

Fostering

Promoting foster
care in Scotland

Issue 12 Winter 2005/2006

the fostering network
helping children to thrive



in Scotland

The Cost of Foster Care launched in Scotland



Pictured are Alan Jackson (of Edinburgh City), Robert Tapsfield, Felicity Collier, Kay Jackson, Scott Barrie MSP & Cheryl Leggett

In November the Fostering Network and the British Association for Adoption & Fostering (BAAF) launched their landmark report *The Cost of Foster Care – investing in our children's future* in the City Chambers, Edinburgh, and called upon the Scottish Executive to invest an extra £65.5 million in foster care services in Scotland.

The report shows that the governments of Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England need to spend an estimated £1.7 billion in 2005/6. The Fostering Network and BAAF recommend that the extra funding is seen as an investment into one of the most vulnerable social groups in society.

The report, which is the first ever study of its kind, assesses the spending that is required to transform foster care services in order to give children in public care the same opportunities to have a successful future as other children in our society.

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We would welcome your contributions on any news, views, articles or ideas.
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Speak out for fostering

The Fostering Network Scotland is again running free media training for foster carers during April. The training will take place in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee.

Our last media training sessions in September were very successful, and enabled carers from throughout Scotland to be prepared for a media interview and to be more confident in raising awareness of fostering through the media.

If you would like to take part in this training, or know of foster carers who would be willing to be nominated, please get in touch with Sarah Crangle t 0141 204 1400 e sarah.crangle@fostering.net to discuss this further.

The Cost of Foster Care launched in Scotland

(continued from page 1)

Foster carer Kay Jackson and young person Cheryl Leggett gave an insight into the importance of investing in such a crucial service, as they spoke to representatives from authorities and agencies from throughout Scotland.

Robert Tapsfield, Chief Executive of the Fostering Network, said 'For the first time we have a substantial and robust calculation of what it costs to provide a foster care service. The report demonstrates that there is a massive shortfall in funding at present. This is a call to the Scottish Executive to invest a further £65.5 million in foster care services each year. We should ensure that the outcomes for children in foster care are the same as those we want for our own children.'

Felicity Collier, Chief Executive of BAAF, said 'There is an overwhelming need to do better for children in public care. It is simply not good enough that there is no choice of foster carer for so many children, and that foster carers are not paid a living wage throughout the year so that they can be available when needed. The report makes the case for planned long-term investment in the children who are at risk of becoming the parents of tomorrow's poorest children instead of happy, economically active citizens. We know the sum is huge, but we believe long-term savings can be achieved from the adult and family support services that so many looked-after children currently need throughout their lives.'

Bernadette Docherty, Chair of ADSW Children and Families Standing Committee, said 'ADSW welcomes this report on the cost of foster care. We must be in no doubt of the crucial role foster carers play in the child protection system in caring for Scotland's vulnerable children. We know the experience of family-based care has been invaluable, helping a child to enjoy security, trust and nurturing within a family setting. This is in stark contrast to the uncertainties and neglect prior to their coming into public care.'

The tasks of caring for a foster child are complex and need skilled and well-supported foster carers. It is vital that the value we place on this service is reflected in proper levels of resourcing for foster care and the families who provide it.

The report calculations are based on assumptions that:

- all foster carers should be paid the Fostering Network's minimum recommended allowance for the children in their care
- foster carers who, by agreement with their agency, make themselves available for 52 weeks per year should be paid a fee throughout the year
- post-approval training should be an essential part of an effective foster care service and at least 50% of foster carers should be trained to S/NVQ1 Level 3 or an equivalent level of qualification
- children in foster care often have additional education and health needs, and the provision of specialist help and advice should be available to foster carers in order to improve outcomes, especially in education
- significant investment is required in the management of foster care services and the support services to foster carers
- significant investment is needed to improve recruitment and find foster carers who can meet the needs of children from diverse backgrounds.

Dear Members,

I hope that you all had a happy time over the various festivals and celebrations at this time of year! Since the last newsletter we have had some very successful focus groups across Scotland and also a very lively membership meeting in Aberdeen! It was a real privilege to meet so many dedicated carers and placement workers at these events. The sharing of information was valuable and new ideas are now being generated across Scotland.

The Fostering Network has compiled model letters to be sent by members to the Deputy Minister for Education and Children, pressing him to take action on two issues. The first is to have better and fairer allowances for carers. The second is asking him to look at the processes for carers facing allegations. We want him to act to have independent support built in for carers, a speedier process for the allegations to be investigated and to agree that information on unfounded allegations should be erased from disclosure records. We hope that all of you will add your support and write to your MSP. If you would like further copies of the model letters, please get in touch with Sarah.

