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The magazine for CELCIS – the Centre for
Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland

RESEARCH

Taking stock

Further Education and Looked
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CASE STUDIES

Improving lives

North Lanarkshire's Inclusion
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At the heart

Social pedagogy is playing an ever more
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A message from the Minister



I warmly welcome this first issue of the CELCIS magazine, which gives an overview of the work of the new Centre for

Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland.

In this issue, you can read about CELCIS's work to increase permanence for looked after children. Permanence Orders, which have been in place since 2009, offer more stable and permanent placements than before, and are making a real difference to the lives of our children and young people. I have asked CELCIS to work with experts

such as the British Association for Adoption & Fostering, The Fostering Network and others to look at permanence, and how to reduce unnecessary delays in care and permanence planning and decision-making. This work, flowing from the work of the Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group, will be combined with direct support to every local authority over the next few years to help make this happen.

This CELCIS magazine also covers the Scottish Government's work on educational attainment. Many of you will know about the Scottish Parliament's Education and Culture Committee Inquiry into the educational attainment of looked after children. We know that the educational attainment of our looked after children and young people makes uncomfortable reading. Rates of

attendance, exclusions, attainment and reaching further/higher education or employment after school are much worse than for those who haven't experienced care. We need to close this gap and I am determined that our care and support programmes – *Getting it Right for Every Child*, *Curriculum for Excellence*, *Additional Support for Learning* and *More Choices, More Chances* will deliver for looked after children.

This magazine will give you a flavour of the wide programme of work underway in Scotland to improve outcomes for our looked after children and young people.

Aileen Campbell
Minister for Children and Young People

Foreword



On behalf of everyone at CELCIS, I'm delighted to introduce ourselves to you and share some of the CELCIS

activities going on throughout Scotland in collaboration with some of our partners and stakeholders.

Our first six months since launching CELCIS has been a very busy and productive time for us as we've made fruitful connections with many of you working across services in education, health, social work and children's hearings. I'd like to thank all our new friends and colleagues for your generous welcome and big ambitions for what CELCIS will support you to achieve. We look forward to engaging with many more of you as we move forward.

Our overriding aim is to improve the lives of children and young people in Scotland who are either currently being looked after or who have left care and are undergoing what will be for many a complex transitional period. We achieve this through working with our partners – Who Cares? Scotland, Robert Gordon University (RGU), Langside College, Scottish Throughcare & Aftercare Forum (STAF), The Fostering Network, British Association for Adoption & Fostering, Educating Through Care Scotland, Coalition of Care & Support Providers in Scotland,

Multi-Agency Resource Service, NHS Lothian, the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, and the Association of Directors of Social Work.

With the recent news that the number of children looked after by local authorities has increased by two per cent since 31 July 2010, we know it is essential for even more children and families that we concentrate not only on the many existing strategies and practices which are proving successful, but also on continuing to strive for more and better avenues for ongoing learning and improvement. That's why I'm pleased to announce the formation of a CELCIS Permanence Team. By the time you read this, all five posts will have been advertised and we're expecting to have the team in place by early summer.

Some of you working in children's services may already have attended one of our Care Planning to Permanence regional events. More events are taking place around Scotland over the next few months and we hope you will come and join us to find new pathways through this complex subject.

CELCIS was delighted to support the Scottish Parliament in its inquiry into the educational attainment of looked after children (launched in September 2011). At a stakeholder session on 20 April, key stakeholders came together at the Parliament to explore evidence-based solutions. We hope this contribution will assist the Education and Culture Committee

to identify recommendations that will successfully enhance the educational attainment of looked after children.

Social pedagogy is playing an increasingly prominent role in both theory and practice in our sector and we are enthused by current research. Students embarking on the four-year honours degree in Social Work (Residential Child Care by distance learning) at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen this September can now choose to leave the course after successfully completing Stage 3 with a BA in Social Pedagogy.

Finally, here at CELCIS we are excited to have been awarded the commission for an implementation and monitoring handbook on the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, which was approved by the UN General Assembly in 2009. We will produce this international handbook to provide specific guidance on how the guidelines can be practically implemented globally.

