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## Editorial

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Editor-in-chief

### Welcome to the Autumn 2025 issue of the Scottish Journal of Residential Care.

Welcome to the autumn 2025 issue of the *Scottish Journal of Residential Care*. We publish this issue near the date of UNICEF's [World Children's Day](#) on 20<sup>th</sup> November which marks the adoption in 1953 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This year's associated awareness campaign focuses on listening to children talking about their lives, their hopes and their rights. Unfortunately, there are all too many examples of children's rights being undervalued, leading to children being ignored, harmed and even killed.

Our readers, especially those who are child and youth care professionals, may be involved in supporting events planned around Children's Day, including those aimed at helping children to express their views about how their rights can best be promoted. Children living in alternative care have rights to the very best standards of care, and rights are promoted in conditions where their caregivers are well informed and intellectually prepared for their challenging roles. We like to think that our Scottish-based journal with an international reach contributes to that sharing of information and the continuing professional development of child and youth care workers and others working with care experienced children and young people.

### The autumn 2025 issue

This issue features a trio of long-form articles about different aspects of the Scottish residential care context.

Relevant to the theme of children's rights, the issue leads with Abbi Jackson's study of the use of restraint with children in residential care, in the context of 'The Promise' – the 2020 concluding report of Scotland's Independent Care Review - which set clear expectations that Scottish schools and care establishments should aim not to use restraint. Jackson, a social worker and charity CEO, summarises the main debates on restraint reduction, debriefing practices, and the policy framework in Scotland, finding limited research into restraint reduction and the use of debrief after an incident involving restraint in secure care. The study, based on an online questionnaire and focus groups, considers restraint from the perspective of Scottish child and youth care workers, and particularly the use of debrief following an incident where restraint was used with a child. The author identifies the need for a clear definition of



debrief, potentially Scotland-wide, and argues for firmer policy about who should initiate and lead debriefs, suggesting there is scope for staff teams to undertake these themselves.

Jackson's research is set within a broader context of policy and practice work supporting the aim of minimising the use of restraint and upholding children's rights in care. Readers can find more information, including details of the work of the Reflection and Action Learning Forum (RALF) and the Scottish Physical Restraint Action Group (SPRAG), on the CELCIS website at this [link](#).

Next is a research paper by Barry McGrath and Denise Carroll, specialist children's nurse practitioners at Kibble Education and Care Centre in Scotland. Their research is a study of the implementation of an electronic medication administration recording (eMAR) system in a residential school setting. The aim of this system is to reduce the frequency of errors, and to make identification of errors and their causes easier to identify. The authors say they are unaware of such a system being implemented in a children's or secure service elsewhere in the UK. The authors found considerable benefits in the eMAR system, including facilitating best practice in the administration and recording of medication, and a low rate of medication errors.

Finally, in the full-length article section, Ellie O'Donnell, a forensic psychologist in training, also working at Kibble Education and Care Centre in Scotland, has contributed a review of the literature on self-harm and suicide in residential child care exploring definitions, prevalence, risk factors, and interventions. She found that research highlights the need for tailored interventions, such as trauma-informed care, therapeutic interventions like Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, and staff training in suicide prevention techniques, as well as the importance of building supportive relationships and offering coping strategies to reduce self-harm.

We include one short article in this issue, contributed by Julie Garlen of the University of Toronto, Canada. Garlen's article about confronting Canada's colonial legacies of childhood care, invites the reader to engage in a broader critique of the colonial legacies of childhood care in Canada, highlighting the significant role of Indigenous counternarratives in decolonising representation in social institutions and the media.

In our spring 2025 issue, editorial board member James Anglin set a challenge to readers to contribute reviews of classic texts in the child and youth care field. Two of our readers have risen to the challenge - Bruce Henderson contributing a review of Virginia Axline's 'Dibs: In Search of Self' and Nicholas Campbell reflecting on the influence of Angus Skinner's 'Another Kind of Home: A Review of Residential Child Care' in the period since its publication more than 30 years ago. There are more historic book reviews in the pipeline, and we have an open call to our readers: Book Review Editor, Nadine Fowler, would love to hear from you.

The contemporary book review section has two reviews: Matthew Scotland reviews 'Working with Relational Trauma in children's Residential Care: A Guide to Using Dyadic Developmental Practice' by Kim S. Golding, George Thompson



and Edwina Grant; and Leanne McIver reviews 'The Trauma Recovery Handbook: A Model for Navigating recovery for Professionals, Parents and Carers by Betsy de Thierry.

We will be back in spring 2026 with an issue that will include an article based on the 2025 Kilbrandon Lecture by Professor Carlene Firmin of the University of Durham. Meanwhile, keep sending your articles; our reviewers are standing by! You will find guidelines for authors and templates on the [journal web pages](#) on the CELCIS website. Happy reading.

## About the author

Dr Graham Connelly is Editor-in-Chief of the *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care* and a member of the editorial board of *Youth*. An interview with him to mark World Children's Day can be found at [World Children's Day interview](#).