We have some new Trustees elected onto the Board: three carers from England, two workers and one Trustee who is both! I am sure they will add to the discussions at the Board and to getting services enhanced for all in fostering.

The launch of *Caring For Our Children* will feature elsewhere but I wanted to say a public thank you to Bryan for all his work on the report and to Mary who did the work to collect all your views and shape it into the three excellent reports.

The launch in Scotland of the *Cost of Foster Care* report was also successful and Kay Jackson, a carer on the Scottish Committee, Cheryl, a young person who was fostered and Alan Jackson from City of Edinburgh all gave very powerful presentations which can have left no one in doubt about how much carers need to be valued and how positive an experience fostering can be for young people. All in all a very busy and successful year!

I look forward to meeting members in 2006, which I hope will be a good year for you all and for the Fostering Network.

Yours sincerely,



Chair, Scottish Committee
Winter 2005-06

EMAs

Within *Fostering in Scotland* edition 11, the article on educational maintenance allowances, *Get paid to stay on at school*, stated that young people born after 1998 are eligible to apply for an EMA. This should have read 'young people born after 1 March 1988' being eligible to apply, ie those over 16 years. Apologies for any confusion this may have caused.

Young people update us on what's happening with the Fostering Network's Young People's project.

Launch of *Forgotten Voices*

The project has produced two films, one is about the issues and needs of young people in foster care and the other is concerned with the issues and needs of the sons and daughters of foster carers. We are very proud of our work, the important messages highlighted and the changes which are required to ensure that young people are adequately supported.

We are planning to publicly launch both videos at the MacRobert Arts Centre, Stirling in February 2006. This event will give people the opportunity to hear direct from young people the changes we wish to see within the foster care system.

This will be a very important day for us and at present we are busy planning this event inviting young people and foster carers. As this is a very important event we are also inviting Robert Brown, Deputy Minister for Education and Young People, to speak followed by a panel discussion.



New Leaflets

The Young People's project has produced two new leaflets for young people going into foster care. Young people with experience of foster care were involved in the content and design of the leaflets

A big thank you to all the young people who were involved with this.



Article 12 workshops

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that young people have the right to express their views in matters, which affect them. However, for many young people this can be difficult. Due to this, the Young People's project is organising a series of workshops for young people aged 12-14 in February and March 2006.

The Young People's Project – Advisory groups

Alison Boswell from the Young People's project will meet with young people with experience of foster care and the sons and daughters of carers throughout Scotland in 2006.

The purpose of the advisory groups is to provide the opportunity for young people to discuss their experience of foster care and to look at what works and what needs to improve.

For more details on any of these topics or for more information about how to get involved with the Young People's project, please contact Alison Boswell
t 0141 204 1400

Thanks to Dawn and Christine for this update

Barnardo's 25th anniversary celebrations



Barnardo's Family Placement Services in Edinburgh launched their 25th anniversary celebrations at the Scottish Parliament back in November. They wanted to acknowledge the long years of service and valuable contribution from their foster carers over the years.

The evening was hosted by Elaine Murray MSP, who welcomed everyone to the Parliament, and then introduced Hugh McKintosh, Director for Barnardo's Scotland. Hugh gave

an enjoyable speech which was sincere, in touch with the issues surrounding fostering and most importantly came from the heart. Robert Brown MSP, Deputy Minister for Education and Young People said a few words then Carol Douglas, Assistant Director of Children's Services Barnardo's, took over with reading out the names of carers receiving awards which were then presented to the carers. The awards were presented to carers who had 25, 20 and 15 years of service.

There was a cake which was cut by carers who have been with Family Placement Services for 25 years, they had one of their foster children with them who helped cut the cake. All the carers were presented with a presentation paper weight commemorating the event. It was an enjoyable event which created a feel-good factor and everyone enjoyed the night.

Suzanne Higgs,
Recruitment Worker
Barnardo's Family Placement Services

Outcome of allowances consultation

The Scottish Executive closed their consultation on *Secure and Safe Homes For Our Most Vulnerable Children* at the end of October. The Fostering Network Scotland had extended an invitation to those involved in fostering throughout Scotland to comment in particular on how the Scottish Executive should implement recommendation 76 'A nationally agreed scheme of allowances should be introduced for foster carers. (10.14)'

Responses were returned to the Fostering Network from throughout the country. The outcome of this was 7:3 in favour of the Executive annually setting mandatory, ie compulsory, scales of fostering allowances against legislation being set which requires authorities to publish their fostering allowances and explain any variations from national scales. A small number of responses were in favour of the Executive annually issuing guidance containing national scales of allowances.

