

# Scotland's Adoption Task Force

## What is the Adoption Task Force?

Originally formed as a temporary planning group in 2014, the Adoption Task Force is a collective of organisations in Scotland who are striving to improve best practice in adoption nationally. The Task Force meets on a quarterly basis and is hosted by CELCIS (the Centre of Excellence for Children's Care and Protection) based at the University of Strathclyde, and supported by SWScotland and the Scottish Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies.

The group was initiated in recognition of the need to address aspects of the role of contemporary adoption within the Scottish Government's Permanence Planning improvement agenda to offer a safe, nurturing and committed option for the small proportion and number of children in the country who cannot be brought up within their family of origin.

The simple, yet ambitious, aim of the Adoption Task Force is to be a critical friend and force for the improvement of national practice in adoption, driving collective action to make changes for the better.

The Adoption Task Force is very much a 'doing' and 'action' group, reviewing ongoing purpose and tasks at completion of each activity.

## Who are we?

The current membership of the Adoption Task Force comprises a wide range of national agencies, including local authorities representing different geographical areas responsible for children, birth parents, adoptive families and adult adoptees at all life stages, voluntary adoption agencies, a children's rights professional, academic researchers, Stand up for Siblings lead, CELCIS' Protecting Children and Permanence team, and an independent chair of an adoption panel. Some members of the group are also adoptive parents. Including the voice and views of adoptees through attention to research and participation activities within member agencies is at the guiding light for our work.

## Current Adoption Task Force membership

- **Fiona Aitken**, Chief Executive, Adoption UK Scotland
- **Brenda Campbell**, Independent Adoption Panel Chair
- **Chris Jones**, Lecturer, School of Social Work & Social Policy, University of Strathclyde and chair of Stand Up For Siblings campaign
- **Robin Duncan**, Manager of the Scottish Adoption Register & Director of the Adoption and Fostering Alliance (AFA)
- **Margaret Moyes**, Chief Executive, Scottish Adoption
- **Amy McKellar**, Team Lead Adoption & Fostering, Inverclyde HSPC
- **Claire Murrie**, Team Leader, Permanence, Perth & Kinross Council
- **Gerry McMurtrie**, Senior Professional Advisor for Rights Respecting Schools (Scotland), UNICEF UK
- **Sandra McFadyen**, Operations Manager, Barnardo's Adoption Service
- **Aileen Nicol**, Head of Improving Protection & Permanence, CELCIS (Chair)
- **Stephen Small**, Chief Executive, St Andrew's Children's Society
- **Russell Sutherland**, Family Based Care and Permanence Team Manager, City of Edinburgh Council
- **Vivien Thomson**, Head of Children's Services, Falkirk Council & Chair SWS Corporate Parenting sub group

## In attendance:

- **Fiona MacDiarmid**, Team Lead, Family Care, Scottish Government
- **Tara Clark**, Policy Manager, Family Care, Scottish Government
- **Maggie Grant**, Researcher, Adoption and Fostering Alliance (AFA)
- **Ariane Critchley**, Researcher, Napier University

## Key Task Force actions and priorities

- Events and conferences – with subject matters including:
- Constructive debate and sharing of experiences of priorities in adoption practice, particularly in the assessment and preparation of prospective adopters
- Best practice in assessment report writing; and best practice in supporting a child's ongoing connection with birth family members
- Historic adoption and applying the learning from past to current practice, especially in supporting the child's long-term connections between adoptive and birth family and supporting birth families at the time of adoption
- A practitioner workshop focusing on what the best adoption support looks like for everyone involved
- Guidance for writers of prospective adopter assessment reports
- Voice of adoptees project collaboration with Scottish Adoption and Adoption UK Scotland
- Exploration of post permanence/adoption support based on best practice from research and stakeholder needs and feedback

Our current ongoing priorities are to enable the voice of adoptees' experiences to be amplified through a collaboration including Scottish Adoption, Adoption UK (Scotland), St Andrew's Children's Society and CELCIS; and a collaborative exploration of what **best post permanence/adoption support in Scotland would look like** based on best practice from research, stakeholder and practitioner feedback and the needs expressed by birth families, permanence and adoptive families, children and young people in Scotland

[Read more about the Task Force's Journey to date](#)