

Making a Difference Report 2016



Centre for excellence
for looked after children in Scotland



Improving care experiences

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Vision

To improve the experiences and outcomes of looked after children through a collaborative and inclusive approach to partnership working.

Mission

To be a force for change across and beyond the looked after children sector, promoting children and young people who are looked after, their families, and care leavers, placing them at the heart of our services.

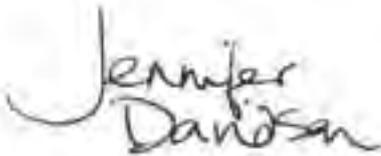
Welcome

Making a positive difference to the lives and life chances of Scotland's 15,500 looked after children simply has to be a team effort. And the real strength of CELCIS comes from our team of people. The drive, passion and commitment made by our own staff towards improving young lives is simply second to none.

Of course, our own people can't make a difference alone. At CELCIS we've always believed that collaborative partnership working between all the agencies and professionals whose work plays a part in the lives of these young people is the way to make lasting change and improvement. By sharing our expert knowledge, our strengths and shining examples of what works well, together we become better equipped to meet the challenging problems faced by young people and their families, and by the people, systems and procedures who support them.

Evaluating the work we do with our professional colleagues on the ground, carefully assessing its effectiveness through our evidence-led approach, is a central plank of the CELCIS ethos. We continue to develop and expand the range of services we offer to support the great work being done in the sector, and use this report to highlight some of our significant success in 2015-16.

Jennifer Davidson
Director, CELCIS



'The real strength of CELCIS comes from our team of people'



Introduction

At CELCIS, our ultimate goal remains really quite simple. We are determined to make a difference. We want to be one of the organisations that lead the way in identifying and securing positive and lasting improvements in the experiences, life chances and outcomes of Scotland's looked after children, families, carers and care leavers.

To achieve our goal, we set ourselves an ambitious programme of work in 2015–16 covering 189 projects, working in partnership with every local authority in Scotland, and more than 408 organisations across the UK and the world.

This report showcases examples of our work from across a wide range of multi-agency partnership projects, and celebrates positive progress already being made in the lives of looked after children.



Making a difference

Every child is different. Children have their own individual personalities, ambitions, needs and experiences. But looked after children, young people and their families need extra support and care because they are more likely to face multiple disadvantages. That is why CELCIS exists, and why we're forging new paths to make long-lasting change.

We take a multi-agency approach towards making that change – breaking down the barriers to change with new thinking and new ways of working. We do that by providing research and evidence, policy, learning and training, and consultancy services for our partners – services which are underpinned by our innovative, evidence-based improvement approach, and our thorough evaluation of what works well in practice.

Our commitment to this far-reaching improvement agenda is at the very heart of everything we do. We promote and encourage an understanding of how evidence and policy may be put into practice on the ground. Our superb team of highly experienced, insightful staff do just that by helping to further build capability, skills and confidence amongst the very people who care for, and deliver services to, looked after children.

Setting our objectives

Our core objectives for the year April 2015 to March 2016 were to:

- Build sustainable capacity in the sector to manage new and existing challenges.
- Build expertise within the sector and promote the development of learning cultures.
- Gather research evidence and disseminate best practice across the looked after child care sector.
- Facilitate the implementation of national policy at local level.
- Work in partnership to facilitate, co-ordinate and maximise collaborative inter-professional work, avoiding duplication.
- Contribute to implementation of the Scottish Government's care and permanence plan, in two local areas.

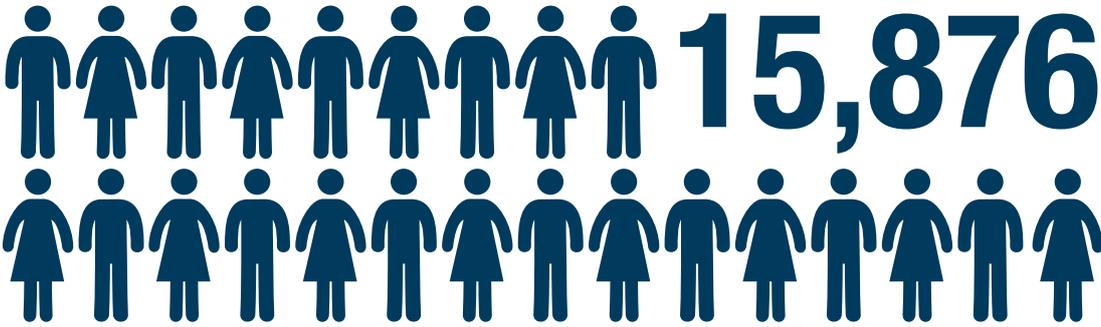
To reach these objectives, our staff deliver our services through six key areas of work – permanence, throughcare and aftercare, education, health and wellbeing, historical abuse and international work.