We are currently awaiting the outcome of this consultation, and continue to urge members to press ministers to take action on fostering issues.

Steps forward

The second round of focus groups were held across Scotland in November 2005 and again generated a great deal of constructive and lively discussions. Building on issues raised in April 2005, the outcome of these discussions is contained within *Steps Forward*, in particular

- Education.
- Allegations.
- Allowances.
- Recruitment, retention and support of carers and workers.

It was suggested at the East focus group that model letters be created, to be circulated throughout Scotland. The Fostering Network are urging individual members to forward these letters to their MSPs. The Fostering Network will continue to push these issues, but with increased support from as many as possible, the issues will be acted upon much faster.

If you require any further information, or for further copies of these model letters or *Steps Forward*, please contact the Fostering Network Scotland.

Education Act in place

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 came into effect in November 2005.

The Act introduces the concept of 'additional support needs', and refers to any child or young person who, for whatever reason, requires additional support for learning. Additional support needs can arise from any factor which causes a barrier to learning, whether that factor relates to social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, disability, or family and care circumstances. For instance, additional support may be required for a child or young person who is being bullied; has behavioural difficulties; has learning difficulties; is a parent; has a sensory or mobility impairment; is at risk; is bereaved. There will be many other examples besides these.

Some additional support needs will be long-term, while others will be short-term. The effect they have will vary from person to person. In all cases though, it is how these factors impact on the individual person's learning that is important and this will determine the level of support required.

Under the Act it will be the duty of education authorities to give extra help in school to all children and young people with additional support needs.

Foster carers, under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 have the same parental rights, given that they have 'care and control of a child or young person'. Young people (16 and 17 years old who are still at school) will have all the same rights as parents.

Key changes include:

- the new concept of 'additional support needs', which is much wider and more encompassing than 'special educational needs'
- new duties on education authorities and others
- more rights for parents
- new independent mediation services for all parents of children with additional support needs
- new dispute resolution arrangements for parents, in addition to mediation
- a new *Code of Practice* which will set out how the new system will operate
- better planning and preparation for transition to post-school life
- removing the current Record of Needs and introducing the new Co-ordinated Support Plan for those who need it
- new independent family-friendly tribunals to hear appeals on a range of issues relating to Co-ordinated Support Plans.

For further information contact Enquire, the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning **t 0845 123 2303** **www.enquire.org.uk**

Links with Latvia

In October Bryan Ritchie and Sue Robertson from the Fostering Network Scotland visited the Latvian Foster Families Society in Riga, having been invited over to share information on what works here.

The society has been in existence for 11 years and they were eager to hear about the work of the Fostering Network and how we have developed over the years throughout the UK.

Foster care is virtually non-existent in Latvia and most of the work done by the society is in supporting guardians. The majority of guardians are relatives of the children such as aunts, uncles or grandparents who receive a small amount of financial support from the national government. The society has a small membership which provides funding to organise summer camps and other activities for the children and young people in care. They hope to apply for funding which will allow training and support to be offered to guardians and foster carers and fund a further visit by trainers from the Fostering Network Scotland.



Ilze Golvere, from the Latvian Foster Families Society and Sue Robertson, the Fostering Network, enjoy the views of Riga

Dates for your diary

February 2006

- Monday 20 Launch of *Forgotten Voices* videos, Stirling
- Thursday 23 Membership meeting, Glasgow
- Tuesday 28 Focus Group West

March 2006

- Tuesday 7 Focus Group East
- Thursday 16 Focus Group North

April 2006

Media training throughout Scotland – contact Sarah for further information

May 2006

Monday 8–Sunday 22 *Foster Care Fortnight*

From your area - news and updates from around the country

Angus enjoyed a busy time through December. Children enjoyed a visit from Santa at the under 5s Christmas party, and a trip to the pantomime was enjoyed by the young and the young at heart!

The foster carers annual Christmas dinner dance was held in the Carnoustie Golf Hotel, organised by Social Work and Health and funded by Angus Council. Over 80 people attended, with a good mix from the Council, Social Work and Health and foster carers. The evening also recognised the valuable service to fostering provided by foster carers, with presentations being made for over 15 years of service to fostering by Anne Hamilton, Olga Beattie, Irene Claffey and Forbes and Marjorie Ingles.

Following a press release detailing changes to the existing payment scheme for foster carers, and an improved package of practical supports, (including greater access to training), **East Dunbartonshire Council** held an Information evening in a hotel in Kirkintilloch.

