

# Making a Difference Report 2017



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

**O**ur passion to make a positive difference in the lives of children in need of care and protection is unwavering. But we don't do it alone.

We support positive change by working alongside the people, services and systems that affect their lives – because building brighter futures for these children, young people and their families is a collective, concerted and cooperative effort.

As we strive towards a shared ambition – for Scotland to be a more equal place to bring up our children – at CELCIS, we've maintained and developed our core efforts to support improvement in practice, in services and across systems for looked after children and care leavers; that's always at the very heart of our work.

This year we've also worked in new ways and alongside others in supporting national strategies for children's safety, extending our work to include a focus on protecting children. We also developed a new transformational programme to improve systems for children and their families living on the edges of care. All because we know that providing early, extra support before crisis point can help families meet their caring responsibilities and remain together.

Along with many other organisations across Scotland, we're also contributing expertise and support to Scotland's important Independent Care Review.

Here, in this report, we offer examples of our work and aim to give you a sense of the range and depth of what we do. We're honoured to be playing our part in local, national and international efforts to work towards brighter futures for children and families facing adversities.

**Jennifer Davidson**  
Executive Director, CELCIS



# Introduction

**A**t CELCIS, our goal remains simple and ambitious. We want to be one of the organisations that lead the way in identifying and securing positive and lasting improvements in the wellbeing of Scotland's children in need of care and protection.

Supporting professionals and carers, and facilitating change in organisations, services and systems, working with and for looked after children and care leavers is at the heart of what we do, and will continue to do. In 2016–17 our remit widened. We're now also supporting those working with and for children who are living on the edges of care or are in need of protection.

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 children and their families and carers.

## Setting our objectives

Our core objectives for the year April 2016 to March 2017 were to:

- Support the looked after sector to embed the principles of 'Getting it right for every child' and children's rights in its practice.
- Provide a feedback loop from research and practice into the development of national legislation and policy, and help to facilitate implementation (of policy and legislation) at a local level.
- Work in partnership to facilitate and co-ordinate collaborative working with young people, their families, carers and other key stakeholders across the sector, avoiding duplication and maximising the synergy of partnerships.
- Work hand-in-hand with people and professionals to improve the care journey and experience of children and young people looked after away from home – in foster, kinship, residential or secure care.
- Support delivery of the Scottish Government's Child Protection Review and its Child Protection Improvement Programme.
- Support the delivery of the Scottish Government's Care and Permanence Plan, including working with local partnerships to deliver the Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) programme in areas across Scotland.



## Governance and guidance

CELCIS remains fully committed to working in an open, accountable and transparent way. Our objective to provide long-lasting, positive change for all children in need of care and protection is supported and guided by our Strategic Advisory Board – an expert group of professionals from across social work, education, health and the third sector. We are also monitored by our primary funder, the Scottish Government.

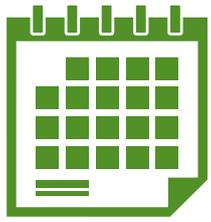
CELCIS receives further funding from COSLA, the NHS Scotland Chief Executive's Group, The Robertson Trust and from our own consultancy, training and project income, and all of our work is delivered in line with our annual business plan.

As the legal body supporting CELCIS, the University of Strathclyde provides a formal governance arrangement for CELCIS. We offer our ongoing thanks to the University of Strathclyde for their enduring support, and our office accommodation.

“We’re now also supporting those working with and for children who are living on the edges of care or are in need of protection.”

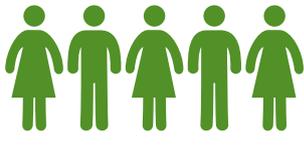


# The year in numbers



106



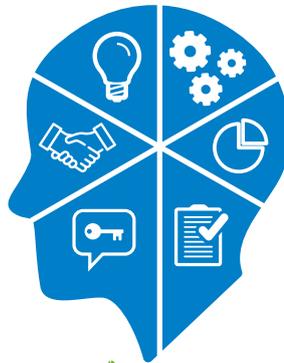
2,372 

19,000+

106 events, with 2,372 people attending a CELCIS conference or learning event

Over 19,000 people heard about CELCIS work through events and conferences

89%



89% of people attending our learning events said they would apply their learning in practice

32 

210+

CELCIS engaged with 210+ organisations, including all 32 Scottish local authorities



