

**Issue 76
May 2023**

Scottish Government update

Meet the team
Page 3

Scottish Parliament event

A celebration of
our work
Page 4

Fosterline Scotland update

Advice on allegations
Page 6

Young Person's Advisory Board

An inspiring group
Page 7

And more!



Hello everyone

I hope you and your families are well. It's so nice to have the daylight back and I hope you're getting an opportunity to be out and about in the sunshine when it appears!

Foster Care Fortnight™ 2023 will be starting soon and we encourage you all to get involved – whether that's attending one of the many events we have lined up, participating in Foster Walk, or downloading a placard from the UK magazine to show your support. I hope to meet as many of you as possible at our events. Turn to page eight for more information on how you can get involved.

It was a real pleasure to meet with many of you during our celebration event at the Scottish Parliament in March, which was sponsored by Rona Mackay MSP. We were delighted that Clare Haughey, Minister for Children and Young People, was able to present at the event (as shown on front cover), and also join us for much of the evening. However, it was our Young Person's Advisory Board who stole the show. They spoke passionately about the importance of their voices being heard and gave thoughtful responses

to the questions that followed. You can read about the event on page four and hear more about our Young Person's Board and Promise work on page seven.

We're pleased to be able to introduce you to the Scottish Government's foster care policy team on page three. We continue to work closely with the Scottish Government, campaigning on behalf of foster families across Scotland to make foster care the best it can be. Keep an eye on our website to find out how you can support this work, particularly our ongoing campaign to secure a national minimum allowance for foster carers in Scotland. Our article on page seven provides more information on this.

Fosterline Scotland has reported an increase in calls relating to allegations in recent months, and we would like to stress the importance that all foster carers facing an allegation contact the service as soon as possible, or our legal helpline during out of hours. A foster carer should never attend a police interview before seeking legal advice. We've also introduced an Independent Support Service in



Scotland to help those going through an allegation. For more information on this, turn to our Fosterline Scotland update on page six.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like more information on anything from this newsletter, or our work in general. I look forward to working with you to develop our work here in Scotland to improve the lives of all children and young people in foster care.

Jacqueline Cassidy
Director of Scotland and Practice

The Why Not Trust fostering directory

The Why Not Trust is developing a fostering directory – it will provide care experienced adults the opportunity to reconnect with foster carers who looked after them. It is a private directory and only used to make relevant matches.



To sign up, just visit tinyurl.com/cairedirectory. A member of the team will get in touch with you if there is a potential reconnection, and then discuss with you how you would like this to happen.

Keep an eye on the next edition of our Scottish newsletter where we will provide more information on the purpose and reasons for the register, and how it can benefit adults with care experience who have lost touch with their former foster carers.



Update from the Scottish Government:

Meet the team

Hello to members of The Fostering Network. We are the foster care policy team at the Scottish Government who form part of the Care Experience and Whole Family Wellbeing Division. The team is made up of:

Dawn Abell (top left), who heads up the Caregivers Unit which has responsibility for adoption, fostering, kinship and sibling relationships.

Louisa Brown (middle right) who heads up the fostering and kinship team.

Sheree McAlpine (bottom left), foster care policy manager with a focus on recruitment and retention.

Rebecca Darge (top right), foster care policy manager with a focus on allowances and professional development.

Susan Fountain (middle left), foster care policy officer who supports all aspects of fostering.

We have met with some foster carers and stakeholders across the sector and are aware of the current challenges in foster care. In particular, issues relating to recruitment and retention and ongoing challenges around a national minimum allowance for foster and kinship carers.

We are committed to Keeping The Promise and providing support for foster families.

In the Promise Implementation Plan published last year, we outlined our vision for delivering **A Good Childhood**. Our team was fully formed in mid January and since then we have undertaken a range of work. This includes setting up a recruitment and retention stakeholder group which looks at short and long term strategies for the challenges in the recruitment and retention of foster carers.

We have continued to have conversations with COSLA around a national minimum allowance for foster and kinship carers and hope to provide you with an update on these conversations soon.

We are creating connections across the Scottish Government with links to foster care in areas such as The Promise, housing, benefits, health, education. On top of this, we are creating connections with our counterparts in the UK Government and Welsh Government.

