



**Centre for excellence**  
for looked after children in Scotland

# Stakeholder Survey Report

Louise Anusas  
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## About CELCIS

CELCIS is the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland. Together with partners, we are working to improve the lives of all looked after children in Scotland. Established in 2011, CELCIS has been committed to further improving the outcomes and opportunities for looked after children through a collaborative and facilitative approach that is focused on having the maximum positive impact on their lives. To do so, we will:

- work with partners to improve the care experience and outcomes for all looked after children
- place the interests of children at the heart of our work
- provide a focal point for the sharing of knowledge and the development of best practice
- provide a wide range of services to improve the skills of those working with looked after children.

## 1. Background to the Stakeholder Survey

### 1.1. Purpose of the Survey

The Stakeholder Survey initiated CELCIS' stakeholder engagement work since its establishment in September 2011. The survey aimed to enable stakeholders' views to inform and direct the work of CELCIS. The survey focused on CELCIS' six priority areas of work:

- Corporate Parenting
- Family and Community Support
- Permanence, Stability and Transitions
- Diversity and Disability
- Advocacy and Human Rights
- Leadership and Management

The survey aimed to identify stakeholders' involvement in the priority areas, gaps in delivery and how well the priority areas meet the needs of children and young people.

CELCIS will be establishing seven Themed Advisory Groups over time to take forward the priority areas. The survey provided an opportunity to identify stakeholder interest in becoming involved in the groups.

Respondents were also asked to share examples of practice in the looked after sector and to identify services and support which respondents would find beneficial from CELCIS and other providers.

## 1.2 Target Group and Distribution

The survey was targeted at all staff working with looked after children and young people, in a strategic, operational or practice role. The online survey was distributed via CELCIS and SIRCC databases and through online forums including the Looked After and Accommodated Education Forum. Local authorities and their partner agencies were also involved in distributing the survey across their local networks. The survey was available on the CELCIS website, with regular Facebook and Twitter updates on the survey.

## 1.3 Timescales

The survey was developed in November 2011 and distributed on 6 December 2011. Due to high interest in participating in the survey the closing date was extended from 16 December to 21 December 2011.

## 2. Survey Respondents

A total of 545 respondents participated in the survey. Of this number, 264 completed all of the survey questions. The response rate varied across questions and this is detailed in the charts below.

The majority of respondents were from the public sector (67%) with 8% from the private sector and 20% from the voluntary sector (See Chart One below).

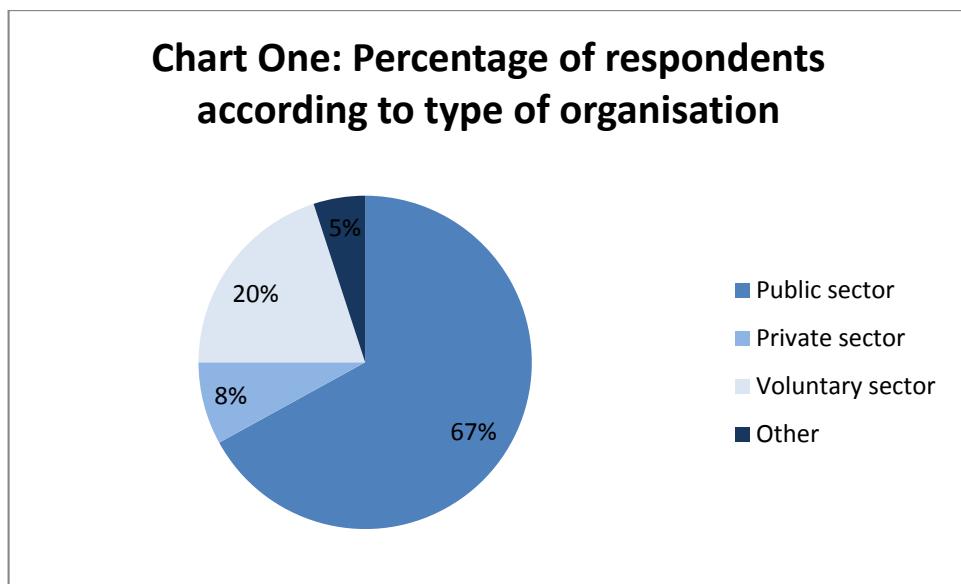


Chart One: Respondents by type of organisation (535 responses).

Responses were received from every local authority and every health board area in Scotland; this was with the exception of two health board areas whose responses were

received from their local authority area. 21% (111) of respondents had a national remit (See Charts Two and Three).