We hope you can take time out from your busy schedules to read this, our first issue of the CELCIS magazine. We'd appreciate your feedback (celcis.comms@strath.ac.uk) and are keen to ensure future issues strike a chord with your experiences and resonate with your ambitions for the children, young people and families you are working with. We want to inspire you by highlighting the many examples of good practice in our sector.

Jennifer Davidson
Director, CELCIS

In our view

At CELGIS, we're committed to realising the twin aims of improving the educational achievements and the employment opportunities of children and young people who are looked after. Here, CELGIS researcher **Dr Graham Connelly** looks at the progress so far – and sets the targets for the future.

Our politicians are understandably frustrated by poor outcomes, but since the first official report into the education of looked after children in Scotland, *Learning with Care*, was published in 2001, advances have been made.

We now have more quality information from which to draw conclusions. We are better able to identify successes and problems, for example we know that children in foster care are no more likely to be absent from school than children who are not looked after. Attendance is generally worse among children living in local authority children's homes. We continue to work with our partners and stakeholders to close the gap in attainment between looked after children and their peers.

It is useful to get an international view to help put Scotland's strengths and weaknesses into a broader perspective. We recently published a *CELGIS Research Briefing* on educational outcomes comparing Scotland with Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. In terms of international comparison, the degree of scrutiny now seen in Scotland, and the determination to improve, are

features of our country which are impressing external observers.

We are committed to providing an inclusive education in Scotland. However, this important value is not being demonstrated in relation to looked after children. For example, the significant use of exclusion from school as a sanction for behavioural difficulties – an approach which affects looked after children disproportionately – marks Scotland out as different. Northern European countries have a higher proportion of looked after children staying on at school beyond the minimum leaving age.

CELGIS is working with the Scottish Government's Analytical Services, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) and local authorities on a project which is a preliminary to carrying out more detailed intervention aimed at improving educational outcomes. As well as improving understanding of current issues, the project aims to use information to support a programme for improvement. We will report our progress on this project in future issues of the magazine.

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Taking stock

Further Education and Looked After Young People: Evaluation of Pilot Projects

CELCIS recently published a research account of three pilot programmes aimed at supporting looked after young people and care leavers into further education in Scotland.

The research aimed to identify clear lessons for the Scottish Funding Council, which supported the pilot programmes, and provide recommendations leading to improved participation by care leavers in post-school education. Conducted between August 2009 and June 2011, the research was based on feedback from college tutors and the experiences of participating youngsters, all of whom were in local authority care or had recently left care.

Researchers also maintained that further education colleges should be encouraged to commit to the principles of the Buttle UK Quality Mark for Care accreditation.



Find out more

To read the report, *Supporting Care Leavers in Scottish Further Education Colleges*, go to our website at www.celcis.org

RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDED:

- Summer schools should be considered to help prepare young people for college
- Opportunities for looked after young people to meet other young people with positive experiences of education
- Information aimed at looked after young people should refer to the broad range of course options, rather than 'lower-level' courses
- Colleges to be aware of the particular difficulties and barriers to participation in education for looked after young people
- Local authority staff to continue to accept corporate care responsibilities for looked after young people attending college
- Colleges to consider the value of having a staff member with the time to fulfil the role of 'champion' for looked after children and care leavers

Transatlantic connections Scholarship for Harvard Summer School Programme

Who Cares? Scotland funds an annual scholarship scheme that gives a young person from a looked after background the opportunity to attend the famous Harvard Summer School programme.

Four young people to date have benefited from this competitive scholarship. As well as seven weeks of world-class teaching and facilities, the young person will have the opportunity to build confidence, develop

skills and meet new friends from a wealth of other countries.

CELCIS researcher Dr Graham Connelly, commenting on the programme, said: "The prestige of the Harvard brand is symbolic of the high ambition we should have for the education of looked after children in general. Not all aspire to a university education but all are entitled to have much better opportunities.

"Although the American summer school system is much more developed than is common in Scotland, there are many local

summer school opportunities, such as the Sutton Trust's programme at the University of St Andrews, and practitioners advising looked after young people should draw their attention to these opportunities."