84 tailored training courses and 106 training days delivered to colleagues in the sector

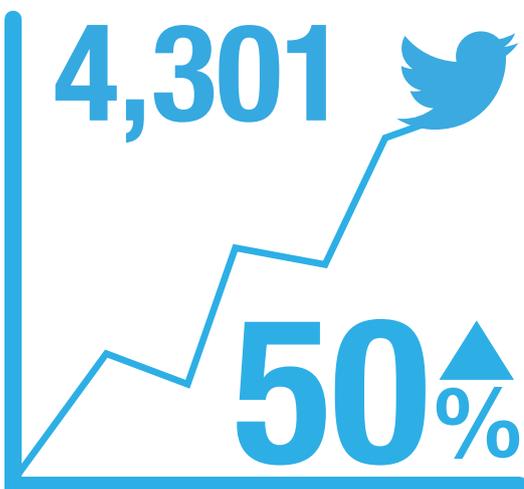
106

46,905



46,905 users of the CELCIS website, including 6,841 from outside the UK

6,841



An increase of almost 50% in our Twitter followers – up from 2,863 to 4,301 by end of March 2017



Our sector-specific downloadable digital content has proven to be a big smash with our partners and interested parties this year. The top 5 digital hits are:

1. REACH: A permanent home to flourish and thrive, Issue 8, Autumn 2016
2. Inform Briefing: The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Part 9 (Corporate Parenting)
3. REACH: Looked after at home and kinship care, Issue 7, Spring 2016
4. Throughcare and Aftercare, Whole Systems Process Map
5. Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE): Background, Approach and Evidence, Fiona Mitchell and Robert Porter, February 2016.



Kazuo Ishiguro might have snatched the Nobel Prize for Literature, but several CELCIS colleagues and guest bloggers shared their specialist knowledge on the blogosphere. This year's favourite 5 reads were:

1. The Power of Caring Relationships, Kenny McGhee
2. The attainment gap – a look behind the stats, Linda O'Neill
3. No mean city, Janine Fraser (guest blogger)
4. A Passion for Permanence, Aileen Nicol
5. Latest stats on children in care prompt some interesting questions, Ben Farrugia

# Building brighter futures together

Children in need of care and protection, and their families, need extra support to thrive, because they are more likely to face multiple disadvantages. That is why CELCIS exists, to build brighter futures for these children and families.

At CELCIS, collaboration is in our DNA. It's how we, alongside our partners, continue to improve. We learn from each other, solve problems together and talk, sparking ideas and developing solutions; we exchange knowledge and build on the evidence base, together. We firmly believe that better, brighter futures can only be built if we're all involved in the process together.

In 2016–17, we delivered a bold and ambitious programme of work, covering 169 projects, working alongside every local authority in Scotland and over 210 other organisations across the UK and around the world. This included everything from snappy, one-off projects to long-term, whole systems change.

Taking a multi-agency, improvement approach, we provide integrated research and evidence, policy, multi-layered learning and training, and consultancy services for our partners. These services are flexible, and are adapted to fit the exact needs of the people and organisations we're working with at any one time; they combine the specialist skills of our staff with an evidenced based approach to what it takes to implement sustainable change and improvement for children and families.

## Living on the edges of care

An example of our integrated approach is our work to develop new thinking about how to make meaningful change for children who are on the edges of the formal care system. We began to develop a new collaborative programme looking at issues for children living on the edges of care, following on from the joint publication in 2015 of the **Overseen but often overlooked** research, co-authored by ourselves and Barnardo's in Scotland.

This triggered a series of strategic round-table discussions with some of Scotland's most senior children's sector officials, including the Scottish Government's Realigning Children's Services team.

During 2016–17, CELCIS collaborated with, and received funding from, The Robertson Trust, to develop and implement a brand-new change programme for children on the edges of care across three local areas – East Renfrewshire, north east Glasgow, and North Lanarkshire.

This is a prime example of how CELCIS services work together to create transformative change. Initial research identified the need; our policy work played a critical role in shaping the context; and our learning and consultancy team worked in close partnership with each area local area, supporting and championing the process of change.

The **Transforming Pathways for Children on the Edges of Care** programme aims to identify, design, develop and implement processes which will enhance opportunities to intervene early in a child's life, so that there is a better chance of them continuing to live with their family. Ultimately, we expect the programme will make significant changes in the lives of this often disadvantaged group of children.