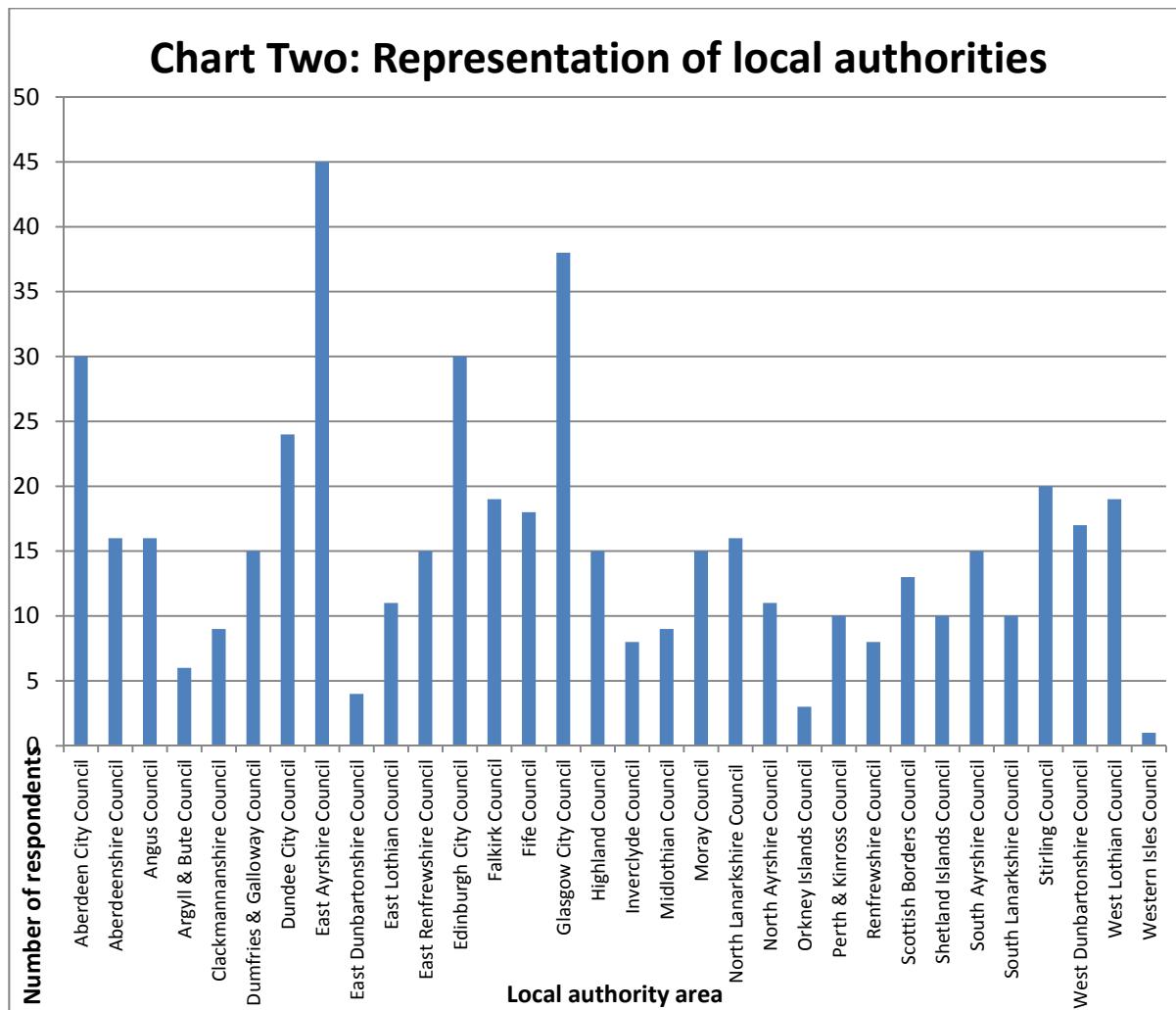
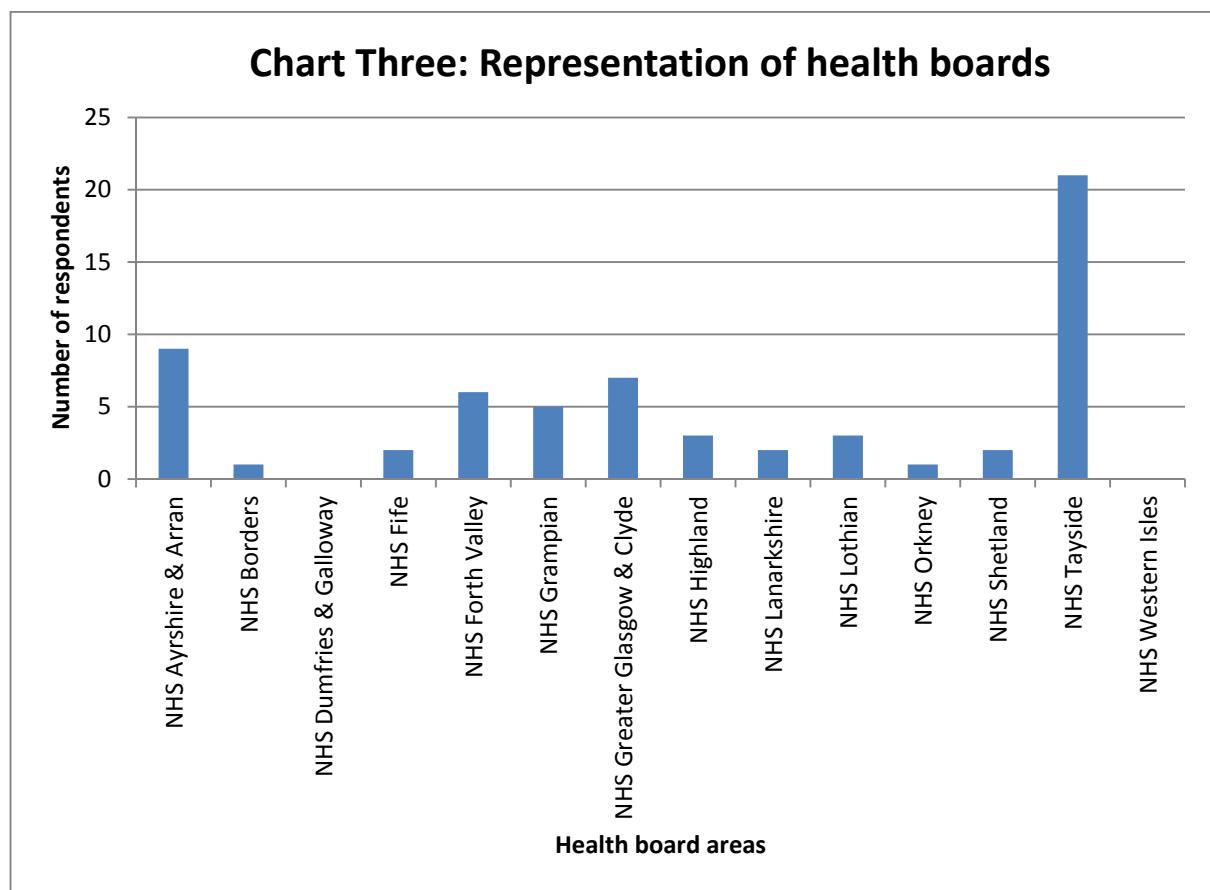


Chart Two: Representation of local authorities by participants (538 responses)



**Chart Three: Number of respondents by health board (538 responses).**

Respondents were asked to detail the primary focus of their role with an option to select up to three categories. There were respondents from every professional category with education and residential child care having the highest number of respondents (22% and 23% respectively). A comparatively low response (20 respondents or below) was received from Children's Hearings, Commissioning, Housing, Kinship Care and Nursing. Between 2-4% of respondents were from these sectors. 18% of respondents said they were from the 'other' category. The majority in the 'other' category stated they had a role in post- school transition, employability and staff learning and development. See Chart Four below.