This meeting was very well attended and provided the opportunity for those interested in becoming carers to chat informally whilst enjoying light refreshments, with members of the Family Placement Team and experienced foster carers.

Such was the level of interest, there are now plans to run a set of preparatory groups early in the New Year. It is hoped that this will result in additional carers joining the team to increase the provision of fostering services for children within the area.

NCH Caps and North Lanarkshire Remand Fostering held Christmas lunches for their carers throughout December, as well as outings to the bowling for some family fun.

North Ayrshire enjoyed a get together in Irvine for a Christmas lunch enjoyed by carers, staff and members of the fostering panel.

North Lanarkshire carers and children enjoyed a Christmas party in mid-December. Santa made a very welcome visit to all the young people and the carers enjoyed the opportunity to relax for a few hours while the children were entertained with games and competitions. Once the festivities are over the support groups for the carers have organised a New Year night out for the carers so that they can catch up with one another in a relaxed atmosphere and get a well-earned break.

Combining their annual Christmas party with a Civic reception, **Perth & Kinross carers**, children and young people enjoyed a get together before Christmas.

Renfrewshire Shared Care Capability Scotland held their first support group in Makerston Spa, with carers enjoying a half-hour treatment. Treatments on offer were reiki, aromatherapy, hot stone massage, facial, pedicures/manicures and neck, back and shoulder massage. The evening also combined a presentation to Billy and Jan Gilchrist who were retiring after eight years as shared carers, offering shared care to a number of children and for the last eight years had offered an ongoing service to two brothers.

Many thanks to everyone for keeping us informed of what's happening in your area. If you have any news to share, please contact Sarah Crangle **t** 0141 204 1400 **e** sarah.crangle@fostering.net

Fostering Network Scotland membership meeting

Caring For Our Children



Our next membership meeting will be held in Glasgow on Thursday 23 February. The day is sure to generate some lively discussions on proposals outlined within *Caring For Our Children* and will involve presentations by researcher, Mary McKenna, and the Fostering Network, and will examine in greater depth some of the issues highlighted in *Caring For Our Children*.

Of particular interest are the mandatory training and development plans contained within Part Three of the report. Proposing increased training opportunities and extending post-approval training, and also identifying professional development for fostering workers and specific training for managers, which will affect foster carers and placement team workers, and ultimately benefiting the children and young people being looked after.

Further discussions will focus on placement limits of three fostered children per family. At present, Scotland is the only country in the UK which does not impose a limit of three fostered children with each foster family at any one time. As a result, carers are all too often being asked

to look after four or more children, putting extreme pressure on foster families.

Part One addresses the issue of allegations, one that can be extremely distressing and even detrimental for all involved, in particular children and young people. With one in three carers in Scotland experiencing an allegation at some point during their fostering service, it is essential that the correct handling and supports are available throughout the allegations process.

These and many other issues will be discussed throughout the day, and will build upon the existing strengths of the service to enable it to meet the growing demands of children requiring foster care in Scotland.

Booking is essential as places are limited. To book a place, or for further information, please contact Sarah Crangle **t** 0141 204 1400 **e** sarah.crangle@fostering.net

Membership meetings are free, and of interest to anyone with an involvement in fostering, in particular foster carers, social and family placement workers. A buffet lunch will be provided.

What are focus groups?

The **focus group** structure unites all members of the foster care service across Scotland. Geographically dividing Scotland into the North, the West and the East, and dividing the authorities and agencies across Scotland between these areas accordingly. The overall format of these meetings is to bring representatives from agencies together and discuss current issues, exchange ideas and identify the key issues that can then be promoted, by carers, workers and young people with the support of the Fostering Network.

Who is involved?

The Fostering Network Scotland invites all authorities and agencies across Scotland to nominate representative foster carers and family placement and social workers to attend these meetings. These representatives should maintain regular contact with foster carers and fostering teams in their authority/agency, keeping them informed of what happens in the rest of the area, and being kept updated of what's happening in their local area.

The Fostering Network Scotland's Young People's project will support sons and daughters of foster carers and children to be involved in the focus group structure to enable all those with a voice in fostering to be heard.

Regional advisers

For each area, the North, East and West, there is a regional adviser. The regional advisers are foster carers and members of the Fostering Network's Scottish committee.

Marjorie Ruddick is the regional adviser for the North area and a foster carer with Aberdeenshire. She and her

husband have been fostering for 20 years, from pre-adoption babies, emergencies, bridging placements, sibling groups, mother and baby, supporting birth families, short term and long term. At present, the Ruddick's provide respite to carers, so are 'booked up' weekends and holidays! Marjorie has been involved in establishing a support group for carers, preparation training with her agency and supports the Fostering Network in presenting many of the training courses throughout Scotland.

