

Making a Difference Report 2015



Centre for excellence
for looked after children in Scotland



Improving care experiences

Contents

Welcome	3
Introduction	4
Making a difference	5
The year in numbers	6
Collaboration and partnership	8
Shining a light on our work	9
A permanent place to stay	9
Growing up and moving on	12
Staying the course	13
Young, gifted and well	14
Laying down the law	16
CELCIS goes global	18
Multi-layered learning	19
The coming year	22
Acknowledgements	23

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

With around 16,000 children and young people being 'looked after' by local authorities in Scotland, and with many, many more children living on the edges of being looked after, our passion for *making a difference* in their lives burns as brightly as ever. But we don't do it alone.

At CELCIS, we take a multi-agency and collaborative approach towards making lasting change – working alongside professionals and practitioners, and with families and carers, we help to break down barriers and forge new paths so that all looked after children have the very best chance to reach their potential.

As a respected and influential organisation, our ethos is solid and unchanging – we work tirelessly to promote, encourage and demonstrate methods, good practice and radical thinking that can make a difference. CELCIS is an evidence-based, reflective organisation. We constantly question and evaluate the effectiveness of our work. Here, reporting from April 2014 to March 2015, we proudly showcase some examples of our work, and celebrate the positive progress we and our partners have achieved in making a big, big difference in the lives and life chances of looked after children.

Jennifer Davidson
Director, CELCIS



'At CELCIS we help to break down barriers and forge new paths'



Introduction

At CELCIS, our goal is really quite simple. We want to make a difference. We want to make positive and lasting improvements in the experiences, life chances and outcomes of Scotland's looked after children, their families and carers, and care leavers too.

To achieve our goal, we set ourselves an ambitious programme of work in 2014 – covering 143 projects, working in partnership with 31 local authorities and more than 150 organisations.

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



Making a Difference

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

We take a multi-agency approach towards making that change, breaking down the barriers to change with new thinking and new ways of working. We do that by providing research, policy, learning and training, and consultancy services for our partners, all underpinned by our innovative, evidence-based improvement approach.

Our commitment to this far-reaching improvement agenda is at the very heart of everything we do. We promote and encourage an understanding of how evidence and policy can be best applied where it really matters. Our superb team of highly experienced, insightful staff do just that by helping to build capability, skills and confidence amongst the very people who care for, and deliver services for, looked after children.

Setting our objectives

Our core objectives for the year April 2014 to March 2015 were to:

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

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

Governance

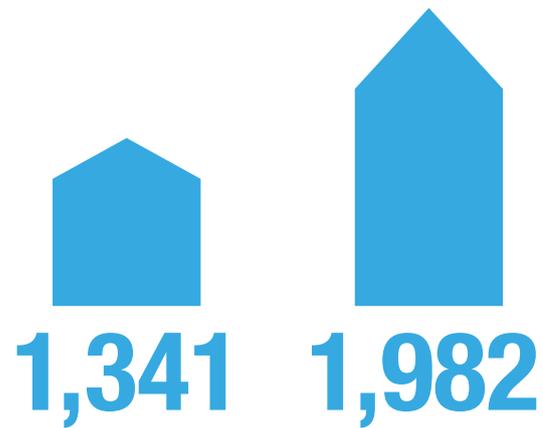
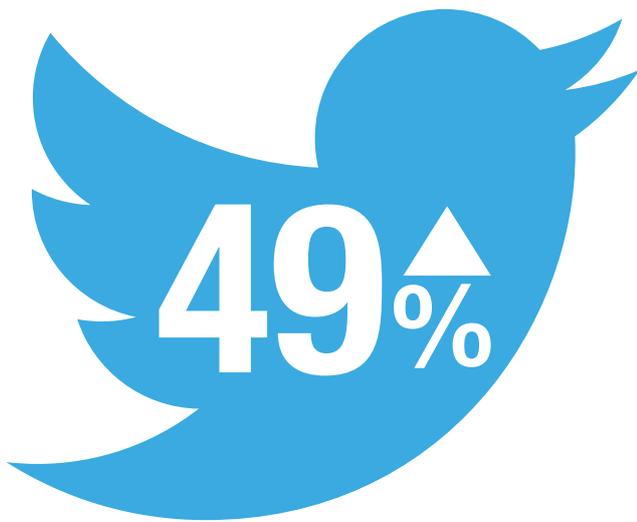
As an organisation CELCIS fully recognises the value and importance of governance and accountability to ensure that our work remains firmly focused on making a difference. We are governed by a Strategic Steering Group, supported by the University of Strathclyde, and monitored by the Scottish Government,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