**Chart Four: Percentage of respondents by focus of role**

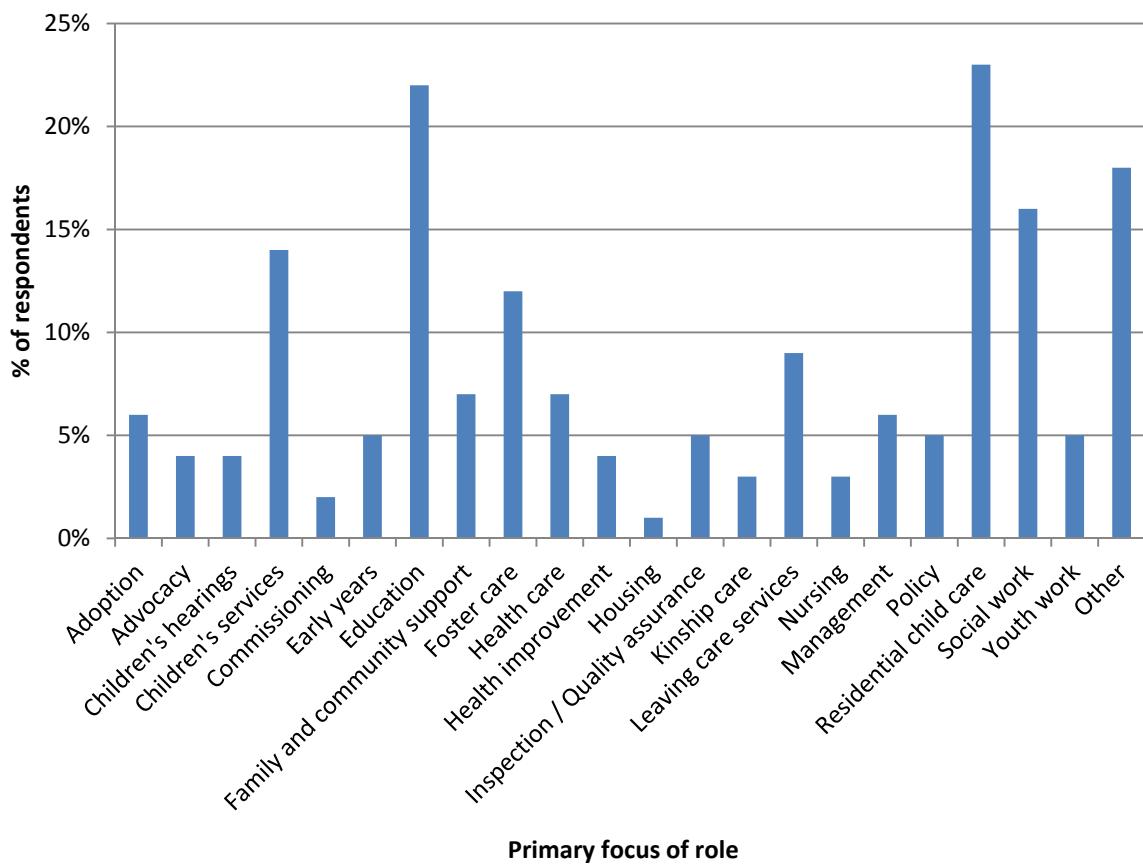


Chart Four: Percentage of respondents by primary focus of role in relation to looked after children and young people (507 responses).

### 3. Delivering the Priority Areas and Gaps in Practice

Respondents were asked to identify how well the CELCIS priority areas met the needs of children and young people in their area. The priority areas are outlined in Section 1.1 of this report. Just less than 300 respondents completed this question. From a scale of 1-5, with 1 being not very well and 5 being very well, the priority areas received an average score of three. This indicates that respondents noted that the priority areas reflect the needs of children and young people.

Respondents were asked to describe their involvement in CELCIS priority areas of work. For the purpose of the survey, the priority area 'Diversity and Disability' was separated into two categories. This aimed to identify practice with disabled children and young people and staff involvement in diversity issues. It also aimed to identify the gaps in

each priority area. Chart Five details respondents' involvement in the priority areas. Respondents' description of their involvement in the priority areas is described in Sections 3.1-3.7.

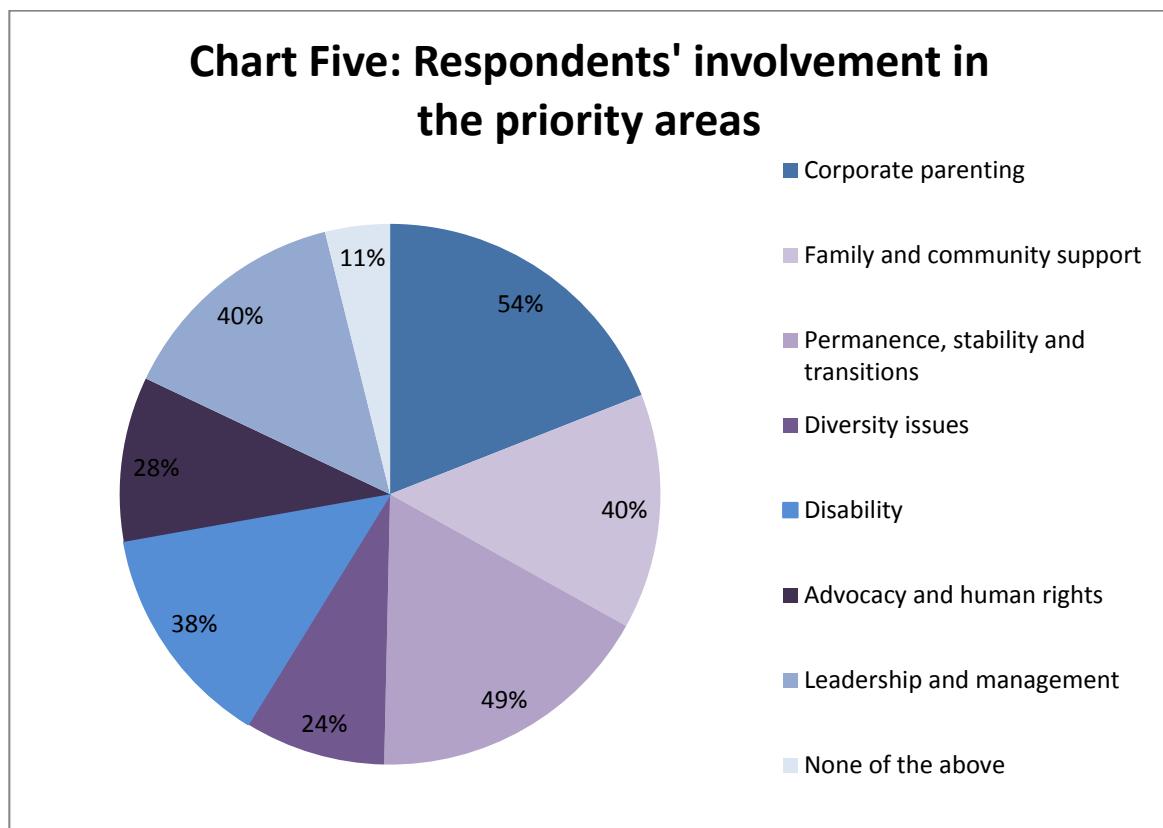


Chart Five: Percentage of respondents involved in priority areas (334 responses).

Respondents were asked to identify gaps in the priority areas, which if addressed would lead to better outcomes for children and young people. The priority areas which received the highest response were Permanence, Stability and Transitions, Corporate Parenting, and Family and Community Support. 11% of respondents said that none of these priority areas would lead to better outcomes (See Chart Six).

