

Caring for our Children

Quarterly newsletter for family based carers in Edinburgh

Make someone's day... Make someone's life



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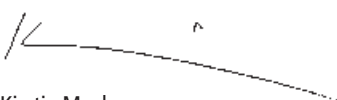
FESTIVE
GREETINGS!

Kirstie's Column



As you know, we are always looking for a wide variety of carers for the wide variety of children we provide with care. The Fostering Regulations in place until September 28 2009 said that the only people we could approve as foster carers were either a man or a woman living alone (other than if close relatives lived with them) or a man and a woman living together. Not only did this prevent gay or lesbian couples being approved, it prevented two friends of the same gender living in the same household from becoming foster carers. It also prevented single carers who had a lodger of the same gender from fostering. Technically, this meant that if a single carer had an ex foster child of the same gender lodging with him or her, she or he could not foster younger children. Although the Adoption Regulations were different, they also meant that we had couples where only one partner could adopt and the other had to apply for parental rights.

Fortunately, we are now in a position where we do not have to automatically reject people because of who they choose to live with. Since the legislation changed, we have attracted a small number of applicants who are either same sex couples or pairs who, although they are not a couple, choose to live together. Some had previously been befriending a child but were not allowed to foster him or her. Recent research by BAAF found there are still a lot of misconceptions in the wider public concerning who can foster or adopt. Consequently, if you have relatives, friends or acquaintances who you know are great with children but think they may not be eligible to be approved as carers, tell them to contact the recruitment team.


Kirstie Maclean
Service Manager, Looked After and Accommodated Children

Staff News

We have lots of staff news in this issue as we have just gone through a business review which included the whole of Support for Children and Young People division. The admin team in Family Based Care are now to be called business support.

Congratulations to the following:

Chrissie Love is moving to the Accommodated Children Review Team as a business officer.

Grace Lyons is taking up the business officer post with FBC.

Maxine Coleman and **Lorna Marshall** have both been offered business assistants posts in FBC.

Maria Perez is moving to Westfield House to be a CPSMA (Child Protection Statutory Minute Taker).

Bianca Culbert is moving to Leith to take up the business assistant post.

Kenny Grubb is now business manager for LAAC.

Neil Bruce is sharing FBC management with **Tricia Rosa** and will be joining the Permanence Team and Kinship panel.

Warm welcomes to the following social workers:

Lynne Pollen Disability

Bernadette O'Halloran Permanence

Rachel Bentley Permanence

Jen Ritchie Permanence

Emily Simpson Recruitment

Farewell

We wish both **Ken Morrison** and **Roger Szadurski** happy retirements.



Training matters

Don't forget you can still sign up for courses from the 2010/11 Carer's Training Booklet. Check out full details of courses offered online in the carer's section of www.edinburgh.gov.uk/fostering

To book courses please phone Workforce Learning and Development on 469 3227 between or e-mail candf.cpd@edinburgh.gov.uk

Telford College also offer many professional development courses. Check out their childcare courses online at www.ed-coll.ac.uk. They have various HNCs and SVQs in childcare up to level 4. ILA funding is available for part time and evening courses.

Home learning opportunity

Basic Child Protection Level 1 Awareness and Response



The Council's e-learning team have introduced a new e-learning module in Child Protection – Awareness and Response. The course has been designed for use by staff or carers who have direct contact with children and young people who have either:

- not yet undertaken a basic child protection course or
- have not undertaken this type and level of training in the past 2-3 years.

This course is funded by Edinburgh Child Protection Committee as an alternative to classroom based learning. The material is based on what is currently delivered in the tutor-led Basic Child Protection Level 1 course and is therefore suitable for all staff or carers needing basic child protection training, including the updates required on a 2-3 year basis. It is targeted at all staff or carers who have direct contact with children and young people.

The training module offers a balance of procedures and legislative framework without being overly detailed. It identifies the key national and local documents staff should know about. The training should take approximately 1.5 hours.

Alongside this they recommend reading Protecting Children: Information for Service Providers, 2009. This booklet reinforces the messages within the e-learning training and explains what to do and who to contact if you have a concern about a child. Both the booklet and the training should be read in conjunction with your own existing child protection policies and procedures.

Speak to your liaison worker to get the dvd and/or booklet so you can start learning from home.

STV advert



Did you happen to catch a glimpse of us on STV in September?

For the first time ever, FBC have branched out into tv advertising to try and recruit more carers. We managed to get a fantastic deal from STV to run 10 and 20 second adverts in the last week of September, including one during Sunday's X Factor.