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

The year in numbers



Approximately 15,927 people heard key messages formally delivered by someone from CELCIS, a whopping 85% increase from last year (8,600)

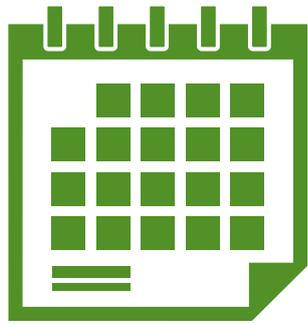


An increase of 49% in our Twitter followers – up from 1,341 to 1,982 by end of March 2015

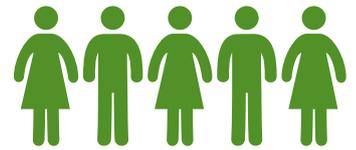


150+

CELCIS engaged with 150+ organisations, including 31 of Scotland's local authorities



102


3,365

102 events, with 3,365 people attending a CELCIS conference or learning event

88%



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



43,220

43,220 unique website visitors – an increase of 33%

↓ 5

CELCIS downloadable documents continue to provide practical and valuable information for colleagues working in the sector. The top 5 digital downloads were:

- 1. Inform: Children and Young People Act Parts 10 and 11 – Aftercare and Continuing Care**
- 2. Reach magazine, Autumn 2014**
- 3. Integrating Health and Social Care in Scotland: Potential impact on children**
- 4. Foster Care Review: Final report**
- 5. Inform: Children and Young People Act (Part 12) – Services in relation to children at risk of becoming looked after**



8,333

8,333 international website visitors – an increase of 42%

Collaboration and partnership

At CELCIS, collaboration and partnership is in our DNA. It's how we and our partners continue to evolve and improve. We learn from each other. We solve problems together. We talk, sparking ideas and developing solutions. We exchange knowledge and build on the evidence base together. Ultimately it is how we will make that big difference for children and young people.

In 2014–15, CELCIS worked in partnership with over 150 organisations, and 31 local authorities, covering a wide spectrum of engagement. This ranged from intensive, in-depth work to snappy bite-sized one-offs. No matter the scale of our collaborations, we always work collectively towards making a difference.

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

CASE STUDY: Information and advice when it's most needed

A lot of CELCIS's work is ad hoc, bespoke support for the sector. For instance, one local authority Head of Service approached CELCIS for advice on 'what works' in a specific part of alternative care provision. In her independent feedback, she reflected that:

'CELCIS can be confidently counted on to provide both excellent staff and relevant and robust information. It's extremely helpful to work with people who have in-depth knowledge about sector developments across Scotland, and who can direct us to the relevant evidence. CELCIS helps add capacity to local authority – the appraisal and packaging of the most relevant information allows us to plan effectively, and provides us with the potential to be better-informed about how best to look after the children and young people in our care.'

Shining a light on our work

A permanent place to stay

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

The work of our Permanence and Care Team (PaCT) is diverse and wide ranging. The team has worked collaboratively with multiple agencies and 30 local authorities this year to encourage the development of systems which secure sustainable, long-term placements for children, quickly and effectively. PaCT does this by mapping permanence processes, supporting whole-systems change, concurrency planning, family contact, conducting research (see our excellence and evidence spotlight), and delivering practice exchange workshops with partners to share and exchange learning between local authorities and agencies.

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

Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE)

A critical strand of our permanence work comes through the PACE programme, which we co-deliver with Scottish Government colleagues and in partnership with Aberdeen City and Renfrewshire councils. We applied an innovative and rigorous whole-systems approach to improving permanence, with the aim of including all of the agencies involved. And the evaluation shows the programme has resulted in significant improvement in permanence processes in each council. A suite of intense and in-depth activities were delivered (see the PACE process figure overleaf).