Governance

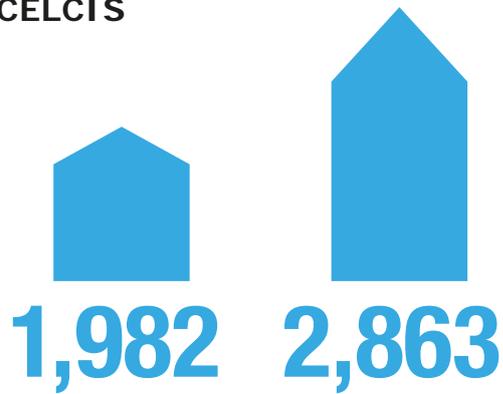
As an organisation, CELCIS fully recognises the value and importance of governance and accountability to ensure that our work remains firmly focused on making a difference. We are governed by a Strategic Steering Group (SSG), supported by the University of Strathclyde, and monitored by the Scottish Government, our principle funder.

All of our work follows an annual business plan, and is further funded by our own projects and consultancy services.

The year in numbers



Approximately 15,876 people heard key messages formally delivered by someone from CELCIS



An increase of 44% in our Twitter followers – up from 1,982 to 2,863 by end of March 2016



408+

CELCIS engaged with 408+ organisations, including all 32 Scottish local authorities



69



69 events, with 1,947 people attending a CELCIS conference or learning event

88%



88% of people attending our learning and development events said they would apply their learning in practice



51,512

51,512 unique website visitors – an increase of 16%



12,474

12,474 international website visitors – an increase of 50%



CELCIS plays an important role in cyberspace by providing a range of digital downloadable documents. This digital databank continues to provide practical and valuable information for colleagues working in the sector. The current top 5 downloads shows what's been most popular with our partners this year.

1. Looked after and learning
2. Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care, Volume 14.3
3. Standard for Residential Child Care
4. Corporate parenting: Enabling implementation of Part 9
5. Inform: Supporting the education of looked after children with uncertain immigration status



The musings of our colleagues might not make it to the MAN Booker Prize shortlist, but our regular blog posts provide essential reading for many of our partners. Making it onto our coveted Blog of the Year chart were:

1. Moving quickly and confidently for permanence, Liz Brabender
2. The voice of children, Linda O'Neill
3. Love makes us loveable, Judy Furnivall
4. Staying Put to move forward, Kenny McGhee
5. A long journey to justice, Moyra Hawthorn

Collaboration and partnership

At CELCIS, collaboration and partnership is at the very heart of how we work. By sharing goals and experience with colleagues working with vulnerable children and their families, we all continue to evolve and improve. We learn from each other. We solve problems together. We talk – sparking ideas and developing solutions. We share knowledge and build on a growing evidence base together. Ultimately, working together is how we will make that big difference for children and young people.

In 2015–16, CELCIS worked in partnership with over 408 organisations and 32 local authorities, covering a wide spectrum of engagement. This ranged from intensive, in-depth work to snappy, bite-sized one-offs. Whether giant strides or baby steps, we always work collectively towards making a difference.

The expert knowledge of our staff and consultants, coupled with their deep insight and experience, and their flexible, positive problem-solving approach, was acknowledged by many of our collaborators in independent feedback.

A pathway to justice

At CELCIS, we have over a decade of experience working alongside survivors, service care providers and the Scottish Government so that collectively we can set a pathway to justice for survivors of historical abuse of children in care.

Listening and gathering the views of survivors and service providers has been a key part of our collective efforts this year. We published the results of our **Consultation on the Public Inquiry into Historical Child Abuse** which then informed the focus of the Inquiry and Scottish Government commitments in the **Action Plan for Justice for Victims of Historic Abuse of Children in Care**. Through our membership of the InterAction Review Group, we work with partners to ensure these commitment are realised and survivors voices are heard.



Shining a light on our work

A permanent place to stay

At CELCIS, one of our principle objectives is to make sure that every looked after child in Scotland is provided with a settled, secure and permanent place to live. We want to see an end to the unacceptably long waiting times experienced by many children to secure that permanence.

The work of our Permanence and Care Team (PaCT) is diverse and wide ranging. The team has worked collaboratively with multiple agencies and 32 local authorities this year to encourage the development of systems which secure sustainable, long-term placements for children, quickly and effectively. PaCT does this by mapping permanence processes, supporting whole-systems change, concurrency planning, family contact, conducting research, and delivering practice exchange workshops with partners to share and exchange learning between local authorities and agencies.

An **evaluation of PaCT's work** demonstrates that our tailored support and partnership approach is making a distinct and positive difference in permanence processes.

Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE)

We have continued to develop the reach of our sector-leading permanence work through the PACE programme. This innovative programme adopts a rigorous whole-systems approach to improving permanence, and aims to include all local agencies involved in permanence processes.

