpose is to enable young people to become more active and engaged in their community and **#trysomethingnew**.

Access to the fund depends on meeting our four eligibility criteria. You can apply for the ILF Scotland Transition Fund if you:

- Are between the age of 15 and 25 years old (you need to be 16 to receive funding and you can apply right up until the day before your 26th birthday).
- Are 'resident and present' in Scotland at the time of application and intend to remain for the grant period.
- Have an impairment or disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010).
- Have less than £28,500 of personal savings.

The fund can provide up to £4,000 for a period of 12 months to allow an eligible young person to meet their self-determined goals.

Unlike some other funds, we don't



require a formal diagnosis of a disability or condition. It is more important to tell us how the condition affects the young person on a day to day basis and what it makes it hard for them to do.

The young person's disability doesn't need to be a traditional disability that would make them eligible for disability benefits, it encompasses a much wider range of difficulties that young people encounter, for example:

- Learning difficulties, such as dyslexia/dyspraxia/ADD or ADHD.
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Mental health conditions, such as trauma, ACE, PTSD, anxiety and depression.
- Hearing impairment.
- Visual Impairment.

This list is not exhaustive – we look at each application on an individual basis.



If you think that this fund could help a young person, take a look at our website, [ILF.scot/Transition-Fund](https://www.ilf.scot/Transition-Fund) which has a selection of success story videos **Transition Fund Case Studies Archive - ILF** to give you some idea of what can be achieved using an ILF Scotland Transition Fund grant.

Once the young person has decided what their goal is and what they want to apply for to help achieve this, applications can be made online through our website. To date, we have helped over 3,500 young people make their goals a reality. Could our next success story be someone you know?

We will be hosting an information session with ILF Scotland on Tuesday 22 February 2022, 10.30 – 12pm, via Zoom. For more information, please email Bethany Shelton: scotland@fostering.net.

Free online sessions for foster carers, in partnership with Children's Health Scotland

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing for Children in Foster Care

This topic is in two parts: part one looks at the connection between childhood adversity and brain development and behaviours which come from that – it will be held on **Tuesday 1 February 2022**; and part two looks at ways to manage children's mental health needs and support and assist recovery – it will be held on **Tuesday 8 February 2022**.

The Impact of Loss and Change (this includes but not exclusively bereavement)

Loss and change are a part of all our lives, but how are they different for children and young people in foster care, whose lives may have been subject to much change? How might this impact on their sense of emotional wellbeing and how can foster carers best support the child (as

well as themselves and their families) to manage the feelings which flow from change and loss. This will be held in the spring, please get in touch to register interest.

Please contact Bethany Shelton or Sara Smith for more information on either of these events by emailing scotland@fostering.net.



Dates for your diary...

Wednesday 26 January 2022
Moving into Adulthood
Zoom (page 3)

Wednesday 16 February 2022
Life Work
Zoom (page 3)

Tuesday 1 February 2022
Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing for Children in Foster Care, part one
Zoom (page 7)

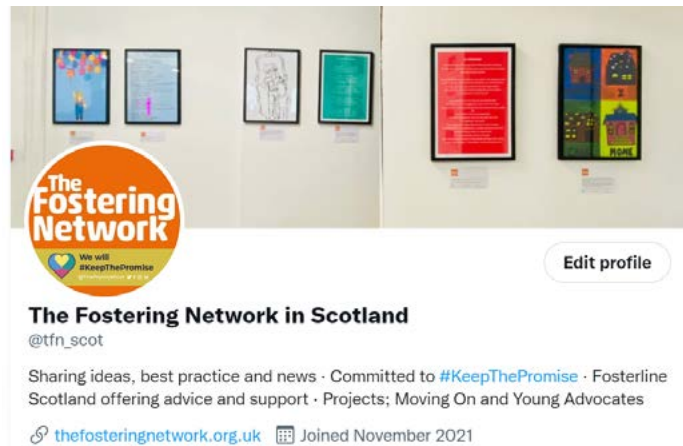
Tuesday 22 February 2022
ILF Scotland event
Zoom (page 7)

Tuesday 8 February 2022
Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing for Children in Foster Care, part two
Zoom (page 7)

Wednesday 16 March 2022
Moving Children On
Zoom (page 3)



If you would like more information on any of the above, please contact us on **0141 204 1400** or scotland@fostering.net.



Hello Twitter

We received a warm welcome from the land of Twitter in November when we launched our brand new account. We clocked up 136 new followers in our first few days and started off introducing everyone to members of our team in Scotland. We will be using the account to tweet about news, training opportunities, events and project updates from The Fostering Network in Scotland. We'll also be sharing news, campaigns, projects and good practice from across our network. You can find us using the handle [@tfn_scot](https://twitter.com/tfn_scot). See you there!



With thanks to the funders who supported this edition.

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Registered Charity Number: 280852
Registered in Scotland: SC039338

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