We had a high number of phone enquiries that week and the web had three times as many visits as normal. Fingers crossed this will in turn lead to many more people joining the Council as carers.

BME recruitment campaign

The search for more black and minority ethnic carers (BME) was launched on 27 September. It ran for two weeks with the strapline *Could you care for Edinburgh's children?* Currently there are very few BME carers in Edinburgh and the aim is to try and increase numbers so that children from different cultural, religious and ethnic groups can live with foster carers who share similar backgrounds.

If you are you interested or know of someone who is considering becoming a foster carer, encourage them to call us on 0800 174 833 or go to www.edinburgh.gov.uk/fostering

Not an average week



Heather Doig is irrepressible. Full of laughter, fun and wise words she looks every inch what a good day carer should be. She's been a day carer for eighteen years and has lost count of the number of children she has cared for, but reckons it's over 200.

Meet Heather Doig, day carer and respite carer

Detailing how she got into day care Heather says: "I had a toddler (now my twenty two year old son!) and we were stuck in the house. I was used to working and wanted him to meet other children." She has friends who have been caring for twenty five years. She laughs: "I'm one of the younger ones, I love saying that!"

She started out doing day care, had two foster care placements and now does day care during the week and respite one weekend a month. "Day care is nice; you get a good feeling when you pick the children up and their face lights up. You are the only break for the mums and you feel you let them down if you are sick," says Heather. She has four children at the moment, ages two to four, saying, "they are all friends. It upsets the dynamic when one of them moves onto nursery as the boss changes!" There are plenty of challenges in day care, from the children and the parents and Heather has found ways to work through them: "I collect the children from their own houses in the morning around 9am. I find the attendance rate is better than when parents used to drop them off at my house."

There is an element of being a bit of a social worker in her job too: "Respite care is about being there for the mums, not just the kids. There are lots of young mums and I'm often seen as a granny type figure. I get occasional phone calls at night from them, but I would prefer that than the mum crying all night and the children being upset too."

During the week Heather takes the children on lots of different outings. Carer play groups are among these. "Gilmerton Community Centre is my favourite group. The group is not there just for kids, it's great for advice for me too, the other foster carers can notice something you might miss. I am also on the Management Committee there. The Gilmerton Community Centre is a really

friendly place and being on the committee helps us know what's going on.

Every day is different and full of activity. She says: "Monday is our day out, even if it is wet we try to get out." Asked where her favourite place to bring the children was, Heather had a tough time trying to decide: "The carers group because I get support and the children get to play, or wandering to the play park, or seeing calves on the farm being born. We go to Joppa, the climbing frames, Liberton Dams for the horses; we can go to the stables. I teach them rules about how we have to ask if we can go on the farm." Back at Heather's house the children get a hand in choosing their own lunch: "They will even eat courgette on a pizza if they made it themselves. Some kids just want pizza all the time because that is all they get at home."

Among the challenges that Heather faces is that she is always scared she will miss something, and says it important for the children to keep coming. Explaining: "You need to have the parents want to have day care. You've got to work at getting on with your parents. When they move on you realise they are a lot better than when they first came in." Catriona MacKenzie is Heather's liaison worker. She agrees: "Day care is an invaluable resource, it is a lot of support families are getting."

Heather's children are now 32 and 22. Growing up with foster children has meant they are not so judgemental when they see things happen. Her son was tormented by one of the foster girls when they were both small and he never retaliated because he felt sorry for her, no matter what she put him through.

Laughing, Heather remembers an occasion when her son flushed a foster daughter's bath foam down the toilet. Retaliating later she flushed his bubble bath down the toilet too. When Heather went to see what was happening there were bubbles everywhere, made worse by the foam bubbling up each time the toilet was flushed.

When Heather asked why her foster child hadn't simply told on her son, she said she didn't want to get him in trouble.

Of the children moving on, while many keep in touch, she says: "Occasionally if you see the children and parents out, the children want to come over and say hello, but you see the parents back away, as for them it is a memory of a time they were not coping. That hurts, but it's life."

She thinks that things have improved since she started as a carer, smiling at Catriona she says: "We feel more linked with social workers. Before it felt like 'them and us'. A carer needs to be open with their worker. If you are open, you'll get support. Carers shouldn't be frightened to seek help, otherwise they will never learn new ways to do things."

Asked for advice for prospective carers she says: "It's a good job as long as you're not scared to ask for help – it's not a mark against you. Definitely use your support group and support worker. Offloading makes the job easier." Catriona agrees: "The job is all about relationships."