How you can help

To donate to the Harvard Scholarship fund, go to www.justgiving.com/Harvard-summer-school-scholarship-2012



Mandy, 18, from Lothian Villas in Edinburgh is one of the young people who benefited...

"Getting onto the Harvard Summer School Programme reinforced my belief that it didn't matter if I had a care background, if I put in the hard work and was determined enough, I could literally go places.

"As well as making new friends of various backgrounds and nationalities, getting an insight into modern day American life, and learning Neurobiology and African American studies, I came home to find I was a bit of a role model to the younger kids in care at the home.

"They saw that someone from a similar background to their own could qualify for this fantastic experience, and if they put their mind to it they really could achieve what they wanted."

An alternative to school

Nurture Base

In an effort to provide a meaningful curriculum, while at the same time improving attendance and reducing school exclusions, Peter Reid, head teacher at Broxburn Academy, set up a Nurture Base.



The Base targeted a group of third and fourth year pupils, the majority of whom were looked after at home.

The children attend the Nurture Base for the entire school day and have all their lessons in the unit itself. Alongside standard lessons the youngsters are taught life skills such as cooking, growing vegetables and washing and ironing their own clothes. Pupils in the Base also helped organise a charity coffee morning. This hub is a safe haven for young people who were habitual non-attenders or were exhibiting behaviour difficulties in class.

“The Nurture Base is somewhere they want to come to,” said Peter. “It’s somewhere that they can have fun and mix with other young people. They learn to respect and empathise with each other. Our pupil support worker, Cheryl Stirling, remains in the Base with them and the pupils recognise her as a mother figure.”

The school has organised work experience for some of the group while other youngsters attend Oatridge College one morning a week to study Rural Skills.

Young people from the Base are now set to leave school with a fistful of certificates, including a John Muir Award, Youth Leadership certificate and Biology, English and Maths qualifications. Without the Base they’d have left school with no qualifications.

Most of the young people remain for a year while others return to mainstream education after a few months.



“It really just depends on the child,” added Peter. “Some accept they need to stay at the Base for a long time, others tell us when they feel it’s time to move on. The Base has prevented young people from becoming disengaged or excluded and reduced disruption in the school overall.”

Filling the gap Teachers provide out of hours support in Ayrshire

Looked after children and young people at five residential units in North Ayrshire are benefiting from visits by teachers that allow them to catch up with gaps in their education, foster a culture of doing homework and advise carers on ways to support their learning and act as a bridge to school.



The additional educational support is provided by North Ayrshire Council’s educational outreach programme for youngsters aged eight to 16. The programme involves teachers, project workers and community workers and is individualised around the needs of the young person, with close links maintained with the school.

“Our knowledge of school procedures and our relationships with school staff usually enable us to address issues quickly and effectively,” said principal teacher Willie Ferries. “We act as a conduit between school and the unit. We take our responsibility as Corporate Parents seriously and do whatever we can to support a young person, such as ensuring work is delivered, attending hearings and generally working with schools.

“It’s about gaining the youngsters’ trust. We’ll often sit down with them and talk through any difficulties they might be having at school. In a way it’s the kind of thing you’d expect a parent to do.

“It’s not just about educational attainment; it’s about helping young people achieve their potential. That might involve convincing a teenager that she really can stand up in front of the class and present a talk she’s prepared or it might be encouraging and supporting a young person to turn up for school in the first place.”

Improving lives

Two boys' stories

For the past five years, a key objective for employees at North Lanarkshire's Inclusion Support Base has been to improve the lives of looked after children. Here, **David Woodier**, one of the support teachers for looked after children, talks about how the right kind of support was vital to making a difference in the lives of two of his pupils.

JOHN'S STORY

"When it came to John, it wasn't just a matter of sending him to school and making sure he stayed there," said David. "He was settled in long-term foster care but had been struggling in school for a number of years. He had given up and had no sense of a positive future for himself. He needed an opportunity to experience success but we had to look for this outside of his regular class setting."

This was achieved through John's love of dance. He was encouraged to hold break dancing classes for the younger children at the local primary school which culminated in his organising a dance competition.