## Supporting redress for survivors through collaboration

We have over a decade of experience of working alongside survivors, service care providers, historical service providers and the Scottish Government. Building on this legacy, the Scottish Government commissioned us to explore options for the development of a potential financial compensation/redress scheme for individuals who experienced any form of abuse in care. In this important process, we worked alongside victims/survivors of abuse in care, former providers of care, the Scottish Government and other key stakeholders.

Developing and maintaining effective working relationships with this diverse range of stakeholders was key to this. We successfully built and facilitated valuable, mutually respectful, trusting, working relationships, bringing together the views of survivors, service providers and representatives of various religions. This close collaboration with the national **Interaction Action Plan Review Group** resulted in the design of a redress survey by survivors, for survivors.

After the consultation process, CELCIS will deliver a paper to the Scottish Government detailing options on possible redress scheme parameters for consideration. The paper will take into account the views expressed, plus evidence from similar schemes implemented in other countries.

If a financial compensation/redress scheme is established, it may provide victims/survivors of abuse in care with an alternative way to seek justice and compensation, and/or a tangible recognition of the harm and trauma they have endured. CELCIS will continue to work closely with survivors and other stakeholders throughout the whole process.



# A safe, healthy childhood

**W**e believe that everyone – whether that’s carers, parents, families, members of the community or corporate parents – has a shared responsibility to provide our smallest citizens with a safe, healthy, loving, educational and fun-filled childhood, especially those children who are at most risk.

One of the principle objectives of our new Protecting Children work is to support the design, implementation and evaluation of early intervention models. It is this approach which will allow practitioners and multi-agency partners to identify risk and take action at the earliest possible point in a child’s life, to prevent possible escalation and the need for intervention at the point of crisis. This approach is in keeping with realising the aims of the national ‘Getting it right for every child’ strategy.

In 2016–17, CELCIS worked on two major pieces of work, making an important contribution to the Scottish Government’s Child Protection Improvement Programme (CPIP):

1. We undertook a national Child Protection Systems Review – a significant partnership project, completed swiftly and with great care and quality; a review that will build on the strengths of the child protection system and services for our most vulnerable children and families.
2. We began our work on Addressing Child Neglect and Enhancing Wellbeing, a programme looking at child neglect processes and systems in three of Scotland’s local authority areas.

We also supported the Scottish Government’s Child Protection Improvement Programme across a number of areas: we developed a specialist advice service for practitioners working on complex cases; we brokered independent reports to the Children’s Hearing System; and we provided administrative and professional support to the national Child Protection Committee Scotland and its related sub-groups, and the national Child Sexual Exploitation Group.

## Reviewing and strengthening Scotland’s Child Protection System

As part of the Scottish Government’s National Child Protection Improvement Programme (CPIP), CELCIS supported and coordinated the Child Protection Systems Review group, its related papers and their publication. This group included representatives from a wide variety of professionals with expertise at national and local level, and was independently chaired by Catherine Dyer, former Chief Executive of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.

The Review group was asked by Scottish Ministers to look at the operation of the formal child protection system, including Child Protection Committees, child protection registers, case conferences, and initial and significant case reviews – and to recommend what changes or improvements might be needed to these processes, systems and structures, in order to protect children and young people more effectively.

The Review group reported its findings to the Scottish Government Minister for Childcare and Early Years in December 2016, and the recommendations within the report were formally accepted by Scottish Parliament in March 2017. These recommendations inform actions for improvement within CPIP, and the next phase of the work is well underway to put action into practice.

The role of CELCIS was formally noted by Catherine Dyer:

“The high quality of these papers and overall support to the Group came from CELCIS... [the team] made possible the examination of evidence and delivery of this Report and Recommendations within such a short timescale.”

[www.celcis.org/child-protection-systems-review](http://www.celcis.org/child-protection-systems-review)

## Taking a new approach to neglect

In September 2016, CELCIS initiated a new Addressing Child Neglect and Enhancing Wellbeing programme. Through a process of mutual selection, three areas were identified for participation in the programme – Dundee, Perth & Kinross, and Inverclyde.

Our role was to build capacity in the system using active implementation approaches, and support each local area to improve the help offered to parents and families experiencing multiple pressures, where children may be at risk of, or are already experiencing, neglect.