The PACE model

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

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

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

CASE STUDY: From learning to practice

Our PaCT practice exchange workshops continue to be a success. In partnership with local authorities and voluntary agencies across Scotland, we delivered three such workshops and promoted a number of useful tools, such as contract agreements, GANTT charts for concurrency planning, protocols, and pathway documents.

87% said they would apply their learning in practice.

87% 

87% said they would apply their learning in practice

Processes and systems were tailored to suit the needs of each council, but the evaluation demonstrates clearly that PACE has made a real difference in cutting delay and drift in the permanence processes in both areas:

Aberdeen City reduced delay caused by continuation of Advice Hearings by changing the way they notified parents and contacted families. This process has now been fully implemented as routine practice.

'CELGIS expertise and in-depth support has been instrumental in helping our multi-agency partnership test and embed the changes to improve permanence here in Aberdeen City. With the support of CELGIS and the hard work of all agencies we have reduced the time it takes for a child to receive a permanence decision by an average of 3 months.' (Lead Services Manager)

Implementing a new early referral system in Renfrewshire to the reporter for all children under three on the date of accommodation has significantly improved permanence timescales for children.

'...getting the legal order in place after early referral is probably taking around about three to four months off the timescale already.' (Children's Services Manager)

'We have reduced the time it takes for a child to receive a permanence decision by an average of 3 months.'
(Lead Services Manager)

The PACE process

Warming up

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



Establishing the programme

- Initial discussions
- Stakeholder event
- Improvement capability building through training / coaching
- Multi-agency meeting
- Launch event
- Process mapping
- Direct input by PACE team (min 2 days per fortnight)



Sharing learning

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



Maintaining momentum

- Champions meetings
- Ongoing support
- PACE delivery team debrief (known as Scruddles in ACC)
- Sub-group meetings (Renfrewshire)



CASE STUDY: Excellence and evidence

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

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

In 2014–15 our researchers worked with a tremendously diverse range of agencies on 26 research related projects. A number of examples of excellence from this period demonstrate real improvement in services for looked after children, and an ongoing knowledge exchange:

CELCIS builds on the permanence evidence base

Our research services delivered: national research on Safeguarders in the Children's Hearing System; a systematic literature review into permanence for disabled children; and a literature review on 'Achieving permanence for disabled children and young people in foster care and adoption', including hosting an event to explore the findings with researchers and practitioners, and working with IRISS to produce a podcast.

A study on health and social care integration

Funded by Social Work Scotland (SWS) and conducted in partnership with Children in Scotland, this research examined the impact of the Public Services (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 and the integration of health and social care services on children and young people. The cutting edge information and evidence identified is being used by SWS to inform major restructuring which will better protect the position of children and families during these processes.

'In 2014–15 our researchers worked with a diverse range of agencies on 26 research related projects.'

Growing up and moving on

Here at CELCIS, we work tirelessly to promote the understanding that leaving care is a major life event for every looked after young person, and not just a bureaucratic exercise. Our throughcare and aftercare work aims for radical and sustainable improvement in care leaver outcomes. We support and encourage the development of services and systems which are designed and implemented to fully reflect the milestone that is leaving care.

In 2014–15 the team worked with numerous local authorities and organisations to provide bespoke training and support. The team also brokered learning exchanges between local authorities, spread the word about effective transition at conferences and events, supported a successful service merger, and developed guidance on behalf of the Scottish Government.

Successful transitions

We worked with staff in three local authorities and they overwhelmingly agreed that they will use what they learned from our specialist training on promoting successful transitions for care leavers.

- 92% will use what they learned in their practice.
- As one participant said: (the course) 'motivated me to improve services and fight for changes.'

92%



92% will use what they learned in their practice

CASE STUDY: Staying Put in Shetland

We successfully supported Shetland Council to develop its own embryonic throughcare and aftercare service, one which embedded the principles and objectives of the Staying Put Scotland agenda. Incorporating the views of everyone involved, including care leavers themselves, the review had significant impact on the way residential child care provision is designed and delivered in Shetland.