"On the morning of the competition I knew John would be nervous but he'd disappeared", added David. "I eventually found him hiding in an empty classroom refusing to move because he was terrified he'd fail. Eventually I persuaded him to go ahead and he stood there in front of 30 children and judged the competition, aware of their appreciative faces the whole time. It was a real turning point for him."

John also learned from his experience what being a role model was about. "In order to teach the younger children, he had to learn to act as a responsible person - someone to be looked up to rather than a peer," said David.

John moved up to one of the local colleges to study sports coaching, through encouragement from his high school PE teacher. "John's success was down to input from our base, the school, his foster parents - they all worked together to reinforce what was put in place," explained David.

"In order to teach the younger children, John had to learn to act as a responsible person, someone to be looked up to rather than a peer."

STUART'S STORY

Stuart had been violent throughout primary school and was using the language of a bully to hide the rejection he felt from having been through several foster placements. However, his new school, a primary school in Cumbernauld, is exceptional when it comes to looked after children.

"Fundamentally, this is because they believe that looked after children have a right to be there; they don't give up even with children who present challenging behaviours. Stuart knew that his teachers were trying to understand him," said David.

"Stuart really needed to experience success. And like John, we needed to think more broadly about how to help him experience that kind of success."

Stuart was made a member of the school's student council and given responsibility for a project to raise money for a school in Kenya. He also had a key role in planning a vegetable garden, which went on to win an award.

David added: "When Stuart was preparing to move to high school, we knew that he would be more vulnerable. So even while he was in P7, his pupil support teacher from the high school began to build a relationship with him. It has been a difficult first year for Stuart, but the school understands why he gets upset sometimes; they find ways to support him even when he is struggling."

"They believe that looked after children have a right to be there; they don't give up even with children who present challenging behaviours."



Find out more

For more about the work of North Lanarkshire Inclusion Support Base, contact dwoodier@ea.n-lanark.sch.uk or kwalker@ea.n-lanark.sch.uk

At the heart

The role of social pedagogy in informing good practice

Social pedagogy as an approach is playing an ever more central role in informing practice with looked after children and young people.

Based on collaborative working and putting the child at the core of activities, it is in keeping with the aims of CELCIS. So too is social pedagogy's holistic and inclusive nature.

Researchers at CELCIS are currently developing a Social Pedagogy Strategy which will be taken forward in partnership with local authorities and a range of children's service providers in Scotland.

"We're very excited and enthusiastic about what this discipline has to offer both as a concrete and a theoretical framework," said the Course Development Lead at CELCIS, Graham McPheat. "There's a certain level of complexity in taking a set of ideas and concepts which originated in Europe and applying them in Scotland."

The Cumbria-based organisation, ThemPra, has worked with CELCIS to deliver social pedagogy training for a number of organisations from the residential child care sector.

Social pedagogy is playing an increasingly prominent role in both theory and practice in our sector and we have published an evaluation report on a social pedagogy training course that was delivered to Orkney Islands staff by ThemPra. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide systematic evidence of the impact the social pedagogy training had on participants' day-to-day practice and inter-agency or inter-professional working and to suggest areas for future development. The report was jointly funded by Orkney Islands Council and the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC), now incorporated within CELCIS. The Orkney initiative was the first instance in Scotland of an inter-agency group of participants undertaking the course together.

"Social pedagogy has the potential to present a refreshing alternative to the procedure-driven approach we have at present," added Graham. "It is about building on practices which have already been established in institutional child care and it emphasises relationships whilst reflecting carefully upon each child's unique circumstances."

Social pedagogy can be thought of as the way societies think about children, their education and their upbringing and is consistent with our aim to put children, young people and families at the heart of everything CELCIS does.

Social pedagogy in action



Social work students studying for the BA (Hons) Social Work (Residential Child Care) by distance learning are embarking on a trip to Esbjerg in Denmark to study social pedagogy in action.

The group will visit a range of services and share learning opportunities with Danish Pedagogue students on the intensive five-day trip hosted by the local university.

Joining the students on the trip will be a group of young people from the Voice of Reason, the Debate Project and Who Cares? Scotland – all of whom have experience of being looked after away from home. They will meet peers in Esbjerg where it is hoped they will begin to forge international links and develop research opportunities.