## Chart Six: Gaps in priority areas identified by respondents

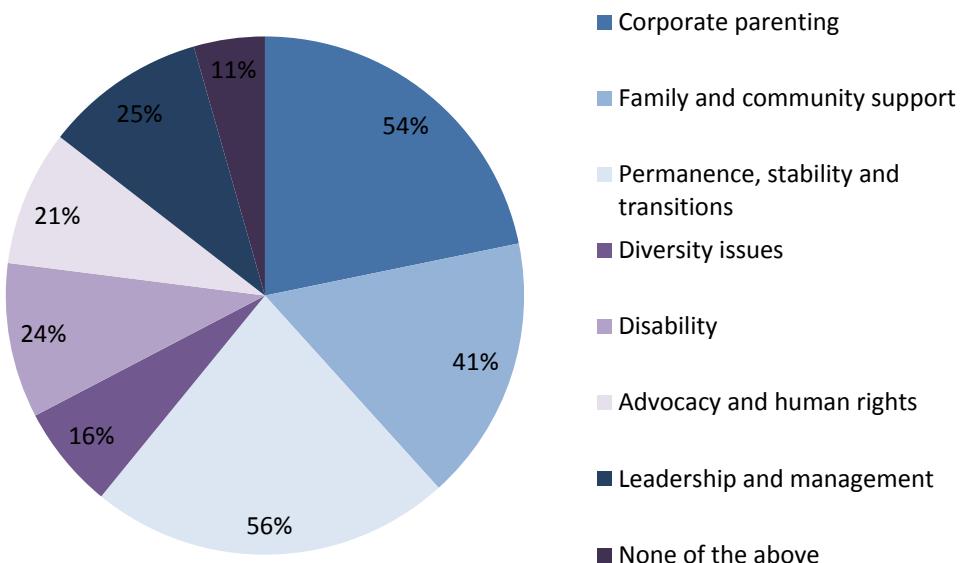


Chart Six: Percentage of respondents who indicated existing gaps in each of the priority areas (304 responses).

### 3.1. Corporate Parenting

#### *Delivering the Corporate Parenting Role*

54% of the respondents who answered Question Four said they were involved in Corporate Parenting. The type of work in delivering the Corporate Parenting role spanned across practice, operational and strategic levels. The majority of respondents described a strategic remit such as leading or participating in corporate parenting groups. Comments were received around respondent involvement in the promotion and training of staff on the delivery of the Corporate Parenting role. Some respondents described their commitment to being a Corporate Parent. Exemplar quotes are included below.

### *Delivering the Corporate Parenting Role*

*I look at what the young person's needs are and try and support them to address them.*

*(Youth Work)*

*Part of council group looking at policy and encouraging agencies to consider their role.*

*(Foster Care Services)*

*We work closely with education, social work and health professionals to ensure that the needs of young people are met. (Residential Child Care)*

*Working for a council means you are a Corporate Parent, along with every single person who works for the council. (Early Years)*

*I am the Corporate Parent for a young person... We come together (with the social worker) to look at current circumstances and consider ways in which I can be a positive influence on the challenges they are facing... (Management, Health Services)*

### *Gaps in Corporate Parenting*

54% of respondents who completed Question Five said that if gaps in Corporate Parenting were addressed this would lead to better outcomes for children and young people. Respondents described the following as gaps in provision:

- Need for improved interagency practice

*More local opportunities for multi-agency training. Starting from grass roots rather than formal policy down... Listen to the real picture! (Management Foster and Adoption Services)*

*Still not enough 'joined up working' across agencies, within local authorities and across local authorities... (Health Improvement)*

- Better communication between professional groups

*Sometimes there is a lack of communication and understanding between the Corporate Parents. At times there is nobody taking the lead... (Education)*

- Need for ownership of Corporate Parent role across departments/agencies

*If all workers in a local authority thought that there was a sense that they belonged to a united group of people with a united aim this term may have a better image... workers see decisions as cost saving and not in a child's interest.*

*(Social Work)*

*Other departments within the council I feel do not take Corporate Parenting seriously...We have had too few supported accommodation places within the council resulting in young people living in the community in their own tenancies and struggling to manage. (Social Work)*

- Increase knowledge of Corporate Parenting role

*More people should be aware of their responsibility in this area and what it actually means. (Youth Work)*

*Work has been done but profile of looked after children and young people could be raised. (Chair of Looked After Children Reviews)*

- Suggestions to improve practice

Some respondents noted progress which had been made with the Corporate Parenting role while others identified the need for further developments:

*I think the Corporate Parenting agenda is being promoted within the sector; however, it could be widened more outwith so local communities as well as other agencies are as aware of their responsibility to children and young people. (Advocacy)*

*Local authorities could establish positive discrimination systems to increase employment opportunities for looked after children within the local authority. (Post-school Transitions)*

### **3.2. Family and Community Support**

#### *Involvement in Family and Community Support*

40% of the respondents who answered Question Four said they were involved in Family and Community Support. Some respondents were involved in direct work with children, young people and families. A small number of respondents had a role supporting foster carers, kinship carers and people who are adoptive parents. Involvement in education programmes was noted by respondents while others were involved with practice which aimed to strengthen family relationships.

### *Involvement in Family and Community Support*

*Intensive work with families to enable them to retain looked after children in their own homes. Working with health, education to implement Getting it Right for Every Child. (Social Work)*

*Delivering a holistic family programme which aims to support parents/carers and young people who are involved in the Children's Hearing. (Social Work)*

*Foster and Kinship Care training around the European Association for Children in Hospital (EACH) Charter and the toolkit to help carers better manage the care of the children and young people they look after at times of illness...(Health Care)*

*Work alongside schools to ensure placements are meeting the educational needs of looked after children, and consult and advise parents/carers as appropriate. (Family and Community Support)*

### *Gaps in Family and Community Support*

41% of respondents who completed Question Five said that if gaps in Family and Community Support were addressed this would lead to better outcomes for children and young people. Respondents described gaps in provision across different settings for children, young people, parents, families and carers. Some respondents noted the need for improved, long term funding for community-based programmes to achieve impact. The need to address specific issues such as health-related issues was also detailed by some respondents.