This child-centred approach refocused and reasserted the value of long term residential group care for children and young people, and boosted professional confidence amongst residential care workers. In feedback the team leader remarked that 'this confidence has made a real difference in practice: staff are trying new things with young people, changing ways of working and challenging current practice with other agencies'.

The project has resulted in Shetland being one of the first Scottish local authorities to apply for permanency orders allowing children to remain long-term in residential care until they are at least 21 years old. And because young people now have a settled and secure home, they feel more positive about what the future holds, and like their friends, they too can focus on getting a job, or going to college or university.

Staying the course

The educational statistics for looked after children makes for unhappy reading. These children tend to do far less well at school, and many leave school just as soon as they can. One of our key ambitions is to play a big part in narrowing that educational attainment gap, indeed our ultimate goal is to close the gap completely.

At CELCIS, we believe in building on the rich capacities, skills and aspirations of our looked after children from early years education onwards. In our education work, we encourage the development of systems which support children to enjoy the benefits and advantages a high quality education can bring.

This aspiration extends to further and higher education. With the introduction of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, colleges and universities now have statutory responsibilities as corporate parents and are required to have a plan that will improve access to post-school education for young people from a looked after background (see CASE STUDY on page 16).

CELCIS continues to inform and influence policy and agenda of change

13

consultation responses, two on the attainment gap and one on lowering of the voting age.

3

Inform briefings, all regarding Parts of the Act as well as other pertinent issues for children and young people, synthesising research with evidence and knowledge about systems and practice on the ground.

2

Research briefings, synthesising best available research on improving education outcomes for the sector.

Our partnership projects this year focussed on working with and supporting four local authorities through our test of change model in schools. We worked to exchange knowledge and influence change through existing structures with, for example, steering groups and boards, and at events. In doing so we played a central role in providing expert advice, guidance and support to the college and university sector as they implement their corporate parenting duties and put in place mechanisms to improve young people's access to college and university.

CASE STUDY: Influencing educational change for care leavers

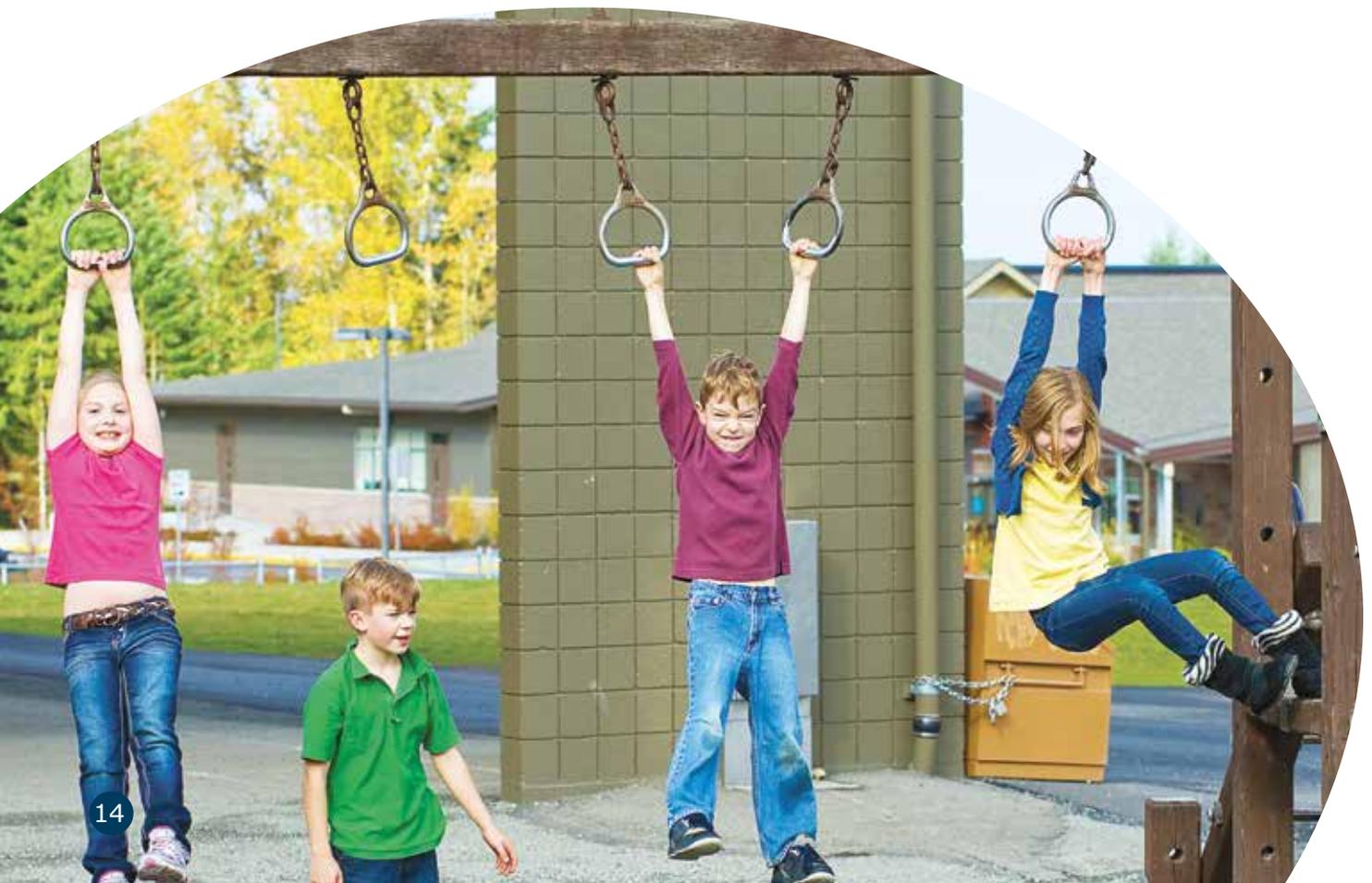
In 2014–15 CELCIS developed a framework for 'improving access and support for care leavers in college and university' in collaboration with Buttle UK and a range of stakeholders. Together we influenced the guidance given to colleges and universities which recognises that they should make a commitment to care leavers alongside 'protected groups' under the Equality Act. By doing this, they can provide effective pathways into further education for care leavers, and keep those young people's distinct needs high up on the educational agenda.