Dorothy Scott Retirement



Dorothy Scott retired in July after 30 years of caring for Edinburgh's children, initially as a day carer and respite carer then eventually as a foster carer. During her 30 years as a carer Dorothy has had the support of her family Marysia, Carole-Anne and Lynsey, and they have been 'fabulous' enriching the lives of all the children in their care.

It is now time for Dorothy to think of herself and doing so in the knowledge that the children she has cared for have had a better start in life than they might have done otherwise.

Dorothy will be missed by her support group (especially her stories and sense of humour) but we all celebrated her farewell at our last meeting in June.

Well done Dorothy and good luck from all at family based care, and your carer colleagues.

Goodbye and good luck to the two Ms



Margaret Stewart and Marjory Higgs are a pair of mould-breakers. In 2004 they became the first day carers to share the same workplace – Margaret's house.

Having known each other since nursing days in the Eastern General Hospital, they joined forces when Marjory retired after the hospital closed. Margaret had been a day carer since 2001 and she convinced Marjory to train as a day carer and join her.

Their working relationship was successful because as Marjory says: "We were both of the same mind about our rules and boundaries, just like a mother and father. It may not work for everybody, but we got on ok beforehand and it worked for us."

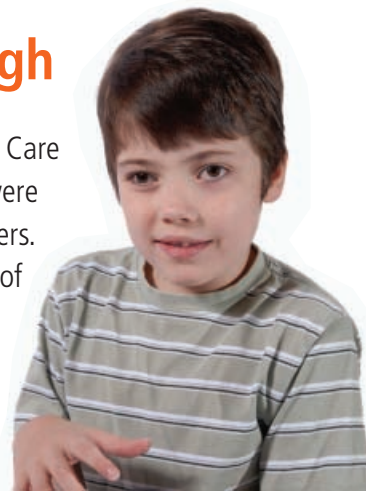
The pair retired recently and they've been so busy they haven't had time to think about their respective retirements! Marjory's third grandchild has just been born so she'll be able to see lots of her and knows the child friendly places to take her when she's growing up.

Margaret has been busy writing, which you can read about on page 7. She is in the middle of doing up her house with her husband, or as she says: "He is doing all the work and I'm the general dogsbody!"

They had a retiral presentation from the North East Carers Group and went out for lunch with Hilary Marsh, their liaison worker last month. They'll miss the fun, the children coming out with funny expressions and seeing families doing really well. Ladies, thanks for your hard work and we wish you long and happy retirements.

Lithuanian trip to Edinburgh

The 4 and 5 October saw Children and Family Based Care welcome fellow professionals from Lithuania. They were here to find out how we recruit and retain foster carers. Half the delegation spoke English and with the help of translators we were able to swap stories, with one outstanding fact being that they have over 2000 children requiring suitable adoptive parents.



Reviews

Dr Book has reviewed two fun books that you can read by yourself or with your family! If you want to send in your own review of a book, music or a film that you have enjoyed, please e-mail michelle.donegan@edinburgh.gov.uk



Mr Stink by David Walliams

Chloe sees Mr Stink every day, but she's never spoken to him. Which isn't surprising, because he's a tramp, and he stinks. But there's more to Mr Stink than meets the eye (or nose) and before she knows it, Chloe has an unusual new friend hiding in her garden shed. For 8 – 11 year olds, and all the family



Morris the mankiest monster by Giles Andreae and Sarah McIntyre

Are you brave enough to open the most revolting children's book of the year...?! It's years since he last changed his t-shirt. It's crusty and crawling with ants. His shoes are all slurpy and squelchy inside, and potatoes grow out of them.... For 3 – 7 year olds, and all the family

Check out Mr Stink, Morris, Horrid Henry, Charlie and Lola, Harry Potter, Alex Rider or the latest Julia Donaldson at your local library, for free. If you want to listen as well as read, there are books on CD. For bilingual families there are picture books in lots of languages. Need some help with homework? There's free internet access in every library.

Check out Dr Book's prescriptions and all that's on at the library including lots of Christmas fun at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/libraries



5
minute

Interview with Kenny Grubb

Business Manager for Looked
After and Accommodated Children



How did you get into this area of work?

I actually started off in the old Education Department doing a summer job and ended up staying (with the Council). Although I have moved around Council Departments I spent most of my time with Finance. I was looking for a fresh challenge and the post of Business Manager in Support for Children and Young People (SCYP) came up. I thought the job sounded interesting and matched the experience I had.