During 2015–16 the PACE programme has been co-delivered by CELCIS, the Scottish Government and seven of Scotland's local authorities – Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Dumfries and Galloway, East Renfrewshire, Orkney, Renfrewshire and Shetland. A suite of intense and in-depth activities were delivered in each area, built around a tailored 'process map' and supported by permanence champions from social work, health, education, legal services, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and the Children's Hearing System.

The CELCIS PACE team report significant progress in permanence processes across every local authority area, and have witnessed the positive impact a whole systems approach can make in securing permanence more quickly for children and young people. The bigger the buy-in from each corporate parenting agency, the better the outcome.

From learning to practice

Our PaCT practice exchange workshops continue to be a success. In partnership with local authorities and voluntary agencies across Scotland, we delivered three such workshops and exchanged the latest research, good practice and thinking among practitioners on topics such as using legislation to improve outcomes for children, and approaches to assessing and preparing prospective adoptive parents.

93% said they would apply their learning in practice.

93% 
said they would
apply their learning
in practice



The PACE model

PACE is underpinned by a rigorous model of improvement (Langley et al, 2009) which asks three questions:

1. What are we trying to improve?
2. How will we know that a change is an improvement?
3. What changes can we make that will result in improvement?

Small tests of change are used to build up learning about what works locally. Tests are tracked through the Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycle, converting ideas into tests and promoting learning. If tests are effective, then changes can be scaled up.

One example of significant progress is in Aberdeenshire Council. Aberdeenshire Council was one of the first authorities in Scotland to implement the PACE programme, and has made real progress with its own permanence ambitions. Fast forward from an initial goal (set in 2014) to provide 90% of its looked after children aged under 12 with a permanence plan within nine months, to early 2016 – Aberdeenshire has gone on to achieve 100% permanence planning for under 12s. Now that's what we call permanence progression.

'We could not have done this work without the support, perseverance and commitment of colleagues from CELCIS and the Scottish Government. Having their skills, knowledge and encouragement enabled our local multi-agency group to push on and try new things in a child-centred manner. They took us out of our comfort zones, but ultimately enabled us to achieve our goal and to continue to embed the good practice.' (Leigh Jolly, Social Work Manager, Aberdeenshire Council)

'CELCIS enabled us to achieve our goal and to continue to embed the good practice.' (Leigh Jolly, Social Work Manager, Aberdeenshire Council)

The PACE process

Warming up

- PaCT case audit
- Support with data collection and analysis
- Prior engagement with CELCIS
- Prior LA experience with strategic change initiatives



Establishing the programme

- Initial discussions
- Stakeholder event
- Improvement capability building through training / coaching
- Multi-agency meeting
- Launch event
- Process mapping
- Direct input



Sharing learning

- Joint learning day
- Champions' 'Get Together'
- Conference presentations



Maintaining momentum

- Champions' meetings
- Ongoing support
- PACE delivery team debrief
- Sub-group meetings (Renfrewshire)

Excellence and evidence

CELCIS is an evidence-led centre for excellence – everything we do is rooted in high quality research and evaluation. When it comes to research and evaluation services, we have our feet in two camps. Our highly skilled team provides rigorous academic research to contribute to an ever-expanding evidence base which practitioners can access and use in practice, and we also provide testing and evaluation services for external agencies.

Our success comes from our application of sound knowledge exchange principles – involving practitioners and policy makers at the right times during the research process to ensure the greatest possible impact.

In 2015–16 our researchers worked with a tremendously diverse range of agencies – from universities across the globe to third sector organisations right here in Scotland – on 29 research-related projects. A number of examples of excellence from this period demonstrate real improvement in services for looked after children, and an ongoing knowledge exchange:

Overseen but often overlooked

Funded by Barnardo's Scotland, this research explored the needs of and current services supporting children looked after at home. Our study found that the needs of these children are just as severe, complex or difficult as other children in care, but that many services allocate a lower level of priority when it comes to support or intervention. This new and cutting-edge evidence has been widely referenced and used to inform third sector campaigns – calling for greater support and improved service for these vulnerable children – and used by us and Barnardo's to spark action and develop new work with the Scottish Government and The Robertson Trust, among others.

www.celcis.org/overseen-but-often-overlooked

The Role of the Solicitor in the Children's Hearings System

With an increase in the number of solicitors attending children's hearings, this research – commissioned by the Scottish Legal Aid Board – examined the role, impact and training needs of solicitors, and how best to achieve a fair and consistent approach to monitoring and compliance. The Children's Hearing Improvement Partnership has collective responsibility for taking forward all 6 recommendations from the study and has actioned these as part of its important improvement work.

www.celcis.org/solicitors-childrens-hearings

'Our success comes from our application of sound knowledge exchange principles to ensure the greatest possible impact.'

Growing up and moving on

With our throughcare and aftercare work, CELCIS is determined to increase an understanding that leaving care is a huge milestone in each care leaver's life, a time which presents even greater challenges for them than for other young people moving into adulthood. To help narrow the gap in outcomes which exists between care leavers and their peers, we encourage and support the development of systems which provide ongoing support for as long as it takes to help this vulnerable group of young people move towards successful independent living.