Young, gifted and well

Children coming into the care system will have experienced trauma; trauma which often has a profound impact on their health and wellbeing. At CELCIS we believe that positive experiences and successful long-term outcomes depend hugely on each child's physical, mental and emotional health.

CASE STUDY: CELCIS writing goes global

An IRISS Insight on trauma sensitive practice, co-authored by our expert CELCIS consultant, has been a worldwide success. The piece synthesises available evidence and is supplemented by our consultant's own expertise and experience of dealing with trauma in children and young people while supporting practitioners to reflect on their practice. The Insight has been regularly referenced and viewed online, not just here in the UK but throughout Europe and around the world. In addition to hard copy circulation, it has been downloaded nearly 900 times so far.



The Scottish Government's Getting it Right For Every Child approach emphasises the importance of wellbeing, with health as a key component. But many services are not set up to understand, identify or meet the multiple, complex health needs of looked after children and their families.

We recognise the scale of this task. But by working to support collective effort from carers, practitioners and professionals, we aim to make significant, long-term improvements in the health and wellbeing of looked after children. We know that our improvement and multi-agency partnership approach can work here (as it has in other areas of our work) to introduce structures and processes which can tackle the systemic barriers preventing good health outcomes for these children.

In 2014–15 we made further headway towards better health for looked after children with a new series of projects and activities tailored specifically to the needs of each of the organisations we worked with, including three NHS Boards.

CASE STUDY: Bespoke training on attachment drives change

Our bespoke training and consultancy services around children's development, attachment, and resilience have been a great source of support for frontline staff, and a driver for change across the sector.

An example of this work is training we delivered for a total of 36 multi-agency and residential care staff on the impact trauma has on young people and their behaviour, and developing effective professional and personal responses. The training was very positively evaluated. A whopping 97% of staff said they would use what they had learned in their practice, and 88% said they would encourage others to use their learning too. As one member of staff put it: 'This training should be mandatory for all professionals who work with children and should be a regular part of all CPD.'