In March 2017, the programmes were in the initial scoping stages of the work. This involved extensive and intensive engagement with several services and professions involved in the lives of families and children. In addition to targeted and specialist services, we worked with practitioners and managers from health and education, and involved families and communities too.

Next, we'll be working together with our local partners to make sure the plan for change is rigorous and well designed, and that system gaps are identified and improved. We'll be developing data systems to measure and track our progress, and we'll continue to share our learning across the sector. We'll be working hard to keep all parties engaged and involved as we work to make improvement to neglect systems together, and that will always include the local families themselves.

"We were delighted to be part of this initiative along with two other local areas. The initial phase has provided really profound learning about what we are already doing well and the strengths of our partnership working. It has also, with the support of the CELCIS team, helped us to be much clearer about what it is we need to do to get it right for our families in Perth and Kinross. The CELCIS team bring expertise, determination and a respectful approach... the time taken to explore our local needs is paying off as we move into exciting decisions about future design for improvement."

**Jacquie Pepper, Head of Services for Children, Young People and Families,  
Perth & Kinross Council**

"The CELCIS team bring **expertise, determination** and a **respectful approach...** the time taken to explore our local needs is paying off as we move into **exciting decisions** about future design for improvement."



# Secure and settled

**A**t CELCIS we champion every looked after child's right to feel settled and secure. We know this is a goal worth working towards, because young people in the care system have been telling us for years how important it is for them to feel a sense of security and belonging.

To help achieve those ambitions, our Permanence and Care Team (PaCT) continues to work across Scotland, supporting the development and improvement of permanence processes and practices, which offer children minimal delay and disruption on their journey to a permanent home.

## Upping the PACE

The main focus of the PaCT and our Scottish Government partners during 2016-17 was further delivery of our ground-breaking, Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) programme. Now in its 3rd year, this successful whole-systems improvement programme continues to achieve significant permanence improvement by working locally with all agencies involved in the process.

In 2016-17 we welcomed new PACE partners from areas such as North Lanarkshire and the Western Isles, and we were delighted to see some impressive successes from existing PACE programmes.



### PACE on the podium

In November 2016, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen Councils' PACE teams, in partnership with CELCIS, were thrilled to share the Herald Society's Young People's Project of the Year award for their local permanence project work.

We were all delighted that collaborative, cross-agency work to support children in adversity was recognised by the Award.



## Remember, remember all of November

Bonfire Night wasn't the only sparkling event on our calendar in early winter 2016. CELCIS earmarked it as #PermanenceNovember and took to the digisphere in a big way, with our first ever digital edition of our Reach magazine – posting eight blogs, four news stories, four podcasts and eight videos online. The success was startling. We witnessed a massive 1214% increase in online readership.

#PermanenceNovember also saw us hosting our first Gathering PACE event. This brought together our multi-agency colleagues from every local PACE site to share and learn from each other's experiences, and to talk about ways to reduce drift and delay in permanence processes across the whole country.

Evaluation feedback was positive and gave all of us renewed confidence as we work to support children's long-term security and stability.

"A fantastic event, it is humbling to be in a room with so many people with varied roles who all have the best interests of the child at heart."

"The event was very useful to our local practice as one of the early local authorities involved. It was useful to talk to others about our learning and mistakes."

[www.celcis.org/reach-permanence](http://www.celcis.org/reach-permanence)

## Amazing PACE

As a large authority, Fife Council has over 1,000 looked after children registered locally. The complexity of sustainable multi-agency change at that scale presented an opportunity to try a different approach in this local area.

A small scale localised 'slice of Fife' approach was taken initially, with a gradual, planned scale up across the whole area.

The local PACE programme engaged with all of the partners on a regular basis, building relationships and collaborative working practices. On a practical level, the programme developed a data timeline which clearly illustrated the whole story of a child's journey to a permanence decision, and identified opportunities for earlier scheduling and action to speed up the process.

Success for PACE in this first 'slice of Fife' has been significant. On average, the time a child now spends between the start of the process and a permanence decision has reduced by more than 25 weeks. It's such a positive result, that plans are already in place to extend PACE right across Fife.

"Involvement in PACE has freed innovation and given a cultural permission to try new approaches. This has supported our aim to place equal emphasis on long-term security as well as immediate safety for the children with whom we are involved."

**Rae Ormiston, Service Manager, Children and Families (Resources), Fife Council**

"Involvement in PACE has freed innovation and given a cultural permission to try new approaches."