A major plank in our throughcare and aftercare work in 2015–16 has been the development and launch of the ground-breaking Scottish Care Leavers Covenant – a document which is underpinned by an explicit philosophy of care and guiding principles, and makes a collective promise to support care leavers by the best means possible. The Covenant has already attracted 400 signatories, corporate endorsement from 18 Scottish councils, the Scottish Social Services Council and several FE and HE establishments, plus much international interest.



'We encourage the development of systems which provide ongoing support for as long as it takes.'

Championing care leavers

We recognised that, despite widespread aspiration to deliver effective support for care leavers – an aspiration firmly embedded within the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant – there was a pressing need for a coherent and practical plan to help councils and other corporate parents implement the necessary changes for care leavers to flourish and grow like all young people. To fulfil the commitment to care leavers made within the Covenant, we developed and produced a cross-sector multi-agency Agenda for Change, and continue to promote these ambitions.

As part of that process, CELCIS convened and chaired a representative Alliance of eight key stakeholders, and drew on the contributions, participation and support of over 30 other key agencies. We provided leadership and structure to engage a wide range of organisations to unite them in a care leavers' common cause. Together, we produced a coherent, usable and visionary document, which gives practical assistance to corporate parents in planning services and actions. It is evidence-based, reflecting existing good practice, and importantly, it gives voice to the experience of practitioners and young people about what is required to bring about both systems and culture change for care leavers in Scotland.

"The Life Changes Trust was delighted to have the opportunity to work alongside colleagues passionate about improving outcomes for care leavers and to take a share in promoting the key messages and encouraging sign-up to the Covenant at local and national level. CELCIS has done a wonderful job of leading on this and helping creating a vision for change with Alliance members."

Heather Coady, Programme Director, Life Changes Trust

www.celcis.org/covenant

Getting it right locally for care leavers

To support practical local delivery of the objectives outlined in the Care Leavers Covenant and in the Agenda for Change, CELCIS hosted three Implementation Master Classes in February 2016. Our Throughcare & After Care team were joined by over 50 key stakeholders from the third sector and staff from over 20 local authorities. We heard how organisations are incorporating the Agenda for Change into their local corporate parenting plans, bringing a greater consistency to planning, provision and objectives for care leavers. Already we're seeing the beginnings of positive change.

"We have restructured some of our promotions and project recruitments to make sure that we are more responsive to the needs of care leavers. We have also begun to more effectively target volunteering opportunities and accreditations to care leavers – something which we did not do well before."
(Member of the Covenant)

Staying the course

One of our key ambitions at CELCIS is to play a big part in narrowing the educational attainment gap. In fact, our ultimate goal is to close the gap completely. We are committed to building on the rich capacities, skills and aspirations of our looked after children from early years education onwards. In our education work, we encourage the development of systems which support children to enjoy the benefits and advantages a high quality education can offer.

During 2015–16 the CELCIS Education team has been involved in 4 new local authority improvement projects:

- We supported South Ayrshire Council by facilitating a head teachers' event to identify an action plan to improve educational outcomes.
- We helped Renfrewshire Council to implement a new parental/carer engagement model.
- We supported Argyll and Bute Council by writing a 'handy guide' to the looked after children's system in their authority.
- We worked with East Ayrshire Council by auditing child's plans to better understand what part education plays in the process.



Top marks for our Looked After and Learning toolkit

In October 2015 the CELCIS Education team published its blueprint for improving educational outcomes for looked after children: Looked After and Learning.

The team developed this easy-to-use benchmarking and self-evaluation tool based on solid research evidence of what makes the biggest difference in supporting children to achieve all they can in school. The Looked After and Learning toolkit not only helps teachers and other professionals to celebrate the things that they're doing well, but also supports an understanding of where there are opportunities to develop practices that will contribute to children achieving more in school.

Spreading the word far and wide

We spread the word in the sector far and wide and got top marks:

1,206 

views on our website

13,725 

people have seen
information we've posted
about the toolkit on Twitter

750+ 

copies have
been handed to
teachers and other
professionals

427 

people have liked,
shared or commented
on Twitter

We continue to receive positive feedback about how it's being used in schools.

East Ayrshire using the toolkit for learning

Following on from a wider educational development programme we ran in partnership with East Ayrshire, the council are now using the benchmarks within the toolkit and, with the ongoing support of the CELCIS Education team, are developing their strategic plan for improving educational outcomes for looked after children in their schools.

"Working with the 'Looked After and Learning' toolkit has given us a framework to enable knowledge into action. The toolkit's evidence and references has given us a secure knowledge-based approach which we have strategically developed into an action plan to engage and empower our children's services workforce... we have embraced the benchmarks identified as our local priorities. I look forward to seeing the impact on the educational outcomes and the learning being taken forward fully embedded and evaluated into sustained improvement, closing the gap for our looked after children."