- Need for early intervention and prevention

*Require earlier intervention taking into account the young person's views of their lived lives... (Advocacy)*

- Family involvement in planning

*Families should be more encouraged to engage with planning for their children and involved directly in all meetings. (Social Work)*

- More family and community-based services

*Long-term commitment and funding of preventative community-based services required. Initiative should mirror that of the Early Years Framework with a ten-year plan to work towards improving services.* (Residential Child Care)

*More interventions, wider range and more therapeutic help for parents.* (Early Years)

- Need for focus on specific issues

*Acknowledging the difficulties of looked after children with early trauma and equipping families with support and assistance in meeting their children's difficulties.*

(Foster Care)

*Community education programmes covering issues like trafficking, domestic abuse and sexual abuse.* (Youth Work)

*Better support for substance misuse issues prevention and education.* (Youth Work)

*Services which can provide practical support to carry out household tasks and basic cooking skills.* (Family and Community Support)

### 3.3. Permanence, Stability and Transitions

#### *Involvement in Work Related to Permanence, Stability and Transitions*

49% of the respondents who answered Question Four said they were involved in Permanence, Stability and Transitions. Some respondents described their practice with children, young people and families to promote and meet the needs of children and young people. Respondents were involved in the Children's Hearing, report-writing and assessments. Some supported children and young people's transitions in education, post-education and employability. Involvement in throughcare, leaving care and adoption and fostering panels was also noted. A small number described experiences of providing placements and accommodation to children and young people.

### *Involvement in Work Related to Permanence, Stability and Transitions*

*Working directly with children to help them understand what has happened and involve them in the planning process. (Social Work)*

*Working with children in all of these areas to make sure voices are heard and rights upheld as much as possible. (Social Work)*

*Offer support to colleagues in Children and Families to enable children to move on to permanence at home or with an alternative family. (Social Work)*

*I help young people during the transition from leaving care. (Youth Work)*

*Driving cases through permanence planning, supporting children through transitions and promoting stability to enhance lifelong opportunities. (Social Work)*

### *Gaps in Work Related to Permanence, Stability and Transitions*

This priority area received the highest number of responses in term of gaps in practice. 56% of respondents who completed Question Five said that if gaps were addressed this would lead to better outcomes for children and young people. A range of issues facing staff at a practice, operational and strategic level were described. Respondents stated the need for more robust planning procedures, improved decision-making and the reduction of timescales in relation to care planning. The need to improve permanency planning and avoid drift was noted. Some comments highlighted the need for more child-centred planning and the challenge of balancing the rights of the child with parental views and responsibilities. The need to develop more effective partnership working, address workload issues and increase resources available to staff was noted.

- Improve planning, assessment and decision making:

*Workers being given the time, space to progress permanence in appropriate short timescales. (Early Years)*

*More decisive and transparent decision making, better plans for transitional periods to include all stakeholders within the process. (Foster Care and Adoption Services)*

- Need for a child-centred approach

*Focus on early planning for permanence. A child-focused approach is essential. (Residential Child Care)*

*There is a need for children's needs to be held in greater significance than that of parents. Still feel that parental rights are seen as having greater significance especially in the legal system and hence this can lead to greater delays for children. (Quality Assurance)*

- Improve permanency planning, reduce transitions and avoid drift

*Still too much drift in moving children to permanent placements. Young children stay too long in temporary foster placements... (Social Work)*

*Children and young people still get moved around far too often and we sometimes underestimate the impact of change. With the present economic climate funds for taxis are being cut and as a result children are having to move school more often. (Education)*

*Multiple transitions exacerbate this problem, more work around this area may help. (Arts Development)*

- Improve leaving care and throughcare services

*More effective supports when growing out of care. (Social Work)*

*I am particularly sighted on the transition period in late teens and how multiagency support needs to be improved for these young people at a potentially difficult time. (Management, Health Care)*

*Better more varied housing options. (Social Work)*

- Increase resources and options for children and young people

*More choices for children when they need them. (Residential Child Care)*

*Lack of suitable foster placements for young people to move on to. (Residential Child Care)*

### 3.4 Diversity

#### *Involvement in Work Related to Diversity*

The survey stated that by diversity we mean issues of inequality relating to gender, sexuality, race, faith, income, geographical location and unaccompanied children. 24% of the respondents who answered Question Four said they were involved in diversity work. Compared with other priority areas this area received the smallest number of responses regarding the type of work respondents were involved in. Some described how diversity issues underpin their practice. Some detailed the work they are involved in at a practice and strategic level such as developing and implementing equalities policy.

## *Involvement in Work Related to Diversity*

*Working in a non-judgemental manner. (Residential Child Care)*

*...can offer foster placements with carers who identify as gay or lesbian...we have carers from different religious faiths. We have a range of carers who are in different income brackets. Finally we have carers who would identify as being members of the black and minority ethnic (BME) community. (Social Work)*

*Working with young people who face extreme poverty from some of the country's most deprived areas. (Education)*

## *Gaps in Work related to Diversity*

This priority area received the lowest number of responses in terms of gaps in practice. 16% of respondents who completed Question Five said that if gaps were addressed this would lead to better outcomes for children and young people. Respondents' comments on this area were much lower compared with their responses to other priority areas. Responses noted the importance of addressing diversity issues and the importance of recognising and meeting the different needs of children and young people.

- Need for increased understanding and awareness

*Training for front line staff on the issue of diversity, often the area that is assessed the least. Foster placements/carers that are trained also to recognise and work with issues of diversity. (Social Work)*

*Whilst...we strive to provide placements with carers who are representative of the diverse cultures existent within Scotland, the willingness of councils to embrace and value diversity (e.g. gay/lesbian carers) remains a challenge. (Social Work)*

- Need to meet different needs of children and young people and carers

*Poor recognition of the needs of some children for services in remote and rural communities. (Residential Child Care)*

*Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) needs of young people, carers and prospective carers. (Management)*

*Education and prevention work on substance misuse that is tailored to black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. (Youth Work)*

### **3.5. Children and Young People affected by Disability**

#### ***Involvement in Work with Children and Young People affected by Disability***

38% of the respondents who answered Question Four said they were involved in work with children and young people affected by disability. Respondents described direct work with children and young people comprising advocacy, day care, respite care, provision of placements and support within education settings. Other respondents had a managerial role or strategic responsibility.

#### ***Involvement in work with Children and Young People affected by Disability***

*Advocating and ensuring children and young people's rights are upheld at xxx school; also promoting young people's participation by supporting them to communicate at the student council and involving them in the Speak Out Magazine (Who Cares? Scotland magazine for looked after children and young people). (Advocacy)*

*We offer placements to children and young people who are identified as being disabled, and as a result offer support to families and children and young people who are affected by disability. (Social Work)*

*Previous work in residential child care supporting young people with complex learning disabilities. (Residential Child Care and Quality Assurance)*

#### ***Gaps in work with Children and Young People affected by Disability***

24% of respondents who completed Question Five said that if gaps were addressed this would lead to better outcomes for children and young people. The need to understand and respond better to the individual needs of children and young people affected by disability was noted. The impact of cuts in services on provision was highlighted along with the need for more person-centred planning and more effective integrated practice.