## Caring for care leavers

Compared to other young people, care leavers can face a more difficult journey towards adulthood, and are less likely to share the same kinds of opportunities and positive outcomes. At CELCIS, we continue to champion the rights of care leavers, and encourage the development of systems and services which support young people for as long as necessary, as they take those big steps into adult life.

During 2016–17, we played an important leadership role in the development of a new, more positive understanding – that leaving care is a huge milestone in every care leaver’s life, and of what it takes to support care leavers in the challenges they face as they move towards successful independent living.

This new understanding is making its presence felt most of all through the continued roll-out and embedding of the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant (the Covenant) and the associated Agenda for Change. This ongoing work was the most important activity for CELCIS Throughcare and Aftercare staff during 2016–17.

“The Covenant also calls on corporate parents to take a rights-based approach to support services for care leavers which puts their empowerment and participation at the heart of decision-making.”

### Covenant continues the process of change

Increasing numbers of local authorities and other corporate parents have signed up to endorse the principles and incorporate the actions outlined in the Covenant. During this period, the Covenant has become the de-facto improvement agenda for corporate parents and other services supporting young people as they leave care.

The process of change is supported through CELCIS direct consultancy and coaching work with corporate parents, its research and analysis of data generated by members, briefings, blogs, communications, events and multi-agency meetings.

The result is that we’ve changed thinking and assisted corporate parents to meaningfully address the complexities and challenges in implementing the new corporate parenting, continuing care and after care duties outlined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The Covenant has received international recognition and praise as a leading policy driver for improvement. During 2016–17, the Covenant was presented to international audiences in Canada, Slovakia and Switzerland, and across the UK.

“The Covenant challenges current thinking and practice. It provides clear actions for change across the broad range of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Importantly, the Covenant also calls on corporate parents to take a rights-based approach to support services for care leavers which puts their empowerment and participation at the heart of decision-making.”

**Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland**

“The Scottish Care Leavers Covenant offers a clear and engaging framework to bring consistency to practice for young people transitioning from care and for their continued support into adulthood.”

**Karen Reid, Chief Executive, Care Inspectorate**



## Covenant campaign

In February 2017, the CELCIS Throughcare and Aftercare Team were proud to join up with Glasgow Caledonian University to offer a free screening of Ken Loach's acclaimed film 'I, Daniel Blake', including a follow-up Q&A panel discussion.

This key event explored the impact of poverty and financial hardship on care leavers. As a consequence, CELCIS and other partners, working under the Covenant banner, began discussions about council tax exemption for care leavers in Scotland. CELCIS then produced a briefing and liaised with colleagues and partners across the UK, which played an important role in influencing the Scottish Government's decision to change the law to exempt all young care leavers from paying council tax.

# 100%



**100% of responders said they were likely or very likely to share resources from the event, talk about the event to colleagues, and seek out further learning opportunities.**

### Looking back to move forward in residential child care

The CELCIS conference calendar features our annual biggie, the long-running and prestigious Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) Conference and SIRCC Awards, which rolls around every year in June. This is the opportunity of the year for residential staff to come together, talk, learn, laugh and celebrate their success, which we all know is important for a healthy workforce.

This year we attracted a stellar line-up of speakers and specialist workshops to educate, provoke and inform, as well as a hefty and healthy delegate list of 348 people passing through the conference doors over both days.

Powerful keynote speeches came from our own implementation guru Melissa van Dyke, and from Who Cares? Scotland's Laura Beveridge. Melissa made a compelling argument for residential care professionals to make best use of active implementation strategies to make an even bigger difference in the day-to-day lives of children in care. Then, on day two, as a care experienced person herself, Laura's inspirational and emotional story, and plea to feel and show love for children in care, touched the hearts and minds of delegates, and played a big part in the conference's social media success. With the hashtag #SIRCC2016, we found ourselves trending in Glasgow across both conference days, ranking higher than Ed Sheeran! #CELCISsocialsuccess.

**Possibly the most powerful presentation I've ever heard** @wee\_munchkin6 Inspirational #SIRCC2016 – @joanne\_balmer

**Who knew implementation science was this interesting AND relevant.** #werecoachingup #SIRCC2016 – @SRCCWA

Non-digital conference feedback also gave us a rosy glow. 97% of responders said the event was mostly or very useful, and an amazing 100% of responders said they were likely or very likely to share resources from the event, talk about the event to colleagues, and seek out further learning opportunities.