The team were delighted to attend The Fostering Network's parliamentary reception in February and meet with foster carers and their Young People's Advisory Board.

Our ongoing work will include continuing to focus on recruitment and retention with the stakeholder group, which we will share outputs from in due course. Another significant priority is working with COSLA to agree a national minimum allowance for foster and kinship carers. We will continue meeting with The Promise Scotland to link up the



work around foster care and Scotland's ambition to **#KeepThePromise** by 2030. We also hope to meet with more foster carers, which will include a visit to the Mockingbird project in the North East of England.

Our team are really excited to be working alongside foster carers and stakeholders like The Fostering Network who represent and work with foster carers.

We know the vital role that foster carers and foster families play in the lives of children and young people – providing love and safe homes for these children and young people to thrive. We look forward to meeting more of you in the coming months and would encourage you to continue to raise any issues and feedback to us through The Fostering Network team.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Moving On project: new resources on transitions and visiting parliament



February was a busy month for our Moving On project. After many months in development, we're thrilled to share our new resources on the Principles of Good Transitions. Find them by visiting: thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/movingonproject.

Developed with the Scottish Transitions Forum, these resources give tools to services and foster carers about what best practice around transitions should look and feel like. This content will now be embedded in our training offers such as Moving Children On and Moving into Adulthood. If you would like to keep up to date with this work, please get in touch with Bethany by emailing scotland@fostering.net.

Throughout the winter, Moving On has also been delivering activity sessions with young people. They explore the themes around change and journeys and what is important to young people. We have made treasure chests together and discussed what our special treasures are.

In February, over 70 colleagues, foster carers, children and young people from our fostering community

spent time together at Scottish Parliament, which was supported by MSP Rona Mackay. The event was spent meeting new people, networking and sharing news from across our fostering community. There was a time for speeches and the platform was shared by MSPs including Clare Haughey, minister for children and young people, foster carers, colleagues at The Fostering Network and young people alike.

A highlight of the evening was a thought-provoking speech from our Young Person's Advisory Board. Five of their seven members were in attendance and spoke beautifully about their purpose as a board. They shared why it is so important that young people's voice and those with lived experience of foster care are meaningfully involved in guiding the work

of the organisation. After briefly discussing their priorities – which include the stigma around care, transitions and mental health of young people – the advisory board spoke passionately about the importance of children's rights and meaningful relationships with the professionals in their lives, along with their reflections on their roles and responsibilities as a board: 'Kids shouldn't have to provide all the answers with this sort of stuff, but we want to be involved in shaping the best solutions to the challenges we face.'



An update from The Promise



February marked three years since the publication which concluded the Independent Care Review and work to **#KeepThePromise**. Since then, much has been done to implement the conclusions of the care review and honour the promise made to Scotland's children and families.

Fi McFarlane, head of public affairs at The Promise wrote a blog reflecting on the challenges and progress in efforts to **#KeepThePromise** throughout this time, from the perspective of someone who worked on the Independent Care Review and is now working to see the recommendations made real. Read it by visiting: bit.ly/3L6GeB2.

Earlier this year saw **#CareDay23**. The Promise Scotland were one of the partners for Tending the Light in the North – a festival of care and

connection held over the weekend in Inverness. It brought care experienced young people together with organisations and people with responsibilities to **#KeepThePromise**. Across the two days, the festival focussed on co-design, corporate parents and leaders. As well as this, the event looked at young people's connect, collaboration and leadership.

Fiona Duncan, in her capacity as independent strategic advisor to the Scottish Government, was invited to visit a family support service in East Renfrewshire where she was met with care experienced children and young people.

Another event that had significant consequences for the promise was the announcement by the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon of her intention to resign from the role. The Promise

Scotland and Oversight Board issued statements in response to that development and thanked the First Minister for pledging a 'life-long' commitment to the care community. They added that they 'reiterate our commitment to monitor, and report on progress to **#KeepThePromise**.'

Fiona Duncan expanded on the First Minister's remarks in her latest Friends of the Scotsman column. She highlighted how 'the emotion could be heard in her voice. Possibly because the First Minister wasn't simply making another speech to delegates, she was speaking directly to members of the care community in the audience listening. People whom she'd met to hear the stories of their lives.'