How long have you been doing this job?

I joined SCYP in February 2008.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Being able to achieve something (every so often) and working with extremely professional staff.

What are the challenges you face?

I think the main challenge is the one that will be faced by all employees in how we deal with impending budget cuts. Also SCYP has just undertaken a Business Support Review and the next couple of years will be a challenging as we try to support staff through this process

What is the best advice you have ever been given?

If you have no influence over something then don't spend time worrying about it.

Where do you see yourself in five years time?

Somewhere warm and sunny!

What was the last book you read?

The Men They Left Behind – it's a book about the men that were left behind at Dunkirk and gives a first hand account of what their lives were like and how they survived, not a light read.

Where are you going on your next holiday?

We are just back from Atlanta, Georgia – a very interesting place and nice and warm.

Kid's cyber corner

The summer is now long gone, but we hope you had a great time. Are you back to school or college now? Need help with homework, things to do or just want some fun! Here are some websites that may help fill the gap....

First of all remember to keep yourself SAFE ONLINE!

What's all the fuss about? Try this site and create your own digizen avatar. Films, games, cyberbullying, social networking, digital citizenship and lots more
<http://www.digizen.org/>

Learn more about Cyberbullying on **RespectMe.org** with lots of help and information for young people about what it is, where to go for help and free courses for carers too. Don't miss out!

Ever fancied yourself as a movie director, photographer or graphic artist? Why not take a look at <http://www.tatemovie.co.uk/> for your chance to take part, or even make your own movie.

Ever thought of helping the environment and recycling? Lots of projects and activities for all ages and family fun too at:
<http://www.tesco.com/greenerliving/kids/landing.page>

Would you like to have a say in the policies developed for young people and the Internet? Join HUVY (supports young people to influence policies related to the Internet) and take part in having your say on things that matter to you:
<http://www.huvy.eu/uk/>

Don't forget about local sites too though. Why not join the local youth forum online at <http://www.youngedinburgh.org/>

Why not get creative and have some fun and upload your stuff to the BBC
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blast/>

We can't forget about the wee ones now can we? This has got to be the best wee kids fun with the Waybuloo; play games, watch or take part online
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/waybuloo>

Do you have a disability? Keep up to date with all the news and fun stuff at
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/features/>

There is no getting away from it but here is some help. A whole website full of links to help with homework
<http://www.wisekids.org.uk/homeworkhelp.htm>

Disney is always a favourite so why not check it out for loads of games and fun
<http://www.disney.co.uk/DisneyOnline/games/>

IT Development Officer: marion.boyle@edinburgh.gov.uk
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Memories of care



Margaret Stewart knows what it's like to be both a foster child and look after foster children too.

The youngest of 12 children and taken into care at age of two, much of Margaret's childhood during the 1950s was spent at Tenterfield House, a children's home in Haddington.

Margaret, now retired from caring for children herself, has recently published a memoir, *Tenterfield: My Happy Childhood in Care*, written under her maiden name Margaret Irvine.

"I had a great childhood," she remembers. "The matron, Dorothy Martin, used to say that you were not in a children's home but in a house full of children. The house of 40 children was a happy and caring place, and was strongly supported by our local community."

Margaret's fond memories of her childhood inspired her to become a foster carer herself, a vocation she remained committed to for nearly ten years.

"I have two of my own but I wanted to give other children the same start as I had," she says. "I learnt many lessons mainly that we are there to look after the children and give them experiences that other families would normally have. If the children left me feeling that they understood what a normal life was like, then I'd done a good job."

Margaret now plans to enjoy her retirement and has even begun writing another book.

Recruiting around the city

Season ticket holders at Hibs cannot fail to have noticed our brand new advertising board from the family stand. We've positioned ourselves to attract the attention of football loving families who might be interested in becoming foster carers.

We've also headed out to the cinema to try and catch the eye of potential carers at Omni and Ocean Terminal cinemas. Ten points if you spot us!

Caring for our Children
A Loving Home for Life...

Adoption drop in evening

Wednesday 10 November 7.30 - 9.30pm

Claremont House 130 East Claremont Street Edinburgh EH7 4LB



We have been successful this year in matching a number of children with adoptive parents. Many children with complex disabilities and medical needs however, are still waiting for a family.

We need to find people who can make a lifelong commitment to a child with disabilities and possibly their brothers and sisters. We are looking for adoptive parents who can give some of Edinburgh's most vulnerable children a loving and stable family home.