Robert Gordon University lecturer Sharon Munro said: "We'll be looking at the whole approach to children and family within Danish culture and services – the values and beliefs that underpin their legislation, policy and practice and consider what we may learn and carry forward into practice."



Find out more

Visit www.celcis.org or www.social-pedagogy.co.uk

Making a world of difference

MACEDONIA: Improving the skills of social workers

An international partnership between CELCIS and Westwater International was commissioned by UNICEF Macedonia last year to help develop the capacity of the inspection, monitoring, training and standard-setting staff of the Government of Macedonia to manage the staff of Macedonia's 30 Centres for Social Work and eight institutions for children.

This initiative involved close co-operation with Macedonian managers and practitioners, culminating in a jointly formulated Training Needs Analysis. It will deliver an in-service training curriculum, a series of training tools and training manuals, as well as provide live supervision of staff of the Institute for Social Affairs in their rolling out of the training of trainers.

Every social worker in Macedonia is educated to degree level and the level of responsibility they are given is huge. For example, the social work task includes handing out benefits to families, and there is formal social work intervention in every divorce case where children are involved – even amicable ones. This wide ranging and administration-heavy role makes ongoing practical experience of case work difficult to obtain.

"Their degrees are theoretical rather than practice-based," explained social worker and CELCIS researcher Moyra Hawthorn. "We realised quickly on arrival that social workers in Macedonia needed experience of practical scenarios, especially when it came to engaging with communities and families in particular."

The CELCIS and Westwater team have been assisting the Macedonian Institute for Social Affairs (ISA), to develop a training pack of 14 modules. The modules consist of core sections, courses for managers and modules for government inspectors, and are currently being implemented.

"It's about saying to social workers, 'okay, you've done the course, now evidence your learning using these training modules'," said Moyra.

The first roll out of training by CELCIS and Westwater took place in March this year, bringing in an up-to-date internationally recognised system of registration for social workers. The Macedonian inspectors will in future provide an annual programme of in-service courses for all social workers, social pedagogues and lawyers.

UNITED NATIONS: Influencing quality around the globe

CELCIS has been commissioned to produce an international handbook on a United Nations (UN) framework: the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, which were approved by the UN General Assembly in 2009.

The purpose of the handbook is to provide specific guidance on how the guidelines can be practically implemented – a gap that currently exists among service providers and child protection specialists. By providing illustrative and realistic examples of existing practices that demonstrate the guidelines in operation, it is hoped that professionals will be given an impetus and innovative means for implementing them around the globe.

Under the leadership of CELCIS Director Jennifer Davidson and Nigel Cantwell, an independent consultant on child protection based in Geneva, CELCIS will draw upon a strong project team of international experts to develop the handbook.

Jennifer said: "The guidelines recognise that children out of parental care are amongst the most vulnerable people in our communities to having their rights violated.

"The handbook will be instrumental in making the guidelines real at a local level. It is a tool with the potential to make a critical contribution to this very complex area, to ensure that the systems that impact on children function in the best interest of children first and foremost, and assist children to achieve their full potential."

Nigel, an internationally recognised expert on child protection and a prime actor in the development of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, continued: "Reaching consensus on the guidelines has ensured that the rights of these particular children take a decisive step forward around the world.

"The handbook will reflect the heart of the guidelines' message that children must not find themselves placed in alternative care unnecessarily; and where care has to be provided out-of-home, it is appropriate

and tailored to each child's specific needs, circumstances and best interests."

Jean Zermatten, Chairperson of the international monitoring body, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, said: "This handbook will be an important tool in providing practitioners, organisations and governments across the globe with practical advice that can be applied in different countries, regions and cultures, to inspire the best possible rights-based care for children."

The handbook was commissioned by an international consortium of funders, comprising UNICEF, Oak Foundation, International Social Service, and SOS Children's Villages International – all of whom have a resolute commitment to the realisation of children's rights in the context of alternative care.

Solid start

Focusing on permanence planning

Pauline Hoggan is an independent social work consultant and interim lead of CELCIS's Care and Permanence Team. Here, she describes the work being carried out to improve Scotland's permanence planning and decision-making for looked after children.