Elaine Hetherington, Senior Manager, GIRFEC, East Ayrshire Council

Growing up in good health

Looked after children face challenges which many other children never experience. Many looked after children will have experienced trauma before coming into care, and some may experience trauma while in the care system itself. This trauma often has a profound impact on their health and wellbeing. At CELCIS we believe that positive experiences and successful long-term outcomes depend hugely on each child's physical, mental and emotional health.

Our Health and Wellbeing team works with a range of agencies and organisations to support implementation of the Scottish Government's Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach. By working to support collective effort from carers, practitioners and professionals, we aim to make significant, long-term improvements in the health and wellbeing of looked after children, and encourage a deeper understanding of the multiple, complex health needs of children and families who have experienced trauma.

We know that our collaborative partnership approach is critical to support the introduction of structures and processes which can tackle the systemic barriers preventing positive health outcomes for these children.

In 2015–16 we made further headway towards better health for looked after children with a new series of projects and activities tailored specifically to the needs of each of the organisations we worked with, including three NHS Boards.

Attachment and trauma training in South Lanarkshire

In 2015–16 the CELCIS Health and Wellbeing team worked alongside South Lanarkshire Council's principal psychologist and developed a two-day attachment and trauma course, delivered by CELCIS and piloted in 2 local primary schools and nurseries in South Lanarkshire. We worked closely with the Council's principle psychologist to develop a whole school understanding of the devastating effect which insecure attachments and early trauma can have on a child's wellbeing and ability to form positive relationships. This child-centred thinking was consolidated by increasing awareness of the positive impact which can be made when all staff make a commitment to the use of a shared, non-judgemental language, and to the provision of a safe and secure learning environment to help traumatised children build skills, confidence and resilience for their future lives.

"The CELCIS two-day training was very engaging and extremely relatable to my role as a primary school teacher. It encouraged me to take a different view of the behaviour and actions of children and to go beyond the surface... it has enabled me to look closer into the lives and experiences of our most vulnerable children with compassion and understanding. The powerful points delivered throughout the training were supported by a positive and inspiring message of the ability to make a difference.

Since the training, key themes have had a direct impact upon the way I engage with pupils and the daily practice within my classroom. I look forward to using my knowledge to continue to develop and enhance positive relationships with all children including those who we would consider to be our most vulnerable. I hope that as a result of my actions and the input of our whole school community we can make a difference in the lives of our children both in school and beyond."

Ashley Macmillan, Primary 1 Teacher, St Cuthbert's Primary School, Hamilton

The letter of the law

2015–16 was a busy period for the Policy team at CELCIS. The full extent of the changes introduced by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 began to be properly felt, pushing the children's sector from questions of 'what' to 'how'. Then, hot on the heels of the 2014 Act, came sweeping changes to the Scottish education system, spearheaded by Parliament's approval of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

The CELCIS Policy Team was on hand throughout, responding to practitioner's queries, publishing relevant briefings, leading learning and development sessions, and facilitating implementation discussions across the country. Work which is all designed to introduce front-line practitioners to the letter of the law, and to build knowledge, confidence and capacity to lead change for improvement in the lives of looked after children.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

The 2014 Act was a landmark piece of legislation for Scotland's looked after children and their families. In particular, the new duties towards kinship carers, care leavers and families on the edge of care have significantly extended the statutory responsibilities of local authorities. At a time of restricted financial and human resources this presents big challenges, and at CELCIS we've concentrated on supporting partners to implement changes sensitively, turning the inevitable challenges into opportunities for improvement and reform.

Education (Scotland) Act 2016

Education has dominated the political agenda over 2015–16, and at the eye of the whirlwind has been the Scottish Government's plan to overhaul school improvement, with the reintroduction of national standardised testing, closer analysis of individual school performance, and new requirements for schools and local education authorities to concentrate on closing the attainment gap.

Advocating on behalf of looked after children and the professionals who support them, CELCIS engaged extensively with civil servants, school leaders and education academics, arguing the case for a system informed by evidence of what works. Our efforts were rewarded with numerous references to CELCIS in the closing debate of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, and a commitment from Ministers that the needs of looked after children will be a special consideration in the implementation of the National Improvement Framework – a commitment which CELCIS is now working alongside the Scottish Government to help realise.

CELCIS continues to inform and influence policy and agenda of change

10

consultation responses, ensuring the pertinent issues for children and young people are heard.

3

Inform briefings, all regarding Parts of the Act, as well as a briefing for education professionals on how to support young people with an uncertain immigration status in their journey to post-school education or employment.

6

Implementation Notes – a special series to support Corporate Parents understand and implement their legal obligations.