For the East, Kay Jackson is the regional adviser. Kay has been a foster carer with Barnardo's for eleven years, and has done permanent, bridge and respite care. Kay has also been involved in a pilot project where an experienced carer was doing support work with other carers who were experiencing difficulties with their placements. Kay also is a freelance trainer with the Fostering Network and enjoys the involvement in lobbying and campaigning she has been involved with over the past year.

Katrina Weldon is a foster carer with Glasgow City and is the regional adviser in the West. Now a level-3 carer, Katrina has been involved with fostering for nineteen years, during which time she has cared for all age groups and all types of placement, including short-term, emergency and special needs. Katrina is also a member of the Glasgow consultative group.

The advisers play a crucial role in continuing to maintain links with the focus group representatives and foster carers in their area in the months between meetings, providing feedback and ensuring that issues are always moving forward. Additionally, the advisers will play a fundamental role in

maintaining links with the local support groups in their areas, and assist in developing further support groups where a need exists.

Whether you are already involved in the focus groups, are in a support group, are a new foster carer or worker within your fostering community, want to find out how to get more involved, or just want to find out what's happening in your area, Marjorie, Kay and Katrina would be delighted to hear from you, and look forward to being able to help you link in with others in your area.

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t 01360 313236
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or contact the Fostering Network Scotland

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Kay Jackson



Katrina Weldon



Marjorie Ruddick

Open Courses Spring 2006

New Course

Finance and Foster Care

Half-day course

Wednesday 15 February 2006

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations,
Glasgow

Price: £35 +VAT (including lunch)
(£70 +VAT non-members)

New Course

Childhood Injury – an accident waiting to happen

1-day course

Monday 27 February 2006

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations,
Glasgow

Price: £70 +VAT (including lunch)
(£140 +VAT non-members)

The Skills to Foster Leader's Course

3-day course

Tuesday 28 February, Wednesday 1 & Thursday 2
March 2006

Glasgow Opportunities, Glasgow

Price: £210 +VAT (including lunch)
(£420 +VAT non-members)

New Course

Managing Stress in Foster Care

1-day course

Wednesday 29 March 2006

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations,
Glasgow

Price: £70 +VAT (including lunch)
(£140 +VAT non-members)

Child Protection

1-day course

Tuesday 4 April 2006

Forthbank Leisure Stadium, Stirling

Price: £70 +VAT (including lunch)
(£140 +VAT non-members)

Caring For Children Who Have Been Abused

1-day course

Tuesday 25 April 2006

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations,
Glasgow

Price: £70 +VAT (including lunch)
(£140 +VAT non-members)

If you would like to discuss any of the above training days or any of our other courses further, please contact Joy Crawford
t 0141 204 1400
e joy.crawford@fostering.net

New for January 2006 on the Fostering Network website, www.fostering.net

- 2006 publications catalogue online – browse and buy the latest publications on fostering www.fostering.net/publications
- The Fostering Network recommended allowances for foster carers 2006-7

www.fostering.net/carers/issues/minimum_allowances.php

- *Caring For Our Children* - full report now available at www.fostering.net/scotland/caring_for_our_children

Coming in 2006, a new members-only area of the Fostering Network website, containing FREE information and services available exclusively to members of the Fostering Network.

Watch out for more information early in 2006.

Don't forget to check the Fostering Network website for the latest on the Fostering Network's activities www.fostering.net/news, *training events in Scotland* www.fostering.net/training/scotland, and information on key issues affecting foster carers www.fostering.net/carers/issues/

Moving Towards Independence - The Carers Guide

The Scottish Council for Single Homeless has just published *Moving Towards Independence – The Carers Guide*, a new booklet designed for foster carers, residential workers, and anyone caring for a young person moving towards independence.

Carers provide a great source of knowledge and support up until the young person moves on, but after independence this support may no longer be available. This booklet aims to bridge this gap, and can be used as both a reference book for housing information and as a practical tool for talking to young people about preparing for and maintaining their own place when they eventually move on.

Before they have lived on their own for the first time, many young people have a very poor grasp of the realities of independent living. They often have no idea about rents, how much their bills will be, what their rights are and where to seek advice. The booklet is important simply because the better prepared a young person is before they move out of care, the lower the risk they will experience some form of housing crisis.

More information on the Carers Guide can be accessed on the SCSH website

www.scsch.org.uk/publications/Carers_guide.htm or contact SCSH Youth Unit t 0131 226 4382