Finally, The Promise Scotland has released a new podcast in a series which seeks to give more information on work being done to **#KeepThePromise**. The first in the series focuses on project work being carried by The Promise Scotland and partners to use data differently. Dawn Easton, corporate parenting lead officer (Champions Board) at South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership has written a blog about her positive experiences on working on the data map with The Promise Scotland. Read it by visiting: bit.ly/3yp5Rp6.



Sign up for an open access course

Our training and events programme is regularly updated with courses, which are available for members to join. Find out more by visiting thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/events.

For more information, please email learn@fostering.net.

Upcoming open access online courses include:

Fostering Digital Skills

8 June 2023
£110 plus VAT

Reframing Allegations and Ensuring Safer Care

27 June 2023
£110 plus VAT

Fosterline Scotland update



Hello everyone, we hope you have all had a good few months.

As always, we are here to support you. In our last newsletter, our legal team Levy & McRae wrote about the support they offer in the event an allegation is made against you.

We know that when an allegation is made can be extremely worrying, with a lot of uncertainty in the situation. Fosterline Scotland is here to help you, so don't hesitate to give us a call anytime for advice and

support. Our operating hours are Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm and we can arrange an appointment with you outside of these hours at your request. If you need legal advice, please contact our 24-hour legal helpline on **01384 885 734**.

We are pleased to let you know that we have launched our **independent support service** in Scotland. We can provide tailored, high-quality support to foster carers registered with an individual local authority or independent fostering provider. If you are a foster carer who would like independent support, you must contact your fostering service to organise this on your behalf. Fostering services that are members of The Fostering Network receive a generous discount on the price of support packages.

If you feel you are not able to cope and need to chat with someone for additional support, you can

access our stress support service and speak with a trained counsellor, 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **01384 889 549**.

The Fostering Network also runs a Managing Allegations Against Foster Carers training course which includes input from our solicitors. This can be purchased by fostering services as an in-house course – email **scotland@fostering.net** for more information.

Finally, you can read through guidance Scottish Government has produced on managing allegations by visiting: **bit.ly/3ZtXSDh**.

Best wishes,
Mirren and Julie



Clan Childlaw: protecting children's rights

Care experienced children and young people have rights to make sure they are safe, supported and have a good place to live as they transition to adulthood.

Without these rights, children and young people are at a higher risk of becoming homeless, leaving education, missing out on opportunities and getting into debt.

Did you know?

- If a child leaves care under 16 they lose their right to continuing care and after-care.
- All children and young people have the right to stay put in supportive care settings until they are 18 or older.
- All children and young people who are in a care placement have the right to stay on in continuing care.

- Children who leave a care placement or continuing care after the age of 16 have the right to support from the council to meet all their needs (including financial support) until they are 18.
- Young people (aged 18-25) have the right to ask the council to assess their needs and plan for how their needs will be met.
- No child or young person should be homeless. Anything short of a permanent tenancy (including supported accommodation or supported lodgings) is only temporary and they are homeless until suitable permanent housing is provided.
- No child or young person should leave care into homelessness. Before they go anywhere there must be a plan that says where they are going and how they will be supported.

If a child or young person's experience does not reflect any of these rights – especially if they are being asked to move before they feel ready or leave somewhere they are happy, then they need to get legal help quickly to make sure they don't lose out on these rights.

As Scotland's law centre for children and young people, Clan Childlaw can offer free legal help to care experienced children and young people in Scotland. They also offer information, guidance and training for the adults who support or care for them.

Clan Childlaw can be contacted on their free helpline on **0808 1290 522** and more information can be found at: **clanchildlaw.org**.



#KeepThePromise: our Young Person's Advisory Board

Listening to the voices of care experienced young people and birth children of foster carers is one of the ways in which we are keeping our promise to Scotland's children and families. As we continue to incorporate young people's experiences of foster care into our work, we spent another weekend away in Perthshire with our Young Person's Advisory Board in February. This included an evening of celebrating Care Day which took place on the 17 February, with the theme this year being 'ending the stigma around care'.

During the residential, we spent a full day in workshops with the organisation 'Each and Every Child'. We explored what stigma means and how we can reframe our communications to ensure we are supporting a positive change to the narrative around care. The advisory board used their learning to write a speech which they delivered in Scottish Parliament the following week.