Staying on the right side of the law

The CELCIS Policy team played an important role in supporting local authority staff to understand and implement complex new legal responsibilities for care leavers. We filled this knowledge gap by producing a series of briefings to address many of the continuing care FAQs being posed by practitioners. But more importantly, the team got out and about across Scotland, met with social work and aftercare teams, presented at forums and conferences, and generally made ourselves available to offer support and practical policy guidance. By providing reassurance and understanding about what is expected from staff on the ground, and what the law does or doesn't allow them to do, practitioners had more confidence to take decisions, to starting planning for implementation and, ultimately, to make continuing care placements available to young people.

"The CELCIS staff did a great job sharing their specialist, in-depth knowledge in an accessible way, but they also provided ongoing support at the end of the phone for follow-up questions and issues. This was a great example of true partnership working. We felt the CELCIS team genuinely shared the same aims as Staf staff and members, and they really supported the people who actually deliver the work on the ground."

Norma Corlette, CEO of the Scottish Throughcare & Aftercare Forum (Staf)

Hands across the ocean

At CELCIS we collaborate with all sorts of agencies and professional people, working together towards our collective goal of improving the lives, experiences and life chances of looked after children right here in Scotland. We are honoured to be recognised for, and share, our sector-leading expertise with a range of international partners. We believe in the importance of sharing experience, learning and good practice from all corners of the globe, and making a collective effort to support all children living without parental care in the best ways possible.

CELCIS reach goes right round the world

54 e-news bulletins; providing sector info from Scotland and around the globe, with 18,743 click throughs to read the latest news, events and publications.

12,474 international website visitors, a **50%** increase from last year.

Top 5 countries: Russia, United States, Ireland, Canada and Australia.



As part of this two-way learning process, we hosted a study group of government and non-government visitors from Moldova, Australia and Sweden, and we spread the word about Scotland's own experiences with alternative care systems through key note addresses to major conferences like the launch of the UN Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

Let there be light – CELCIS and Lumos

In 2015–16 CELCIS was invited to provide evaluation support services to Lumos, an international children's charity in the Republic of Moldova.

Alongside Moldovan Government ministries and two district authorities, Lumos has been working towards the replacement of residential children's institutions with community-based services and the reintegration of children with their families, or into family-type care.

CELCIS provided an evaluation of the Lumos Deinstitutionalisation Project, an evaluation which provided not only positive validation of the Project, but also clearly documented evidence and data about the positive potential of family reintegration (including for families with disabled children) and the pioneering use of smaller residential homes for some children. The success of the Project is now being used to provide a tangible example of good practice for policy makers and practitioners – an example which may ultimately prevent further children from living in institutions and losing family care. Lessons from Scotland about this work have been keenly taken on board.

Multi-layered learning

Keeping up to speed with new research, good practice and learning is in our collective DNA at CELCIS. And we are fully committed to sharing this dedication to lifelong learning with colleagues working in the looked after children's sector. We provide an extensive range of professional learning opportunities for carers, agencies and staff working with looked after children – opportunities which help them meet the challenges of that work confidently, equipped with the knowledge they need to make big differences in young lives.

CELCIS delivers that professional development and learning through courses, workshops, conferences, formal qualifications, training and events. Our highly experienced and respected staff also deliver tailored consultancy packages, designed to share in-depth knowledge from each area of our expertise to support multi-layered learning within the sector's workforce.

'We are fully committed to sharing our dedication to lifelong learning with colleagues working in the looked after children's sector.'

Music to our ears

In 2015–16 CELCIS had the great pleasure of combining expressive arts with solid research. Creative Scotland funded us to produce a research report looking at music in residential child care. To do this we worked across four test sites in Scotland. We listened to young people, and we listened to staff who care for them. We also listened to strategic managers within organisations which provide residential care services. From all of our listening we learned lots about what works to support young people's access to music within residential care, and what needs to happen to make that access to music even better. We hope the report will improve that access by sharing good practice, and build a deeper understanding of the importance of creativity for children in care. Let the music play on!

Conferences & events

The CELCIS calendar is always overflowing with conferences and events where sector colleagues can build on their own learning and professional development through practical sessions, challenges to their thinking and work practice, and from inspiring themed events. During 2015–16 an impressive list of learning opportunities was on offer at CELCIS.

1947 people attended 69 CELCIS learning events, and feedback was outstanding. 89% of attendees said they would apply the new learning directly into their practice.

Our events programme features the popular and highly influential annual Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) Conference and SIRCC Awards.



**1,947 people attended 69
CELCIS learning events**

SIRCC Conference enlightens and energises

Now in its 17th year, the SIRCC event is the only annual residential child care conference of its kind in Scotland. Because of Scotland's unique geography, it is the opportunity of the year for staff to come together, talk, learn, laugh and celebrate their success, which we all know is important for a healthy workforce.

We were proud to lead the working group who developed the event around the theme of: 'Steps to Success: Supporting quality transitions through and beyond residential child care'. Young people were, as always, at the heart of the conference – they helped us to develop the programme, deliver and support sessions, and they attended as delegates. The event brought together 297 delegates from a wide range of backgrounds, and their feedback told us that many returned to their workplaces with renewed passion and energy.