- Increase understanding and awareness of disability

*Often the forgotten children. (Foster Care)*

*A better understanding of this group of children's needs - very little national awareness of the context. (Social Work)*

- Improve interagency practice

*Closer working between health, education and social work to identify families and children in greatest need.* (Staff Learning and Development)

- Need for resources for children and young people affected by disability and their families and carers

*Build up greater community-based activities rather than institutional residential respite.* (Residential Child Care)

*Short breaks have become a 'luxury' in eyes of local authorities when they can make a huge difference to the quality of family's lives.* (Foster Care and Adoption Services)

- More person-centred planning

*Gaps in particular surrounding personalisation.* (Children's Services)

*Children with problematic behaviour often make transitions without diagnosis of some major learning difficulties.* (Residential Child Care)

### 3.6 Advocacy and Human Rights

#### *Involvement in Advocacy and Human Rights*

28% of the respondents who answered Question Four said they were involved in work on advocacy and human rights. Respondents described the need to uphold children's rights drawing on references to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Other respondents had a role to advocate for children and young people. For a small number of respondents advocacy was described as the core function of their position or organisation.

#### *Involvement in Advocacy and Human Rights*

*As a residential worker it is important that I promote to the young person their human rights or advocate on their behalf at any planned meetings...* (Residential Child Care,)

*We advocate on behalf of our children and also call in support from the council's Children Rights Service and also Who Cares? Scotland.* (Residential Child Care)

*All our work is underpinned by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the United Nations Convention.* (Social Work)

## *Gaps in Advocacy and Human Rights*

21% of respondents who completed Question Five said that if gaps were addressed this would lead to better outcomes for children and young people. Respondents described the need for more resources in this area, with some respondents recommending that all children and young people should have access to an advocacy service. Some respondents said that staff awareness of children's and young people's rights should be increased. The need for children's voices to be heard, for example, in children's hearings was noted.

- Increase advocacy services

*More truly independent advocacy - ring-fenced and funded centrally. (Advocacy)*

*Service across Scotland remains patchy. (Advocacy)*

*Scottish Government should be ensuring that all looked after children have access to an independent advocate. (National Training Programme)*

- Increase staff awareness of children's and young people's rights

*Fuller understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) by all staff in the local authority. (Youth Work)*

*Children facing the hearings system do not always have the opportunity to have their voices heard - there's an interesting difference between the way we enable children to take part in LAAC Reviews and how children are expected to deal with hearings. (Social Work)*

*Children's rights need to be seen as part of overall human rights. There is often a disconnection. (Children's Services)*

## **3.7 Leadership and Management**

### *Role in Leadership and Management*

40% of the respondents who answered Question Four said they were involved in leadership and management. Some respondents had formal line management responsibilities while others had a role to develop and support staff. A small number described their approaches to leadership and one respondent detailed how young people contribute to the leadership model in their organisation.

### ***Role in Leadership and Management***

*We have a democratic leadership model which works well.* (Residential Child Care)

*We have a robust and proactive management and leadership system throughout the company.* (Social Work)

*Part of what we all do and promote with children and young people. Make excellent use of Columba 1400 leadership academies. We have sent all External Managers, Unit Managers and Deputies. Three groups of young people have gone, including those who have been harder to reach...* (Residential Child Care)

### ***Gaps in Leadership and Management***

25% of respondents who completed Question Five said that if gaps were addressed this would lead to better outcomes for children and young people. Some respondents recommended that leadership styles should be changed in organisations so that they better reflect the needs of children and young people. Others noted the impact of structural change at a managerial level on service provision. The need for support for staff working with looked after children and young people was raised.

- **Need for staff support and development**

*Additional support for looked after children where necessary, supporting teachers and education staff, reasons behind looked after children and how best to support this vulnerable group.* (Education)

- **Consider leadership and management approaches**

*Whole system change is needed, not more projects.* (Children's Services)

*Greater opportunity for developing creative and flexible programmes that respond to young people's feedback and utilise group work.* (Employability and Transitions)

*This area requires considerable focus, leadership on practice issues and young people inclusion in setting this agenda.* (Anti-bullying Service)

- **Address structural change**

*Better structure in local authorities to support the needs of long-term workers and those working with permanence cases.* (Social Work)

*More stability in local authority with fewer changes in management. This has significant impact upon families and young people especially in progressing care plans.* (Family and Community Support)

## 4. Stakeholder links with CELCIS

### 4.1 Themed Advisory Groups

Around 200 respondents expressed an interest in becoming involved in the CELCIS Themed Advisory Groups for the Priority Areas. This overwhelming response shows strong support within the sector for working collaboratively with CELCIS around the priority areas. In order to harness interest from the sector, it is planned that the groups will be flexible online forums with the potential to meet and facilitate seminars around issues of interest to members. The online network will include membership with expertise in the Priority Areas and comprise:

- Advocacy and Human Rights Themed Advisory Group
- Corporate Parenting Themed Advisory Group
- Diversity and Disability Themed Advisory Group
- Family and Community Support Themed Advisory Group
- Leadership and Management Themed Advisory Group
- Permanence, Stability and Transitions Themed Advisory Group

The TAGS will be a forum for CELCIS to engage with a wide range of practitioners on relevant and pressing issues. It will also help to direct the work of CELCIS in order to meet the needs of stakeholders. Membership of the network will be from staff at a practice and operational level. Ideally members will be able to represent the views of children and young people and their families that they work with. This will be one of the ways of ensuring that children and young people's views feed into and are at the centre of the work of CELCIS. Links will be extended between the TAGs and the CELCIS Governance Model as illustrated in Appendix One. Initial efforts to develop the TAGs will be around the Priority Areas which CELCIS is prioritising action on. These are Corporate Parenting, Leadership and Management, and Permanence, Stability and Transitions.

To ensure the most appropriate membership, CELCIS will contact every respondent who expressed an interest in the Themed Advisory Groups to identify interest and expertise in the area. Recruitment to the Themed Advisory Groups will also be extended online and across CELCIS' wider networks. This will give all stakeholders an opportunity to express interest in the Themed Advisory Groups.

### 4.2 Services required from CELCIS and Other Providers

The survey included a question on services required by respondents from CELCIS or other external providers. A total of 314 respondents answered this question and Chart Seven details the responses. This shows that research and best practice sharing, advice and guidance, online learning and email updates were the services which would be the most valued.