"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."

"I was really inspired this year by the people I heard and met, I am new in a leadership role in this sector and feel really passionate about listening to young people and making changes."

## Addressing attainment

When it comes to looked after children's learning, CELCIS continues to champion collaborative and creative working to help those children get the best out of their educational opportunities. We know that working together across disciplines, sharing knowledge, experience and good practice, is a key step in improving educational outcomes for children who don't always do as well at school as their peers.

As it is, the educational attainment gap remains stubbornly wide for some looked after children. What's not different is the potential in each and every young person. CELCIS supports efforts to identify and nourish the potential of children who are looked after, to help them have a better learning experience at school, and to narrow the gap. Our own role in reaching that goal is to support the development of education systems that recognise the needs and circumstances of looked after children, and that can also respond positively to nurture their abilities and ambitions.

During 2016–17, the CELCIS Education team worked across many new projects with our partners. Examples of our education work include:

- Work with North Ayrshire Council to implement Parents in Partnership in four secondary schools ([www.celcis.org/parents-partnership](http://www.celcis.org/parents-partnership)).
- The first national survey on the role of the Designated Manager in Scottish educational establishments, to understand more about what support they need to fulfil that role.
- A new action research project working with one local authority to understand the link between the inclusion of looked after children and post-school destinations.



## Renfrewshire parents go back to school

In 2016, CELCIS were delighted to provide support for Renfrewshire Council's innovative Parents in Partnership (PIP) programme. The PIP programme aims to increase parental involvement and understanding of the school system and the curriculum, and explore links between parent involvement and a potential increase in a child's educational attainment. The six to eight-week PIP programme brought a group of S1 parents into their child's school, for a half day a week, to experience both school subject and life skills lessons.

Our evaluation of the programme provided much positive feedback from parents and teachers, and the evaluation data gathered informed adjustments and tweaks being made to the programme before it is rolled out across all 11 Renfrewshire mainstream secondary schools.

"..just reducing all those stereotypes of what they [parents] thought a teacher was and how they think their kid's being treated. I think a lot of them were reassured about how warm and nurturing the school is as well... We care, and we get that your kid's not confident and we're doing something about it, I think that was good for them to know." (Teacher)

"I thought I had to take part in lessons, likes of actually sit like a pupil and take part in the kind of lessons. But, see when you went in it was more laid back and they were just showing you how much it had changed since I'd been in school..." (Parent/carer)

"They made us feel that we were doing a good job by coming here, so they were praising us and that made you feel, yeah, you've got me on-board, I'm going to stick on board now, I'm going to give it 100%." (Parent/carer)

## Literacy, an open book

Literacy is a gateway to learning for many looked after children, and improving literacy must be at the centre of Scotland's efforts to close the attainment gap. That's why the CELCIS Education Forum hosted its first ever conference in March 2017, titled 'Laying the foundations: Improving literacy among looked after children' – bringing 110 education professionals to hear from internationally renowned literacy specialists and share their collective knowledge in working towards closing the gap through reading and writing.

The conference was a big hit based on feedback from delegates:

"Really enjoyed the workshops and got lots of ideas to take forward literacy in school and close the attainment gap."

"A lot of great learning that will help and improve Scotland's looked after children and its ongoing implementation and development. Some food for thought that I will also be taking to Scottish Government."

"Really enjoyed the workshops and got lots of ideas to take forward literacy in school and close the attainment gap."



# Working towards wellbeing

**E**vidence about the long-term impact of trauma is unequivocal. Childhood trauma can have a major impact on a child's long-term emotional, mental and physical health and wellbeing, that often lasts right into adulthood.

We are completely committed to strengthening a collective understanding about the impact trauma has on looked after children, many of whom experience deep trauma in their lives, at home and/or in the care system.

The support and knowledge we offer is highly valued by many of our partners. Those partners include foster carers, practitioners and professionals working across diverse organisations, and CELCIS works closely with all of them to build their capacity to recognise and respond to the complex and individual health needs of each child.

CELCIS continued to highlight the critical importance of health and wellbeing for looked after children and their families during 2016–17, through participation in a number of key national initiatives around Trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Transforming School Nursing, and improvement activity with NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

## Lanarkshire leads the way

Checking in on the physical and emotional health of looked after children is vitally important, and each one of Scotland's health boards has a requirement to assess a child's health within four weeks of being notified that the child has become looked after. NHS Lanarkshire were not satisfied with their own health assessment process for looked after children and decided to take action.