"This handbook will be an important tool in providing practitioners, organisations and governments across the globe with practical advice that can be applied in different countries, regions and cultures, to inspire the best possible rights-based care for children."

"The CELCIS Care and Permanence team will work collaboratively with key partners and stakeholders to improve Scotland's permanence planning and decision-making for looked after children.

Posts have now been advertised, with the team expected to be fully operational by early summer. This team will take forward key actions from the Scottish Government Care and Permanence Plan 2011.

The need for a more focused effort on permanence planning was highlighted last year by the publication of the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration's (SCRA) research on the length of time it takes looked after children to access long-term stable placements. Based on 100 case studies, the research highlighted considerable drift and delay in the care planning process. In most cases it had taken more than two years to secure 'permanence' for the children involved, based on the duration between their first contact with social services and their final placement. In one instance it had taken more than ten years.

Children who experience high levels of disruption and uncertainty may find key developmental milestones difficult.

The impact of this can be long-lasting, with behavioral, learning, emotional and health difficulties.

The Scottish Government's response to the SCRA research acknowledged that improving permanence planning and decision-making for looked after children had to become a key priority, despite the complexity of the task.

Public authorities in Scotland have a range of options with which to ensure permanence for vulnerable children and young people – from supporting families to look after children in their own homes, to long-term foster care and adoption. The Care and Permanence Team will look to provide support in relation to all these options.

Throughout 2012, the Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group (LACSIG), in collaboration with CELCIS, will host a series of regional events for local authorities and other key partners on the issue of permanence."



Find out more
Contact the Care and Permanence
Team at celcis@strath.ac.uk

News & Events

Partner news

Accolade for Includem

Includem has been included in 'Britain's 50 New Radicals' – a list compiled by the *Observer* newspaper and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) to highlight and celebrate the people and organisations that are finding ingenious and practical new solutions to some of society's biggest problems. It was selected from over 350 applications.

Angela Morgan, Chief Executive for Includem, explained: "Includem is delighted to have been identified as one of Britain's New Radicals. We support the most vulnerable, chaotic and high-risk young people in Scotland, often those who society has forgotten about, and we strive to help these young people realise their potential and become valued members of society."

For further information, see www.includem.org

The Multi Agency Resource Service

The Multi Agency Resource Service (MARS) and Scottish Child Care and Protection Network (SCCPN) have now secured funding from the Scottish Government, ACPOS, NHS and Scotland's local authorities. This means the service will continue to support practitioners, managers and agencies working in the field of child protection to source relevant research and resources; provide seminar events across Scotland; disseminate research findings and provide advice on individual cases.

The organisation will re-launch with a new name, brand and updated website this summer. Meanwhile, it's business as usual – visit the landing page at www.marssccpn.stir.ac.uk/

As part of the new website being developed, MARS and SCCPN are working with the national Public Awareness Group to electronically disseminate general child protection information to the public. They would like to include as many examples of Public Awareness leaflets produced by Scotland's local authorities as possible. In particular, they are seeking contributions on information that highlights the following issues: Internet Safety; Human & Child Trafficking; Sexual Exploitation; Community Disclosure. **Send contributions to sccpn@stir.ac.uk** MARS/SCCPN will also be hosting its national conference *Protecting People through Partnerships* on 25 October at Stirling Management Centre.

See www.marssccpn.stir.ac.uk for further details.

CELCIS Events diary 4-7 September 2012

12th International European Scientific Association on Residential and Foster Care for Children and Adolescents (EUSARF 2012) Conference, Glasgow.

In these times of global instability and economic volatility, there is an added urgency to ensure that professional interventions in the lives of children and young people are timely, effective and child-centred. EUSARF 2012 will bring together researchers and academics, practitioners, managers and policy makers from around the world to address issues facing vulnerable children and young people, and their families.

EUSARF 2012 will incorporate the 10th International Looking After Children Conference and the inaugural International Conference of the Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children in Scotland (CELCIS). The conference theme is *All Our Children: Positive experiences, successful outcomes for looked after and other vulnerable children*. Keynote speakers will include Dr Bruce Perry from the Child Trauma Academy; Professor Harriet Ward from the Centre for Child and Family Research at Loughborough University; and Professor Terje Ogdén from the Norwegian Center for Child Behavioural Development.