## Chart Seven: Types of service beneficial to participants

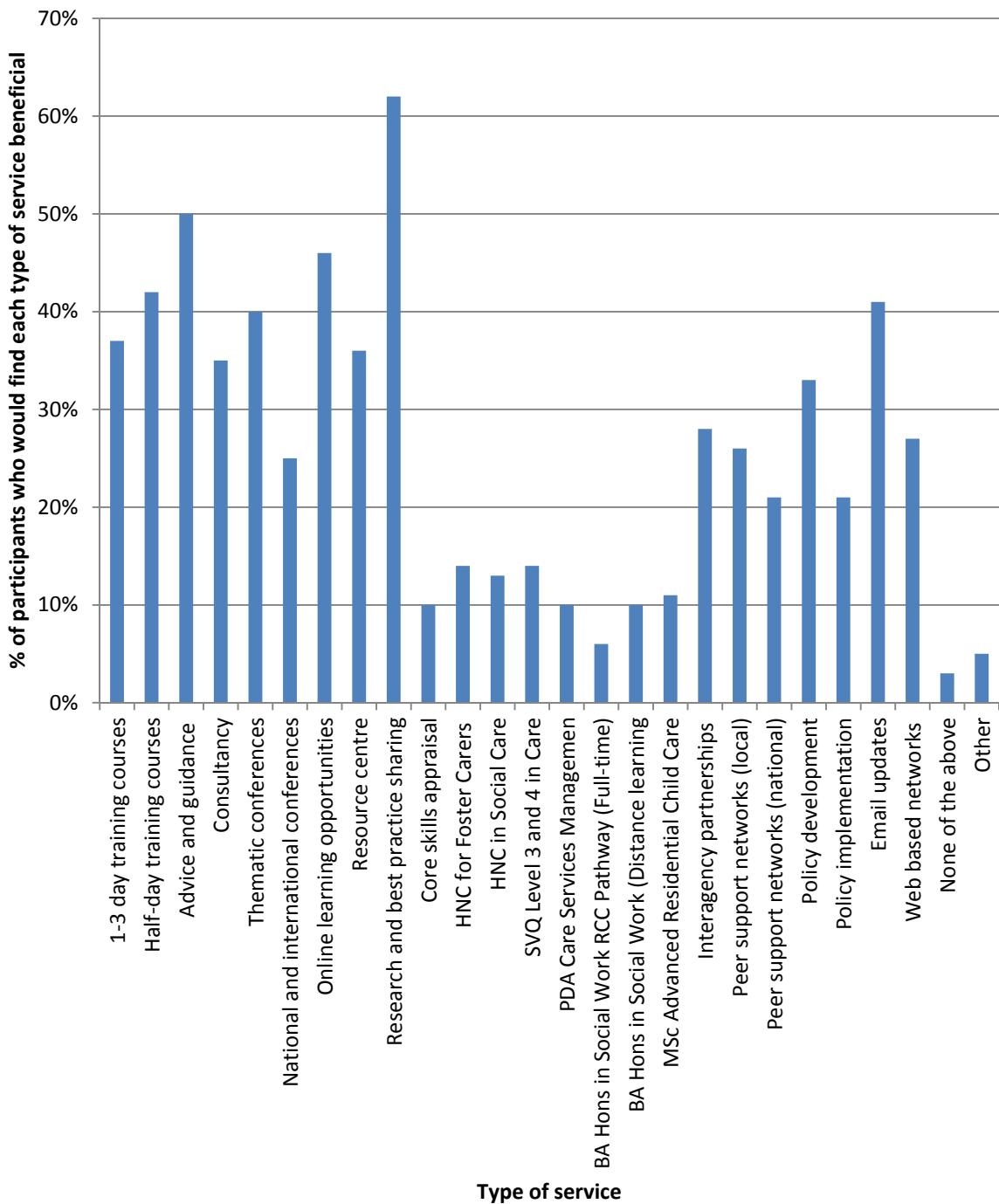


Chart Seven: Types of services participants believe would be beneficial to them (314 responses)

- Training courses

*Continue the range of training already provided, especially around child development and attachment issues.* (Residential Child Care)

*Could be of benefit if delivered locally.* (Children's Services)

- Advice and guidance

*Case studies, both in terms of staff and young people.* (Residential Child Care)

- Conferences

*Sharing learning from other countries has been a key feature of the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) conferences and has often been the aspect which attendees have gained most from, it would be helpful to retain this.* (Residential Child Care)

*Finance is going to be very tight.* (Management, Commissioning)

- Online learning opportunities

*Perhaps discussion groups and a place to share research or practice examples.* (Residential Child Care)

- Research and best practice sharing

*Can we figure a way to make the (Institute) journal (Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care) more accessible for all staff?* (Residential Child Care)

- Email updates

*Provide up-to-date research - Social Workers are often too busy...to look this up for themselves.* (Social Work)

*National debates* (Residential Child Care)

#### 4.3 Examples of Practice

The survey asked respondents to share an example of practice from their area which had a real impact on looked after children and young people. Over 100 respondents shared examples of practice and of these 68 respondents provided their contact details.

Examples of practice shared spanned across direct work with children and young people, parents, families, foster carers and kinship carers to work at a strategic and planning

level. Approaches to delivering the Corporate Parenting role were described. Examples were received from different practice settings, for example, respondents described work related to health issues, therapeutic care, education, employability, throughcare, aftercare and respite. A number of respondents described how they have developed practice and resources which enables the voice of children and young people to be heard.

CELCIS has a role to enable practitioners to share and learn from each other's practice. This will be taken forward through their networks, seminars, conferences and the CELCIS website. CELCIS has made a commitment to contacting all those who left their contact details to gather more information on the examples of practice.

## 5. Final Comments from Respondents

The inclusion of a question asking for further comments gave respondents an opportunity to raise their views on the work of CELCIS. Respondents made recommendations on the role and function of CELCIS. Some respondents noted the need to build on the previous work of SIRCC with requests that the focus of residential child care is continued in CELCIS. Concerns were raised regarding financial constraints which have been placed on services. Several notes of thanks were received for the work of CELCSI and the survey. Examples of comments are included below.

### Comments from Respondents:

*...A centre for excellence for looked after children is to be welcomed as it increases the profile of this group of service users. But it needs to complement not compete with already good resources provided in Scotland many of whom are in the voluntary sector and provide these services as income generation to support direct work with service users... (Staff Development)*

*...I would hope that CELCIS could provide affordable consultancy to services particularly those who are struggling. (Residential Child Care)*

*...Our most vulnerable children are being let down far too often by a system that struggles to appropriately meet their needs...Centralisation has been an issue in the past for small geographically challenged authorities so please make the services available to all... (Social Work)*

*I look forward to CELCIS building and developing on the great work of SIRCC. (Residential Child Care)*

### Comments from Respondents:

*Feel that CELCIS is a real opportunity to bring different communities of interest in children who are looked after together... (Foster Care)*

*...would be great to see the torch still burning brightly for the residential sector despite the vast remit now being undertaken by CELCIS... (Residential Child Care)*

*This is a great opportunity to truly pull stakeholders together and improve outcomes for looked after children in Scotland. (Foster Care)*

## 6. Taking Forward Issues from the Survey

The survey has generated an increased knowledge within CELCIS of the issues facing staff working across a range of settings with looked after children and young people. The high response rate demonstrates that the CELCIS priority areas of work meet the needs of the looked after sector. The CELCIS Business Plan has been developed to ensure CELCIS can respond to the issues raised in the survey. This will involve the development of the following areas of work:

### 6.1 Stakeholder Engagement

***Establishment of Themed Advisory Groups:*** The Themed Advisory Groups will be a forum for CELCIS to engage with a wide range of practitioners on relevant and pressing issues. Membership of the network will be from staff at a practice and operational level. Ideally members will also be able to represent the views of the children, young people and families that they work with. To ensure most appropriate membership, CELCIS will contact every respondent who expressed an interest in the Themed Advisory Groups to identify interest and expertise in the area. Recruitment to the Themed Advisory Groups will also be extended online and across CELCIS' wider networks. This will give all stakeholders an opportunity to express interest and contribute to the Themed Advisory Groups.