Laying down the law

Two significant pieces of legislation affecting children in Scotland were introduced in 2014–15: the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. The CELCIS Policy team played a leading role in supporting effective implementation of the new laws by providing guidance and advice for many of our partner organisations.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

This important new piece of legislation will impact on every aspect of children's services and on all stages of a child's life, from birth well into adulthood. With 18 constituent Parts to the Act, every publicly funded organisation working with children is affected, and for those working directly with looked after children and care leavers, reforms were broad and substantial.

CELCIS played a critical role to provide advice and guidance on implementation of the Act for service providers, carers and sector professionals. We developed the only statutory guidance on corporate parenting, on behalf of the Scottish Government. We liaised with 120+ corporate parents, supporting them to understand and then implement their new duties. Our series of Inform briefings provided valuable guidance for the whole sector, shaping the work of strategic decision makers and front-line practitioners alike. Working alongside the Scottish Government, we have also acted as a conduit for questions, concern and insight between the looked after children's sector and civil servants.

CASE STUDY: CELCIS supports college policy implementation

Our engagement with the College Development Network this year is a shining example of how valuable it is to work collaboratively towards effective policy implementation. Our college colleagues told us that working with the individuals in the CELCIS policy team was 'extremely helpful'. They reported that our practical advice helped to 'demystify the information' around the duties in the Act, supported by resources containing clear information which the Network has used to spread the word within their own sector. With our tailored guidance the college sector has reached a better understanding of their corporate parenting responsibilities.

'We helped over 120 corporate parents to understand and implement their new duties.'

From Act to Practice 2

We saw significant changes to the new Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 which aimed to modernise and strengthen the Children's Hearing system by placing children at the front and centre of the decision-making process. The significant changes meant that everyone coming in to contact with the Hearings system would be affected by the requirements of the new law.

Following on from our first series of From Act to Practice events in 2013–14, which focused on improving understanding of the legislative changes, the emphasis of our From Act to Practice 2 sessions this year focused on how to implement key aspects of the Act. In collaboration with Clan ChildLaw, we delivered 13 national training events to support strategic leaders, and those managing and working on the ground towards effective implementation of the Act.

Sessions had a positive impact on our professional partners. The evaluation shows participants were very positive about the sessions (80% of professionals who attended took part in at least one element of the evaluation):

- 653 professionals attended.
- 81% said the seminars either met or exceeded their expectations about information they received on the Act.
- 78% said they would apply what they learned to their practice.
- 75% said the seminars either met or exceeded their expectations in enabling learning from colleagues.

'[I] was able to gather information and swap practice issues with different organisations involved in the same goal.' (Middle manager)

'I still advocate in the same manner as I used to, but I have a greater understanding of the importance of the child's views. I'm definitely more able to tune into that now.' (Frontline practitioner)



653

653 professionals attended

CELCIS goes global

We're working to make a difference to the experiences and life chances of looked after children right here in Scotland, but our influence and expertise in the development of alternative care systems is also recognised around the world. In our international partnership work both CELCIS and Scotland benefit from a two-way learning process. And it makes sense that we learn from each other, because concern about children living without parental care is a global one.



CELCIS reach goes right round the world

- 59 e-news bulletins; providing sector info from Scotland and around the globe, with 44,000 click throughs to read the latest news, events and publications.
- 8,333 international website visitors, a 42% increase from last year.
- Top 5 countries: United States, Ireland, Canada, Brazil and Australia.

44,000

clicks to read the latest news and events

Our international work is focused on the reform of child care systems. This year we've been involved in a diverse range of international projects to share information, promote good practice and exchange experience about children in care, and how best to prevent children being separated from their parents unnecessarily.

As part of this two-way learning process, we hosted visitors from Bangladesh, Slovakia, Germany, and New Zealand this year, and we spread the word about Scotland's own experiences with alternative care systems through key note addresses to major regional conferences like UNICEF's Child Protection conference.

CASE STUDY: Major project in Africa completed

Africa is home to a large number of children who are deprived of family environments mainly as a result of poverty, HIV/AIDS and conflict. Five years on from the publication of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (by UN Resolution 64/142), CELCIS worked with partners SOS Children's Villages International and the University of Malawi to support eight African countries to evaluate their use of the UN Guidelines.