In response to the speech, the group have had a flurry of offers from other organisations. Some of these opportunities are to have a radio

takeover, write a blog and maybe even record a podcast! This is a well-deserved response following their passion shown in parliament and we look forward to supporting their exciting plans.

The group have also connected with 'See Me' - Scotland's national programme to end mental health

stigma and discrimination - to explore how they could support raising awareness and reducing the stigma of mental health, particularly for young people who are also care experienced.

We are very proud of the work our advisory board have done so far and we can not wait to see where the group goes next.



Scotland's Forgotten Children

Sara Smith, our head of operations, was delighted to support Roz McCall MSP at the Scottish Parliament in March. The purpose of the visit was to highlight the need for adopted children to receive additional support - calling them 'Scotland's Forgotten Children' - as well as emphasising support for children in foster care. Roz took the opportunity to support our campaign and highlight the urgent need for a national minimum allowance for foster carers in Scotland, pushing for this issue to finally be resolved.

The Fostering Network continues to lobby and campaign to 'make foster care fair,' as well as campaigning for allowances to reflect the cost-of-living and the impact this has on foster carers. You can help with our push to secure a national minimum allowance in Scotland by writing to your MSP. For more information, including a template letter, visit our website:

thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/scotlandfostercarerallowances.



Foster Care Fortnight 2023: #FosteringCommunities

This year's Foster Care Fortnight™ will take place between 15-28 May 2023 and the theme is **#FosteringCommunities**. We have a programme full of events in Scotland, including input from our Moving On project, Transitions work, our Promise lead, the Teapot Trust and many more. Send us an email if you have not yet received a copy of the programme, or if you have any queries: scotland@fostering.net.

The back page of the *Foster Care* magazine has a placard which you can complete. We'd love it if you could then share a photo of yourself with the placard on social media. If on Twitter, don't forget to tag us on [@fosteringnet](https://twitter.com/fosteringnet).

During Foster Care Fortnight we will also be celebrating the milestone of reaching our tenth year of Foster Walk! We are encouraging people to create their own walk wherever they are in the UK during the fortnight and would like as many people as possible to walk in their local community on **Saturday 20 May 2023**. There is more information on our website

thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/fundraise/ways-fundraise/foster-walk.

Keep an eye on our [@tfn_scot](https://twitter.com/tfn_scot) Twitter account to see the Scotland staff team count their steps over the two weeks!



Dates for your diary...

Monday 15 May 2023

Self-care techniques for foster carers with Children's Health Scotland
Zoom

Tuesday 16 May 2023

Language workshop: what children want us to say
Zoom or Teams

Thursday 18 May 2023

Supporting Positive Transitions through and out of foster care
Zoom or Teams

Saturday 20 May 2023

Foster Walk - Fundraising day Across Scotland

Monday 22 May 2023

Understanding Trauma and Supporting Recovery with Children's Health Scotland
Zoom

Thursday 8 June 2023

Fostering Digital Skills
Zoom

Tuesday 27 June 2023

Reframing Allegations and Ensuring Safer Care
Zoom



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



With thanks to the funders who supported this edition.

The Fostering Network in Scotland

2nd Floor, Ingram House
227 Ingram Street
Glasgow
G1 1DA
t 0141 204 1400
e scotland@fostering.net
thefosteringnetwork.org.uk

The Fostering Network Head Office

87 Blackfriars Road
London
SE1 8HA

For help with membership queries:
t 020 7620 6440
e membership@fostering.net

Publications & Resources

t 0844 335 1892
e orders@fosteringresources.co.uk


Legal and Stress Helpline


t 01384 885 734

Registered Charity Number: 280852
Registered in Scotland: SC039338

Fostering in Scotland is produced using recycled paper. When you have finished with this newsletter, please share with family and friends, or recycle.



 [follow us on instagram](https://www.instagram.com/thefosteringnetwork)
[@thefosteringnetwork](https://www.instagram.com/thefosteringnetwork)

 [like us on facebook](https://www.facebook.com/thefosteringnetwork)
[@thefosteringnetwork](https://www.facebook.com/thefosteringnetwork)

 [follow us on twitter](https://www.twitter.com/fosteringnet)
[@fosteringnet](https://www.twitter.com/fosteringnet) [@tfn_scot](https://www.twitter.com/tfn_scot)