In conjunction with North Lanarkshire Council, NHS Lanarkshire were awarded funding for an ambitious **My Choice, My Future** health assessment improvement project. The partnership project wanted to develop a better understanding of the needs and lives of looked after children first, and then use that knowledge to design and build an assessment system to better respond to their physical and mental health needs by taking the appropriate actions.

This project was one of several where CELCIS was able to provide integrated, specialist support from a range of our services.



For **My Choice, My Future** that support was offered as an informed, critical friend. CELCIS provided input and feedback on project design and documentation, stakeholder mapping and communications, and we facilitated inter-agency meetings. Our learning and development skills supported an audit of staff learning, and the design of the programme learning plan. With our policy hat on, we worked with all stakeholders to increase awareness about corporate parenting responsibilities, and we worked collaboratively to build motivation for the project amongst all the partners involved. Our data team provided informed feedback for individual staff members and the overall programme, to help with decision-making about the direction of the project. Finally, by keeping our project partners up to speed with national strategic developments for looked after children, we were able to help them identify and secure continuation of funding during a period of economic and political change.

The results show significant and positive change in the health assessment process for local looked after children:

- North Lanarkshire saw a reduction in assessments taking over eight weeks, from 60% to 0% across the year.
- In South Lanarkshire, the total number of monthly notifications increased from 17 to 164 children.

It was noted that the quality of assessment improved, and a more robust and sensitive system was put in place which responds far better to each child's own needs. The programme continues to thrive in Lanarkshire, with quality assessments still being managed by a dedicated team of nurses.

“The quality of assessment improved, and a more robust and sensitive system was put in place which responds far better to each child's own needs.”

## Trauma training

CELCIS combines tailored training and consultancy to great effect with our popular and adaptable **Attachment, Trauma and Resilience** offering. A specific version of this course was designed and delivered for Moore House Care & Education, a long-term CELCIS partner, as part of a consultancy programme focusing on team and service development for management and the wider staff group.

Team members identified that they needed new ways to understand and deal with the sometimes challenging and complex behaviour demonstrated by the young people they work with. Following in-depth discussions with a CELCIS specialist consultant, a training course was designed to cover the specific issues identified by the group, and delivered in a way which addressed those issues practically, and sensitively.

The course was very well received, and the feedback excellent. Best of all, the group used their new learning and understanding to effect positive change in their daily working practices and, ultimately, for the young people in their care.

“The CELCIS consultant [has] helped us adapt to challenges faced over the years, creating a safe space and skilfully facilitating what can often be difficult conversations to take place. The impact of consultancy has often been immediate, with a tangible change in morale and levels of motivation following sessions. Training feedback is always very positive and the learning makes an evident difference in staff practice – from daily interactions with young people, to more mindful completion of paperwork.”

**Stephen Drysdale, Senior Manager**

**Children's Planning & Psychological Services, Moore House Care & Education**

# Crossing international borders

**W**e continue to work far beyond Scotland to generate and share evidence, ideas, good practice and learning with international partners and collaborators. That's because we really believe that shared learning about international alternative care systems will help all of us work towards lasting change for children in care.

In 2016–17 our global collaborations extended far and wide, reaching 172 countries. We worked directly with colleagues in the alternative care sectors in Tajikistan, Latvia, Lithuania, Croatia, Spain, Italy, Moldova, Nigeria, Uganda, Chile, Ecuador, Indonesia and Nepal. In this period, we undertook an extensive study of child care reform which included across three continents – sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia.

CELCIS also continued to spread the word about Scotland's own experiences with alternative care systems through keynote addresses to major conferences, like the launch of the UN Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

## International learning online

Thanks to the digital revolution, CELCIS has been able to extend its shared learning presence on a truly international scale via our free Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Our first Caring for Vulnerable Children MOOC attracted a total of 48,214 joiners at the last count, setting the bar high for our next massive online outing. Our next MOOC involved a huge amount of preparation during 2016–17, including close liaison with colleagues in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Moldova, Ukraine, Italy, France, Uzbekistan, Albania and Georgia. This new MOOC Getting Care Right for All Children: Implementing the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children was ready for launch in May 2017, and we eagerly await the global response.