***Development of a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy:*** This will be developed in collaboration with the CELCIS Partnership Group (see Appendix One). The strategy will detail how CELCIS will engage stakeholders across a broad range of sectors including those professional groups not represented or with a low response rate in the survey. A Participation Model for Children and Young People will be part of the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. This will be available on the CELCIS website.

**Practice Sharing:** In total, 68 respondents shared an example of practice and left their contact details. CELCIS has made a commitment to contacting all those who left their contact details to gather more information on the examples of practice. Respondents also requested that CELCIS provides research and best practice sharing. CELCIS has a role to enable practitioners to share and learn from each other's practice. This will be taken forward through networks, seminars, conferences and the CELCIS website.

## 6.2 Training, Development and Consultancy

As a result of the high interest in online learning from respondents a CELCIS online learning portal will be developed with three courses initially developed and piloted. Online learning resources will also be made available on the CELCIS website. Examples of courses currently being planned which meet the needs identified by respondents include:

- Attachment
- Child Care Law
- Communicating with children with social and communication difficulties
- Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people

Additional training requirements identified which will be addressed include a focus on children's rights, interagency working, Corporate Parenting and leadership and management approaches. A programme of conferences, seminars and events is being delivered, reflecting interest by respondents in these opportunities and sharing learning from national and international perspectives.

Requests for advice and consultancy will also be considered by CELCIS. This will involve the development and support for models of practice across the looked after sector.

## 6.3 Programme of Activity on Permanency, Stability and Transitions

The priority area of Permanency, Stability and Transitions received the highest number of responses in terms of gaps in practice. A team within CELCIS has been recruited to take forward action on gaps identified. Their work will involve the development of a 'whole systems' approach to improving timely permanence. The team will work in partnership with the sector to support their efforts to reduce the incidence and duration of unnecessary delays and drifts in permanence. Learning and development opportunities, research and consultancy will be developed related to permanency planning.

## 6.4 Online Communication to the Sector

Respondents requested email updates, online learning and web-based networks. CELCIS will be taking this forward through development of the CELCIS website to include:

- Sector news
- Good practice guides

- Resources and toolkits
- Interactive discussion boards and forums
- Information about services and events.

This will aim to provide valuable and up-to-date information to the looked after sector. Our social media presence will continue to expand through the provision of updates and access to news through Twitter and Facebook. Professional online forums will be established such as the CELCIS Communities of Practice Forum which will be a mechanism for sharing practice and knowledge exchange.

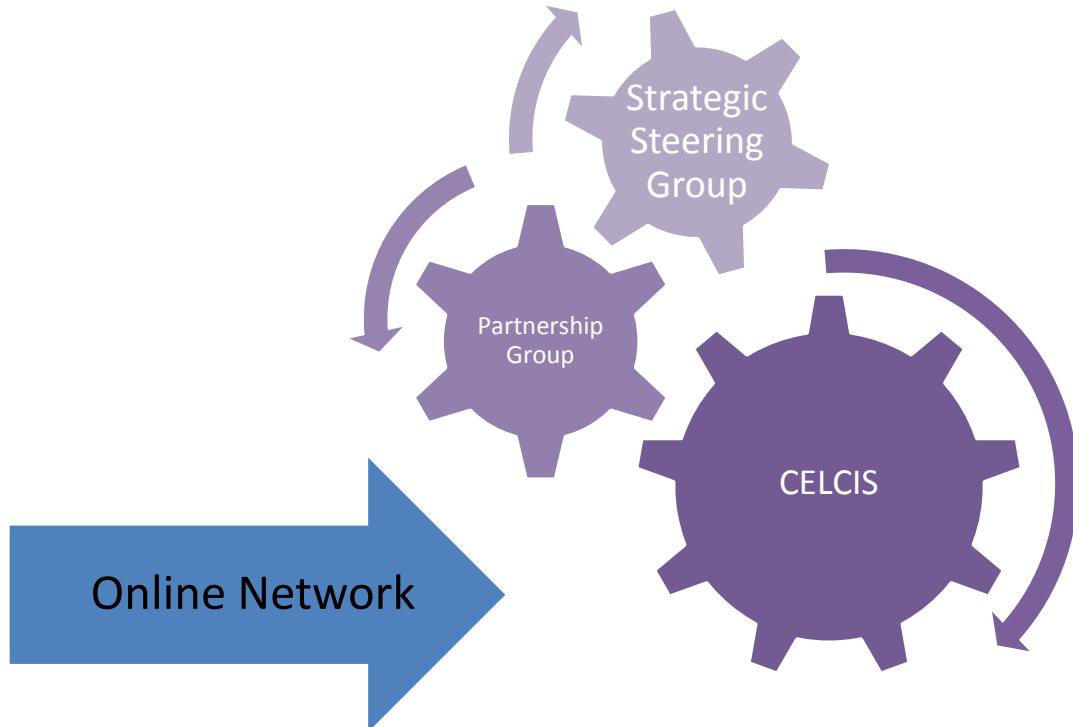
For more information on our web and related developments please go to our website - [www.celcis.org](http://www.celcis.org)

*CELCIS would like to extend their thanks to all those who took the time to participate in the survey.*

For more information on the content of this report, please contact: Louise Anusas, Stakeholder Participation Lead, CELCIS, [Louise.Anusas@strath.ac.uk](mailto:Louise.Anusas@strath.ac.uk)

## Appendix One

### CELCIS Governance Model and links with Themed Advisory Groups



## About CELCIS

CELCIS is the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland. Together with partners, we are working to improve the lives of all looked after children in Scotland. We do so by providing a focal point for the sharing of knowledge and the development of best practice, by providing a wide range of services to improve the skills of those working with looked after children, and by placing the interests of children at the heart of our work.

## For more information

Visit: [www.celcis.org](http://www.celcis.org)  
Email: [celcis@strath.ac.uk](mailto:celcis@strath.ac.uk)