"I have left the conference with a great deal of motivation and ideas of how I want to improve my service and outcomes for young people who live there." (Delegate)

Formal and online education

Alongside our informal learning and training opportunities runs a range of mandatory qualifications which CELCIS and partners have developed to support advanced qualification requirements for professionals working in the sector.



Collaboration for qualification

During 2015–16 CELCIS continued to support implementation of the new Residential Child Care Workforce Level 9 qualification. To ensure that needs, expectations and requirements of the qualification were matched by the workforce, CELCIS promoted the rich and diverse residential landscape as part of the implementation planning process. We offered a variety of opportunities for the workforce to share views and ask questions, and ensured that groups representing the workforce were involved and kept updated during the ongoing development of Level 9.

By sharing information and data at a broad range of meetings, CELCIS has been able to represent the strengths of the sector, assess any potential impact of the qualification, and discuss how existing qualifications can be recognised and built upon towards the new qualification. We worked alongside partner groups such as the Scottish Residential Child Care Workers Association and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (who were also invited to key meetings), we used our direct contacts with Care Providers to inform discussions at every level, and we highlighted those areas where further support and resources will be required.

Our online learning opportunities continued to demonstrate just how effective digital education can be, not just here on our own Scottish shores, but right around the globe.

MOOC still a massive online success

Since its initial launch in 2015, our free Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) – Caring for Vulnerable Children – which we developed in partnership with Strathclyde University, has been making online waves. Delivered on a FutureLearn platform, and now in its 4th run, the stats for our international MOOC are simply superb. But it's not just about numbers, the online discussions and dialogue between users is the highest recorded – ever.

42,418

**joiners from
145 countries
around the world**

859,863

**steps of the
course completed**

149,989

**comments
posted**

Participants in the MOOC and its associated post-learning online discussions include professional child care workers, teachers, nurses, foster carers, new adoptive parents, social workers, academics and even UN employees.

Feedback from MOOC students remains powerful and positive. One student said, "The course has been thoroughly thought-provoking and has honed my opinions on working with vulnerable children. More importantly, it has explored the shortcomings that we are currently facing as a profession and has encouraged me to look to the future and to think about how I as a social worker will try to change this."

Our MOOC has been bathing in the award-winning spotlight too. In April 2016, Caring for Vulnerable Children's 'Billy's Story' won a prestigious British Universities Film & Video Council Learning on Screen In-House Production Award for 'Billy's Story Part 5: Children's Hearing'.

Finding the perfect fit

For CELCIS, there is no one size fits all approach. When it comes to the tailored training and consultancy work we offer, we understand the importance of getting exactly the right fit to match the needs of our working partners.

By taking the time to plan, design and deliver specialist support packages which respond to the specific requirements of each situation and set of circumstances, and make best use of our highly skilled and experienced people, we believe we can really help to make a big, big difference in the lives of looked after children.

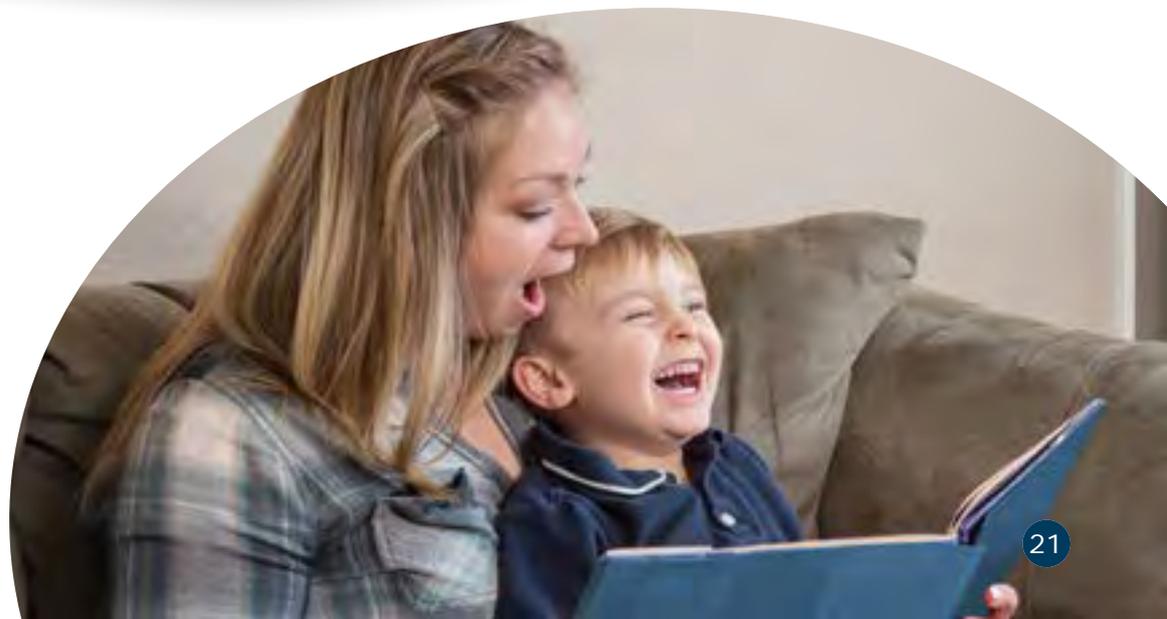
We can work it out

During 2015–16, one organisation asked CELCIS to provide expert support to improve tricky team relations in an otherwise well-performing service for young people.