The final report *Drumming Together for Change* was well received by Benyam Dawit Mezmur who acknowledged the importance of progress aligned to the development of an evidence base. Further, the report joins a chorus of international voices which calls everyone from local communities to governments to take collective responsibility to find the solutions required to implement the UN Guidelines effectively for children and families in need.

Benyam Dawit Mezmur is Chair of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Read more case studies on implementing the UN Guidelines – www.alternativecareguidelines.org

Multi-layered learning

At CELCIS, we take learning very seriously. We believe that carers, agencies and staff working across the sector must have access to the right kinds of learning, at the right times, to help them meet the challenges of working with looked after children confidently, and equipped with all of the knowledge they need.

When it comes to professional development, CELCIS delivers. With a huge range of courses, workshops, conferences, formal qualifications, training and events, plus tailored consultancy packages, we provide practical support and an impressive collective CV of experience to support multi-layered learning within the sector's workforce.

Conferences & events

Every year the CELCIS calendar is crammed with conferences and events based around practical, challenging and inspirational themes to support learning and the professional development of our sector colleagues working in Scotland, and further afield. And it was no different this year – 3365 people attended 102 CELCIS learning events, and feedback was outstanding. 89% of attendees came away saying they would apply new learning directly into their practice.

Our events programme features our two popular and highly influential annual conferences – our own CELCIS conference (based around a 'We Are Family' theme in 2014) and the hugely successful Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) Conference.

CASE STUDY: SIRCC Conference enlightens and energises

Now in its 16th year, the SIRCC event is the only annual residential child care conference of its kind in Scotland. Because of Scotland's unique geography, it is the opportunity of the year for staff to come together, talk, learn, laugh and celebrate their success, which we all know is important for a healthy workforce.

We were proud to lead the working group who developed the event around the theme of: 'Aspirations and Ambitions: changing lives through learning'. Young people were, as always, at the heart of the conference – they helped us to develop the programme, deliver and support sessions, and they attended as delegates. The event brought together 275 delegates from a wide range of backgrounds, and their feedback told us that many returned to their workplaces with renewed passion and energy.

Formal and online education

A further string to our learning bow comes with a wide range of formal sector qualifications developed by CELCIS and our partners in further and higher education. We support and deliver a range of mandatory advanced qualifications for professionals working in the sector, which in 2014–15 included information events to support implementation of the new Standard for Residential Child Care.

Our online learning opportunities have proved to be a huge hit, not just here on our own Scottish shores, but right around the globe. Our distance learning MSc in Child and Youth Care Studies, the first ever, went down a storm, with students from as far afield as Canada, Ireland, Wales, England, Australia and Rwanda joining the first ever cohort of this unique course in September 2014, and many provided extremely positive feedback:

'It's been very intellectually stimulating and the course has been excellent so far.'
'The flexibility it gives me to organise my own learning around other aspects of my life is excellent.'

Raising standards

CELCIS, Scottish Government and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) held six information events across Scotland during the year ahead of the rollout of the new Standard for the Qualification in Residential Child Care. The Standard requires the majority of the 6,000+ residential child care workers in Scotland to undertake some study towards a new degree, a requirement which presents a complex and challenging implementation process for the sector.

200 individuals working in residential care attended the events which provided an opportunity for them to directly advise us of questions, suggestions and concerns that they had about the new qualification.

There were a number of recurring themes at the events. The groups noted that without funding, there was a 'genuine risk of some providers not being able to finance this'. By flagging up the concerns of the sector raised at the events, CELCIS has played a significant part in providing a voice for stakeholders in the future implementation of the qualification.

CASE STUDY: MOOC is top of the charts, and the chats

Over **12,500** people worldwide have taken part in our free, Massive Open Online Course Caring for Vulnerable Children, developed and delivered in partnership with School of Social Work and Social Policy. Participants came from diverse backgrounds – teachers, foster carers, residential workers and volunteers – and they were super-engaged in the course. More than **56,000** comments were posted prompting debate and discussion around the learning themes, making it the FutureLearn Portal's most socially engaged MOOC, ever.