### CELCIS reach goes right round the world

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

**6,841** international website users, a **50% increase** from last year.

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



## Transcontinental travels

In 2016–17, CELCIS continued its international reach by working across three continents as part of the European Commission research project **‘Towards the Right Care for Children: Orientations for reforming alternative care systems, Africa, Asia, Latin America’**.

Millions of children remain in large residential institutions in countries across the world. We know that in many instances these children are not properly or safely cared for and that they experience very poor emotional, developmental and social outcomes.

In order to set the priorities and direction of their own alternative care strategy, the European Commission sought to broaden their understanding of deinstitutionalisation and child care reforms in other parts of the world through evidence-based research.

CELCIS and partners supported this work through a desk review of all aspects of child protection and child care systems in all countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America. In partnership with SOS Children’s Villages International and the European Union, CELCIS also completed six in-depth case studies through field visits to Nepal, Chile, Ecuador, Uganda, Nigeria and Sri Lanka.

This valuable international work culminated in numerous reports, with a synthesis of the findings being presented by the European Commission at a meeting for international agencies in Brussels in January 2017, followed by further EU inter-departmental discussions to progress multi-agency approaches to alternative care.

The findings and learnings from this international work have been presented widely across the countries and continents involved, and CELCIS is now receiving further enquiries and requests for support from our highly skilled and experienced international team.

“SOS Children’s Villages International was delighted to be invited to undertake this project to increase knowledge about children in alternative care and alternative care systems outside of Europe. After a decade long engagement with the EU and other stakeholders on the question of deinstitutionalisation in Europe, this research allowed us to understand the context and situation leading to family separation and placements into care in six countries across three continents, and to put forward recommendations to enable the EU to make better informed decisions about alternative care systems reform in partner countries. We look forward to a continued partnership on developing strategies shaping robust child protection systems around the world – so that the rights of every child can be realised, no matter where they live.”

**Miriana Giraldi, Head of EU Office, SOS Children’s Villages International**

[www.celcis.org/towards-right-care](http://www.celcis.org/towards-right-care)

“We look forward to a continued partnership on developing strategies shaping robust child protection systems around the world – so that the rights of every child can be realised, no matter where they live.”

# The coming year

**W**e've grown and we've changed but, for CELCIS, the commitment to children and young people in need of care and protection remains the same. Whether it's influencing policy, delivering a specialist training programme, or sharing our knowledge about the role of music for children in care, we're always looking to build brighter and better futures, where looked after children, care leavers and children on the edges of care are fully supported, cared for and valued.

Along with all of the amazing people and organisations we've worked with so far, and the many we've yet to encounter, we'll keep working away to make change for the better. Lasting change which makes a real difference in young lives and life chances.

As we move into 2017-18, we'll continue our core work on a range of programmes and projects. Examples of some of the new and evolving work we'll be getting our teeth into include:

- A key role in the development of the Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures, based at the University of Strathclyde.
- The development of a brand new Improving Care Experiences programme.
- The roll out of the Permanence and Care Excellence programme, right across Scotland.
- Continued development of our Transforming Pathways for Children on the Edges of Care programme.
- Supporting the launch of the Historical Abuse redress consultation.
- Hosting the secretariat team for the Independent Care Review.



## Organisational Development

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

- Continuing the transitional phase of our carefully planned organisational change programme, because we remain committed to providing the very best service and responding to needs of our partners, professionals, children and families.
- Continuing to learn and improve how we collaborate and work alongside the many people and partners affecting the lives of children and families.
- Reviewing and updating our vision and mission in line with our revised remit, and consolidating and aligning our strategic planning across the organisation.
- Developing new innovations and business models to support our multidisciplinary implementation work.
- Building capacity to use the theory and practice of active implementation in our 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.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank each and every person who has contributed to our Making a Difference 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 your work and your experience; working together we can make a bigger difference for children in need of care and protection.

Call: 0141 444 8500  
Email: [celcis@strath.ac.uk](mailto:celcis@strath.ac.uk)  
Visit: [www.celcis.org](http://www.celcis.org)

CELCIS is committed to building brighter futures for children in need of care and protection. As an intermediary organisation between research, policy and practice, we strengthen the skills and capacities of people who care for children and young people. What's more, we take an evidence-informed approach to implement lasting and positive change, across the services and systems that affect the lives of children and families.

CELCIS is part of the Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures, based at the University of Strathclyde.



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