To tackle the unique and deeply-embedded problems presenting within the team, a dynamic, bespoke and responsive CELCIS consultancy service was designed, and was delivered over eight days over the course of a year. By tailoring the content to fit the exact needs of the team, with no pre-defined agenda or rules, the CELCIS consultant created a safe and reflective space for open, challenging and frank discussion to happen in the moment. This approach was consolidated by the building of genuine trust between all parties, and the delivery of non-judgemental support which ultimately resulted in positive, productive and mutually-respectful team working. All of which provided an improved atmosphere and environment that has undoubtedly had a positive impact on the young people the team supports.

Feedback for this bespoke training package was fulsome.

“At first it was painful, but it was liberating for individuals and the team as a whole. Regardless of what training you go on, it comes down to people and relationships. Relationships are at the heart of everything. That’s what this expertly guided support allowed us to do – strengthen our professional relationships, conduct and behaviour, and put tight boundaries around the personal stuff. Now we have a free and easy atmosphere, with scope for banter with team members and young people – just like any family would do.” (Independent feedback from the Team Manager)



The coming year

At CELCIS, our message is unwavering, and we never tire of saying it. We want to make big, positive, lasting differences in the lives of looked after children, their families and care leavers. But we don't ever claim to do that alone. This work will always demand positive collaboration and commitment from all of the people, professionals and organisations who share those aims for Scotland's most vulnerable children, and we're proud to work with them now and into the future.

2016–17 will see us and our partners continue to work to make a big difference in the lives of looked after children. We continue to work across a diverse portfolio of projects, with between 50 and 70 underway at any one time. This ambitious programme of work is delivered by our fantastic team of staff from across all of our specialisms. As well as our existing, exciting work, we'll also deliver additional projects including:

- Protecting Children – a major new area of work which will expand our improvement expertise to develop and share effective support systems and services for keeping children safe and protected from harm, neglect and abuse. In this work, we will work in close partnership with the Centre for Child Wellbeing and Protection at the University of Stirling, alongside a wide range of agencies, to develop systems and practices which provide families with the right kind of support for their individual needs, at the right time.
- Implementing the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014: As further sections of the 2014 Act come into force throughout 2016–17, CELCIS will continue to provide the knowledge, information, insight and assistance the sector needs to comply with effective implementation of the legislation in their own settings.
- Collaboration with national and strategic stakeholders to forge new paths and ways of working. One example is our important contribution to the Children's Hearing Improvement Partnership – alongside our partners we are supporting positive change within the Children's Hearing System to improve the outcomes for children and young people.

Organisational Development

We value having time to reflect and continually improve what we do, so that we consistently provide the best possible services to our partners. Some examples of how we're improving this year are:

- Developing and expanding as an organisation, taking on a wider remit and stakeholder group. While we are undergoing our carefully planned organisational change programme, we remain committed to continuing to provide the very best services for professionals, children and families.
- Developing and widening our consultancy offer – extending our service of professional excellence to professionals working on complex permanence and child protection cases.
- Embedding the theory and practice of improvement approaches into our services, projects and key areas of work.
- Implement our evaluation strategy so that we can be even more precise about the real difference we're making day in, day out, in the lives of vulnerable children and families.

As always, CELCIS continues to champion positive change for looked after children and young people, care leavers and all of the people who work with and for them. By working together, and by keeping the needs, aspirations and wishes of those young people at the very heart of our collaborative efforts, we believe that we can all build a brighter future for them.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank each and every person who has contributed to our report. Thank you for taking the time to reflect and comment on our work through feedback, case studies and interviews – it's greatly appreciated and it keeps us right.

Contact us

We always look forward to hearing from our current and potential partners. Talk to us about our work, find out about our policy, research and consultancy services, or get more information about our events programme, learning workshops or tailored training packages.

Call: **0141 444 8500**

Email: **celcis@strath.ac.uk**

Visit: **www.celcis.org**



CELCIS, based at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, is committed to making positive and lasting improvements in the wellbeing of Scotland's children living in and on the edges of care. Ours is a truly collaborative agenda; we work alongside partners, professionals and systems with responsibility for nurturing our vulnerable children and families. Together we work to understand the issues, build on existing strengths, introduce best possible practice and develop solutions. What's more, to achieve effective, enduring and positive change across the board, we take an innovative, evidence-based improvement approach.



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