Evaluation of the MOOC was extremely positive, one student said, 'This has been a fantastic course which I have learned so much from... I feel like I am always (as a teacher) trying to support and be the voice of so many vulnerable children. I see and feel the need for change and am definitely already using my new gained knowledge from this course to support and advocate it!!'.

Finding the perfect fit

For CELCIS, it matters hugely that we find exactly the right fit when it comes to tailored training and consultancy work with our partners. By taking the time to plan, design and deliver specialist support packages which match specific requirements and make best use of our highly skilled people, we believe we can really help to make a big, big difference in the lives of looked after children.

Some of our proudest moments come from feedback we receive from our partners following completion of tailored training and consultancy projects.

'What worked well was having a CELCIS consultant involved in identifying the learning needs of staff, shaping the programme of training, and facilitating learning in a way that builds openness and trust within the group... This was partly down to the consultant's approach but also because he had on the ground experience as a practitioner and manager. He understood and empathised with the challenges experienced by staff.' (Residential care manager)

CASE STUDY: Specialist training – An Introduction to Domestic Abuse

In collaboration with Anni Donaldson, CELCIS developed and piloted a two-day Introduction to Domestic Abuse – Theory and Practice training course in March 2015 for staff and the Head of Service from a large residential school. The course, the first of its kind in Scotland, was designed to enable staff to understand the nature, extent and impact of domestic abuse, and to provide a practice framework for those working with children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.

The training received excellent evaluation from participants:

100% will apply what they learned

'Fantastic course, very informative and hard hitting, lots of information and detailed accounts and facts. Very knowledgeable trainers, every question answered in detail.'

'I feel confident leaving today that I am better equipped in my knowledge which will in turn enhance my practice.'

'What worked well was having a CELCIS consultant involved in shaping the programme of training. He understood and empathised with the challenges experienced by staff.' (Residential care manager)

100%
will apply what they learned



The coming year

Our goal remains the same. We'll continue to work with our partners and collaborators, always with the aim of making big, positive differences in the lives of looked after children, their families and care leavers.

2015–16 will be another big year for CELCIS. Our efforts carry on apace, with between 50–70 projects underway at any one time. These projects form an ambitious programme of work for our key areas of work and delivery of our services. Alongside this, we'll also deliver additional projects including:

- Implementation of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 will gather speed in the coming months, and this important process will permeate much of our work. We'll continue to draw on our vast knowledge, skill and expertise to support the sector to understand and implement this Act, and the looked after children legislative framework, to ensure it improves the lives of looked after children, young people and their families.
- Collaborate with national and strategic stakeholders to forge new paths and ways of working. One example is building on our expertise in knowledge exchange and practice improvement to support Realigning Children's Services in the development of a programme which will improve the fit between every local child's need and the services they receive.
- Promote and deliver tailored training and learning opportunities to practitioners through, for example, supporting organisations and educational institutions to deliver a relevant, accessible residential child care degree qualification for staff and employers in the sector.
- Support the ongoing development of new knowledge into practice through our research into practice initiatives.

Organisational Development

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

- Develop and widen our consultancy work; extending our service of professional excellence by focusing on inclusion, respect, collaboration and a multi-agency approach.
- Integrate implementation science into our services, projects and key areas of work.
- Develop and implement our evidence and evaluation strategy so that we can be even more precise about the real difference we're making daily in looked after children's lives.
- Develop and implement our knowledge mobilisation and communications plan; we've set ambitious targets so that everyone working with and for children and young people fully understands the importance of our messages about making a difference.

As always, we'll continue to take a multi-agency, collaborative approach to break down barriers, overcome challenges, and forge new paths to change thinking and ways of working with everyone whose work touches the lives of looked after children. That way, we can collectively make an even bigger difference in the lives of looked after children and young people.

Acknowledgements

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

Contact us

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

Call: **0141 444 8500**

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

Visit: **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 and knowledge of those working with and on behalf of looked after children, and by placing the interests of children at the heart of our work.



University of Strathclyde
Level 3, Lord Hope Building
141 St James Road
Glasgow G4 0LT
t: **0141 444 8500**
e: **celcis@strath.ac.uk**
w: **www.celcis.org**