More information about EUSARF 2012 can be found at www.eusarf2012.org



Find out more
For more information on all our events, visit our website at www.celcis.org

The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011

Children's records will be managed differently under the Public Records (Scotland) Act which received Royal assent on 20 April 2011 and is due to be fully implemented by January 2013. The new Act is about good governance and is aimed at improving efficiency across public services. It obliges named public authorities, including councils, to prepare and implement a Records Management Plan (RMP). These must be agreed with the Keeper of the Records of Scotland and regularly reviewed by authorities.

The preparation of a Model Records Management Plan (Model Plan) and guidance is currently out for consultation until 18 May 2012 (see page 12 for current consultations). It is likely that the subject of records management will feature specifically in some future invitations to tender issued by public authorities.

Recent publications and useful resources

Children's Handbook Scotland

The Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) has produced a number of resources outlining financial help available for those caring for looked after children and for young care leavers themselves.

The main item is the Children's Handbook Scotland, which lists benefits and tax credits. It's supported by three new leaflets:

- *Kinship care and benefits* – a factsheet explaining the benefits and tax credit rules for kinship carers
- *Children looked after away from home by the local authority* – a checklist explaining what happens to your benefits and tax credits
- *Care leavers and benefits: giving good advice* (produced in conjunction with Scottish Throughcare & Aftercare Forum) – information for young care leavers about the special benefit rules affecting them



Find out more

Copies of the leaflets and the handbook are available from acarr@cpagscotland.org.uk

Kinship Care

The Scottish Parliament produced a briefing paper, *Kinship Care*, at the beginning of the year, which gives an introduction to the government's kinship care policy. The briefing paper provides information on allowances and assessment criteria.

Toolkit: Getting it right for every child

A *Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)* toolkit, recently launched in Lanarkshire, could prove invaluable to professionals working with children and families in the public and voluntary sector anywhere in Scotland. The toolkit includes a combination of written reports, exemplars, graphic images, animations, assessment paperwork and digital resources – the result of a three-year development programme.

To access the toolkit, go to www.girfecinlanarkshire.co.uk/resources

Extra support at school: The rights of looked after children

The Scottish Advice Service for Additional Support for Learning (Enquire) has produced a paper, *Extra support at school: The rights of looked after children*, to ensure a child obtains the most from the education system and is able to reach their full potential.

For a copy of the report, email info@enquire.org.uk

Improving the mental health of Looked After Young People

The YoungMinds report, *Improving the mental health of Looked After Young People: An exploration of mental health stigma*, examines the particular stigmas experienced by looked after young people, based on 50 case studies.

To download a copy of the report, go to www.youngminds.org.uk

Reaching out CELCIS's policy responses

CELCIS welcomes the opportunity to actively engage in the Government's consultation process, providing an informed viewpoint on the potential consequences for looked after children and young people, care leavers, families and those involved in caring for and working with looked after children.

Many of our responses are developed in discussion with our partners to ensure we are effectively communicating the key issues and concerns. Since autumn 2011, CELCIS has responded to five Scottish Government consultations:

- **The Rights of Children and Young People Bill (December 2011)**
- **Mental Health Strategy for Scotland 2011-2015 (January 2012)**
- **Improving Advocacy for Children and Young People: Principles and Minimum Standards (February 2012)**
- **Review of Unified Voluntary Sector Fund and CLD HQ Funds (February 2012)**
- **Secure Accommodation (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (March 2012)**

In addition, we have also provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament on the following:

- **Education and Culture Committee Inquiry into the Educational Attainment of Looked After Children (September 2011) and further supplementary evidence (November 2011)**
- **Equal Opportunities Committee Having and Keeping a Home: Steps to Preventing Homelessness among Young People (February 2012)**



Find out more

Our consultation responses are freely available on our website. For further information, email **Dr Louise Hill, Policy Implementation Officer, at louise.hill@strath.ac.uk**

What do you think about our new magazine?

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CELCIS will be moving to new premises in mid-July.
For full contact details after this date, please see our
website at www.celcis.org

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.