Drop in on 10 November to find out more

• EDINBURGH •
YOUR COUNCIL - YOUR SERVICES

0131 556 6787
www.edinburgh.gov.uk/adoption

Disability adoption drive

The disability campaign, launched on 1 November, was aimed at finding adoptive parents to care for children with complex disabilities and medical needs. The drop in information evening was well attended and targeted potential people through posters and flyers sent to schools, doctors, community councils, as well as through advertisements and the radio.

If you are you interested or know of someone who is considering becoming an adoptive parent, encourage them to call us on 0131 556 6787 or go to www.edinburgh.gov.uk/adoption



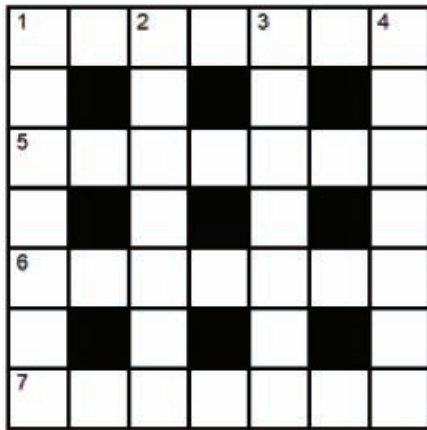
DO YOU CARE ENOUGH TO FOSTER?

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/fostering

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Cool Crossword



Down

1. Merry
2. Mark or stamp as paid
3. Belief or sentiment
4. Vest

Across

1. Angry
5. Segment
6. Occurring at the beginning
7. No longer in existence

Upcoming Events

Edinburgh Christmas Markets

Thursday 25 November 2010 - Tuesday 4 January 2011

Traditional German Christmas Market

Mound Precinct

Highland Village Christmas Market

East Princes Street Gardens

Experience all the magic of a traditional German Christmas Market and a Highland Village Market in the heart of the city centre. Browse stalls packed with handmade decorations, toys and gifts and unique Christmas presents.



Sparkling Snowmen and Cheeky Robins

Lauriston Castle

Saturday 18 December, 10.30am -12.30pm or 1.30pm -3.30 pm

£4 per adult/child

Make a big crepe paper-decorated snowman for your Christmas table, complete with a secret compartment to hide special presents for your Christmas party!

Make him a little robin friend using handmade paper and lovely collage materials. With artist Tessa Asquith-Lamb.

Pre-booking is essential. Call Margaret Findlay on 529 3963.

The Museum of Childhood workshops

42 Royal Mile. Free entry, activity workshops extra.

An Enchanted Christmas in the Museum

Saturday 18 December

Inspired by all the old toys in the museum make the most adorable little framed pictures and Christmas cards and tags depicting old toys

10.30 am - 12.30 pm or 1.30 pm - 3.30 pm, £4 per adult/child.

Advocacy and Assertiveness Skills Course for Foster Carers

Edinburgh, Friday 4 February, 2011, 10am - 4pm

Free training session run by The Fostering Network

Limited spaces available. To book please call Sarah Crangle on 0141 204 1400.

Free Family Fun for Valentine's Day

Seafield Community Recycling Centre, Fillyside Road, EH7 6RD.

Monday 15 February, 11am - 3pm drop in

Fall in love with recycling at our Valentine's themed family day at Edinburgh's largest community recycling centre and:

- make Valentine cards and presents for your loved ones from recycled materials
- take a closer look at the amazing beasts that live in your compost heap
- find out what happens to your recycling
- take part in games, activities and much more.

Top tips time...

Every wondered about the best way to tackle a situation, or wanted to share your top problem solving solutions?

Fishy smells

Frying fish can leave a fishy smell for a long time. To get your kitchen smelling fresh again, simply simmer some orange peel, cloves and water for 10 minutes.

Crayon marks

Remove crayon marks from painted walls by scrubbing with toothpaste or an ammonia-soaked cloth. Rinse and dry.

And finally, a topical one from the Carbon Trust: try and keep your thermostat at 19°C. Every degree you go up can add 8% onto your fuel bills.

Send your top tips to:

michelle.donegan@edinburgh.gov.uk

Have your say...

Let us know what you think about *Caring for our Children* and any ideas you have about what you'd like to see in the next edition. If you want to contribute, please contact the editor with your story, review or idea by 3 January 2011.

Michelle Donegan
Communications Officer
Communication Services

Waverley Court, Level 1.5 East Market Street
Edinburgh EH8 8BG

e-mail: michelle.donegan@edinburgh.gov.uk

tel: 0131 469 5226

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